

Docket Item #5
BAR CASE# 2005-0014

BAR Meeting
February 16, 2005

ISSUE: After-the-fact alterations
APPLICANT: Louise Roseman
LOCATION: 300 South Columbus Street
ZONE: RM/Residential

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends approval of the application as submitted.

I. ISSUE:

The applicant is requesting approval of an after-the-fact Certificate of Appropriateness for alterations to the residential building at 300 South Columbus Street. The transom window above the front has been modified and now contains a decorative metal pattern with blown glass.

Staff notes that the transom, which had already been installed, was approved by the St. John's Square condominium association at its December 16, 2004 meeting.

II. HISTORY:

300 South Columbus Street is part of the St. John's Square condominium project. The building was originally constructed ca. 1840 and subsequently expanded to forty rooms in 1859 as part of a school that was operating in the building. The building was converted to condominiums in the 1980s. At that time, a new section was built behind the historic buildings on South Columbus Street.

III. ANALYSIS:

Until this transom was installed all of the front doors for these condominium units had plain glass transoms which were part of the original design package approved by the Board in 1980.

While Staff is well aware of the considerable opposition of some residents to the installation of this decorative transom, Staff does not believe that it is inappropriate. Decorative transoms have a long history in American architecture and were a common place feature of many doorways in the mid to late 19th century. It is the opinion of Staff that in overall design the transom complements the architectural character of the building. It utilizes materials commonly found in the historic architecture of the historic district - wood, clear glass and thin metal muntin bars.

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:

No comments.

Office of Historic Alexandria:

Plain glass would be more appropriate and desirable.