

Docket Item #10
BAR CASE #2004-0206

BAR Meeting
October 20, 2004

ISSUE: Permit to Demolish
APPLICANT: Richard and Harriet Larsen
LOCATION: 307 South Lee Street
ZONE: RM/Residential

BOARD ACTION, OCTOBER 6, 2004: On a motion by Mr. Wheeler, seconded by Mr. Smeallie the Board deferred the application for restudy. The vote on the motion was 7-0.

REASON: The Board agreed with the Staff analysis and believed that the 18th century carriage house was rare survival in Alexandria and that as little alteration as possible should be made to those portions of the building that are visible from the public right-of-way.

SPEAKER: Robert Bentley Adams, project architect, spoke in support
Murney Keleher, representing the Historic Alexandria Foundation, spoke in opposition

Update: The applicant has revised several important aspects of the design for the carriage house and has provided additional information regarding the location of the chimney on the front slope of the roof. The Staff report has been updated to reflect this new information.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends approval of the application as submitted.

Note: This docket item requires a roll call vote.

I. ISSUE:

The applicant is requesting approval of a Permit to Demolish the existing rear porch to create a new rear addition; sections of the rear (west sloop) of the roof to permit the installation of two new dormers; a portion of the front roof to permit the installation of a chimney and sections of the rear (west) elevation of the carriage house to allow the installation of three new windows and a section of the east elevation to allow the installation of a new window.

II. HISTORY:

307 South Lee Street is a two story, three bay brick rowhouse dating from ca. 1830 and was built by James Brooks according to Ethelyn Cox in *Alexandria Street by Street* (p.83). The two brick carriage house at the rear of the property was originally part of the James Craik house on Duke Street and was built in either 1787 or 1795 (Cox, p.83). The two story rear porch was likely constructed in the 20th century. It was altered to its present configuration in 1965 and was approved by the Board on 11/1/0/65.

III. ANALYSIS:

In considering a Permit to Demolish/Capsulate, the Board must consider the following criteria set forth in the Zoning Ordinance, §10-105(B):

- (1) Is the building or structure of such architectural or historical interest that its moving, removing, capsulating or razing would be to the detriment of the public interest?
- (2) Is the building or structure of such interest that it could be made into a historic house?
- (3) Is the building or structure of such old and unusual or uncommon design, texture and material that it could not be reproduced or be reproduced only with great difficulty?
- (4) Would retention of the building or structure help preserve the memorial character of the George Washington Memorial Parkway?
- (5) Would retention of the building or structure help preserve and protect an historic place or area of historic interest in the city?
- (6) Would retention of the building or structure promote the general welfare by maintaining and increasing real estate values, generating business, creating new positions, attracting tourists, students, writers, historians, artists and artisans, attracting new residents, encouraging study and interest in American history, stimulating interest and study in architecture and design, educating citizens in American culture and heritage, and making the city a more attractive and desirable place in which to live?

Porch

In the opinion of Staff that none of the above criteria are met because this is a late 20th century addition. Staff recommends approval of this part of the demolition application.

East (front) slope of the main house

A section of the front slope of the roof on the north side is proposed to be removed to permit the installation of a chimney. Staff is persuaded from information supplied by the applicant that a chimney previously existed in this location and has subsequently been removed. Based upon this information, Staff recommends approval of this part of the Permit to Demolish.

West (rear) slope of the roof of the main house

In the opinion of Staff criteria #'s 5 & 6 are met in this instance. However, given the fact, that the rear of the house has been substantially altered within the recent past, Staff believes that the demolition of sections of the rear roof to construct new dormers is acceptable. The section of the house fronting on South Lee Street will not be altered. The area to be demolished is shielded from the public right-of-way and thus the overall view of the house will not be compromised. Thus Staff, reluctantly, recommends approval of this part of the Permit to Demolish.

Carriage House

In the opinion of Staff, the areas of the carriage house proposed to be demolished meet criteria #'s 1, 2, 5 & 6. Demolition of parts of the 18th century carriage house to create new windows openings would, in the opinion of Staff, fundamentally alter one of the very few remaining 18th century carriage houses in the historic district. The proposal has been modified since the last public hearing to confine the majority of demolition to the west elevation of the carriage house which is not visible from South Lee Street. At the last public hearing, members ad indicated a preference that any demolition of the carriage house take place on this elevation. A small area is also to be demolished on the east elevation to permit the installation of a small window just to the north of the existing entry door. While Staff continues to oppose demolition of portions of the carriage house, Staff is mindful of the position of the Board members. In light of this and because the alteration of the carriage house is not visible from South Lee Street, Staff is willing to recommend approval of this part of the Permit to Demolish. The small section of the east elevation to be removed for the installation of a new window is below the line of the existing fence and is not visible from the public right-of-way. Based upon this, Staff has no objection to the removal of this part of the east elevation.

IV. STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends approval of the application as submitted.

CITY DEPARTMENT COMMENTS

Legend: C - code requirement R - recommendation S - suggestion F - finding

Code Enforcement:

- C-1 The proposed addition is located adjacent to a 10 foot wide alley. The renovation of the garage is located adjacent to a 10 foot and a 20 foot alley. All exterior walls within 5 feet from an interior property line shall have a fire resistance rating of 1 hour, from both sides, with no openings permitted within the wall. As alternative, a 2 hour fire wall may be provided. The applicant shall determine whether the alley is public or private and shall provide such information at the time of building permit application. Walls located adjacent to private alleys shall determine fire separation distance as measured from the building face to the lot line between the property and the alley, unless information is provided to define ownership, use restrictions and if alley ownership transfers with the sale of adjacent lots. Fire separation distance determined in public alleys is measured from the building face to the center line of the public alley.
- C-2 The current use of the detached garage is classified as U, Utility / Miscellaneous; the proposed use is R, Residential. Change of use, in whole or in part, will require a certificate of use and occupancy (USBC 119.4) and compliance with USBC 119.2.
- C-3 Prior to the application for new Certificate of Occupancy, the applicant shall submit a building permit for a change of use. Drawings prepared by a licensed architect or professional engineer shall accompany the permit application. These plans shall show provide existing conditions, construction type data, and a plot plan. In addition, these plans shall show proposed conditions and provide data by the design professional which details how the proposed use will comply with the current edition of the Virginia Uniform Statewide Building Code for the new use in the area of structural strength, means of egress, passive and active fire protection, heating and ventilating systems, handicapped accessibility and plumbing facilities.
- C-4 The submitted plans show a conflict in stair configuration with the requirements of the Uniform Statewide Building Code. The applicant shall revise the stair turn / landing to comply with the USBC.
- C-5 Prior to the issuance of a demolition permit or land disturbance permit, a rodent abatement plan shall be submitted to Code Enforcement that will outline the steps that will taken to prevent the spread of rodents from the construction site to the surrounding community and sewers.
- C-6 Roof drainage systems must be installed so as neither to impact upon, nor cause erosion/damage to adjacent property.
- C-7 A soils report must be submitted with the building permit application.

- C-8 New construction must comply with the current edition of the Uniform Statewide Building Code (USBC).
- C-9 Alterations to the existing structure must comply with the current edition of the Uniform Statewide Building Code (USBC).
- C-10 Construction permits are required for this project. Plans shall accompany the permit application that fully detail the construction as well as layouts and schematics of the mechanical, electrical, and plumbing systems.
- C-11 Permission from adjacent property owners is required if access to the adjacent properties is required to complete the proposed construction. Otherwise, a plan shall be submitted to demonstrate the construction techniques utilized to keep construction solely on the referenced property.
- C-12 A wall location plat prepared by a land surveyor is required to be submitted to this office prior to requesting any framing inspection.

Historic Alexandria:

No comment.

Alexandria Archaeology:

- F-1 This property was occupied at least by the early nineteenth century. There is the potential for archaeological resources to be present that could provide insight into residential life in early Alexandria.
- R-1 Call Alexandria Archaeology immediately (703-838-4399) if any buried structural remains (wall foundations, wells, privies, cisterns, etc.) or concentrations of artifacts are discovered during development. Work must cease in the area of the discovery until a City archaeologist comes to the site and records the finds.
- R-2 The above statement must appear in the General Notes of all site plans so that on-site contractors are aware of the requirement.