

Docket Item #13
BAR CASE #2004-0218

BAR Meeting
October 20, 2004

ISSUE: Demolition/Capsulation

APPLICANT: Holly Herman

LOCATION: 519 Wilkes Street

ZONE: RM/Residential

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends approval of the demolition and capsulation as submitted.

Note: This docket item requires a roll call vote.

I. ISSUE:

The applicant is requesting approval of a Permit to Demolish for the demolition of and infill of portions of the side and rear walls at the back of the house as part of a reorganization of the fenestration on the second story. Currently, there is a corner window on the northeast corner of the house at the rear of the house on the second story. The applicant proposes to remove the corner window and replace it with two evenly spaced windows on the rear (north) facade. Thus, an area at the northeast corner will be infilled and two new openings will be made in the rear wall.

The drawings also show a new window inserted in the west side at the second story and an east side window in a new location. The building extends from lot line to lot line and therefore any side windows are on located on the property line. The new west side window has been deleted from the plans as the Building Code definitely will not allow new penetrations on the property line. In addition, it is unlikely that the east side window will be allowed in a new location. The applicant must request a code modification for the east side window. Thus, the existing east side opening will be infilled and a new opening may or may not be made on the east side, pending the decision of the Director of Code Enforcement.

The rear of the property is not visible from a public right-of-way. Therefore, only the Permit to Demolish is before the Board.

II. HISTORY:

The townhouse at 519 Wilkes Street is one of six two story, two bay townhouses constructed in 1950, (Building Permit #04742, 3/28/50). The cinder block rear addition appears to date to the 1970s. The Board approved alterations to the front of 519 Wilkes in 1977. More recently, the Board has approved alterations to other properties in the same row: 513 Wilkes Street (BAR Case #95-52, 8/20/1992) and 521 Wilkes Street (BAR Case #92-121, 6/3/1985).

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?

In the opinion of Staff that none of the above criteria are met. The demolition and infilling will occur in a mid- to late-20th century rear addition.

IV. STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends approval of the demolition and capsulation as submitted.

CITY DEPARTMENT COMMENTS

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

Code Enforcement:

- F-1 The existing side windows are located along the lot line and do not comply with building set back requirements for interior lot lines.

- C-1 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. This condition is also applicable to skylights within setback distance.

- C-2 New construction must comply with the current edition of the Uniform Statewide Building Code (USBC).

- C-3 Alterations to the existing structure must comply with the current edition of the Uniform Statewide Building Code (USBC).

- C-4 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-5 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.

Historic Alexandria:

No comment.