

Docket Item #11  
BAR Case #2005-0020

BAR Meeting  
February 16, 2005

**ISSUE:** Permit to Demolish and Capsulate

**APPLICANT:** Harambee Community and Economic Development Corp.

**LOCATION:** 1323 Duke Street

**ZONE:** CD/Commercial

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**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 and Capsulate portions of the existing residential structure at 1323 Duke Street as well as a small outbuilding at the rear of the lot. The property is owned by the Shiloh Baptist Church. The sections of the residential building to be demolished and capsulated include:

- Capsulation of the east wall of the existing dwelling;
- Demolition of the rearmost addition and sleeping porch; and,
- Demolition of the outbuilding at the rear of the lot.

**II. HISTORY:**

The Board is being asked for approval of the proposed demolition and capsulation to allow construction of a new addition to the east of the existing building.

In 2003, an application was filed to demolish the entire building to allow new development on the site. The Board denied that application believing that 1323 Duke Street was important because it represented what this section of Duke Street had been and because the Board believed that there may be a preservation alternative that could save the building (BAR Case #2003-00142, 3/3/03). That decision was appealed to City Council, but was stayed pending review of preservation alternatives. Since that time the project has been substantially redesigned to incorporate preservation of the majority of the historic fabric of the existing building. It is this alternative that is currently before the Board.

1323 Duke Street is a two story, slightly asymmetrical two bay, side hall Victorian Italianate style freestanding brick residence dating from ca. 1890. It is first shown on Sanborn Fire Insurance Map of 1902, the first year the company mapped the area and was in residential use from that time until 1990.



Current Condition Photograph of 1323 Duke Street

The building was acquired by the Shiloh Baptist Church in 1990 and has served church administrative functions since then.

Over the course of the last century, the building has had two additions. A two story brick addition at the north (rear) was added probably within ten to twenty years of the original construction date of the historic main block. A rear two story wood frame sleeping porch was added in 1931 (Building Permit). The sleeping porch was enclosed 1994 and this enclosure was approved by the Board (BAR Case #94-0127, 9/21/94). Prior to the construction of the sleeping porch there was a one story frame addition on the east side at rear. According to information on the Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps this frame addition was constructed between 1912 and 1921 and was demolished by 1941.

The building retains a high degree of historic and architectural integrity. Along the Duke Street frontage the brick work is seven course American bond with an elaborate corbeled brick cornice and arched brick window lintels. The icicle style corbeled cornice appears to be unique within the Alexandria historic district. The windows have been changed out from (likely) two-over-two to inappropriate six-over-six wood Pella windows (there was no BAR approval of this change out). The door opening has been modified with the transom panel bricked in and an inappropriate metal door installed. The doorway is accessed from decorative cast iron steps with decorative railings.

There is a highly elaborate and decorative cast iron fencing on Duke Street on the east side of the house.

The South West Street frontage also has seven course American bond on the historic main block and eight course American bond on the first addition. The windows all have arched brick lintels; two on the second level of the historic main block and three on the first level. The first addition has one window on each level. The enclosed rear frame addition has one-over-one windows. On the north elevation the two story enclosed frame sleeping porch has sets of one-over-one windows on each level. On the east (side) elevation there are no window openings on the first floor of the historic main block and two windows with brick arch lintels on the second level. The window configuration of the first addition and the sleeping porch enclosure mirrors that on South West Street.

#### Analysis of Historic Architectural Importance:

1323 Duke Street represents the type of substantial vernacular residential building form that was present in this section of the historic district prior to the major rebuilding programs that took place in the 1970s and 1980s and helps define the architectural evolution of residential building types in Alexandria. Overall 1323 Duke Street has a great deal of architectural integrity and is little changed in outward appearance from its original construction over 100 years ago.

The building displays a high level of brick workmanship and clearly reflects the work of an expert and highly skilled mason. The decorative Victorian iron steps, railing and fence are also indicative of knowledge of and access to relatively high style building embellishments.

1323 Duke Street begins the south section of the historic street wall of two story residential rowhouses on the east side of the 200 block of South West Street and with its open space buffer provides a transition from the commercial Duke Street corridor to the more residential area of the historic district. In addition, the intersection of Duke Street and South West Street is one of the major entry points from the western section of the city into the historic district. 1323 Duke Street acts as a demarcation point for the historic architecture that makes up the bulk of the physical fabric of the historic district. Thus, Staff believes that the historic architecture of 1323 Duke Street is worthy of preservation.

The existing outbuilding apparently post-dates 1958 according to information on the Sanborn Fire Insurance maps.

The interior of the historic main block has very high degree of integrity and is little changed from the original period of construction. The original room configuration and partitions as well as fireplace mantel and stair are extant. In addition, the first addition has high degree of integrity. As noted above, the rear porch has been extensively modified.

The existing historic house has extensive open space on the east side as well as at the rear (north). Based upon the information in the Sanborn Fire Insurance maps it appears that the existing open space has never had other structures built upon it since the construction of the original house.

### **III. ANALYSIS:**

In considering a Permit to Demolish, 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?

While a number of criteria may be met in this case, it is the opinion of Staff, that the majority of the building will be retained in the re-use scheme, thus preserving the essential integrity of the house. Staff also notes that houses built on corner lots normally anticipated that a rowhouse would be built immediately adjacent on the interior lot. In this instance, that has not occurred up

until this point. Thus, Staff believes that construction of what appears to be a separate residence immediately to the east of the existing building would replicate the typical development pattern found throughout the historic district. The current proposal would save the existing decorative brick work as well as the original openings.

Staff does not believe that any of the criteria are met for the rear sleeping porch or for the two story stucco outbuilding both of which date from the late 20<sup>th</sup> century.

**IV. STAFF RECOMMENDATION:**

Staff recommends approval of the application as submitted.

Staff notes the recommendations of Alexandria Archaeology, but has not included them as part of the Permit to Demolish application.

## CITY DEPARTMENT COMMENTS

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

### Code Enforcement:

- C-1 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-2 A Construction permit for demolition is required for this project.

### Historic Alexandria:

No comment.

### Alexandria Archaeology:

- F-1 This property was part of the L'Overture Hospital and Contraband Barracks complex during the Civil War. The lot contained some of the ward tents for the hospital complex. The site is extremely significant since it has the potential to yield archaeological resources which could provide information about the African Americans who escaped from slavery and sought haven in the Union-occupied town of Alexandria. The demolition of the existing structures and any ground disturbance or construction activities could destroy these potential resources.
- C-1 To insure that significant information is not lost as a result of the current development project, the applicant must hire an archaeological consultant to monitor demolition activities and to conduct test excavations for an Archaeological Evaluation prior to any other ground disturbing and construction activities. Contact Alexandria Archaeology (703-838-4399) to obtain a scope of work for this investigation and a list of approved consultants. If significant resources are discovered, the consultant must complete a Resource Management Plan, as outlined in the *City of Alexandria Archaeological Standards*. Preservation measures presented in the Resource Management Plan, as approved by the City Archaeologist, will be implemented.
- C-2 All archaeological preservation measures must be completed prior to ground-disturbing activities (such as coring, grading, filling, vegetation removal, undergrounding utilities, pile driving, landscaping and other excavations as defined in §2-151 of the Zoning Ordinance). To confirm, call Alexandria Archaeology at (703) 838-4399.
- C-3 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.
- C-4 The General Notes of the Preliminary and Final Site Plans must include the statements in C-2

and C-3 above so that on-site contractors are aware of the requirements. Additional statements to be included on the Final Site Plan will be determined in consultation with Alexandria Archaeology.

- C-5 Certificates of Occupancy will not be issued for this property until the final archaeological report has been received and approved by the City Archaeologist.
- C-6 The developer will erect a historic marker on the property according to specifications provided by Alexandria Archaeology, and agreed to in concurrence with the Directors of the Office of Historic Alexandria and Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities. The marker will highlight the historical and archaeological significance of the property.
- C-7 If warranted by the City Archaeologist, the developer will produce a booklet for the public on the history and archaeology of the property, according to specifications provided by Alexandria Archaeology.
- R-1 All archaeological work will be carried out in accordance with the *City of Alexandria Archaeological Standards* and is subject to the approval of the City Archaeologist.