

Docket Item #13
BAR CASE #2005-0025

BAR Meeting
February 16, 2005

ISSUE: Demolition and capsulation

APPLICANT: Art Fox by James L. Brown & Associates

LOCATION: 418 South Fairfax Street

ZONE: RM/Residential

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 for demolition of a section of the rear (east) wall of the rear flounder on the first story. The area to be demolished measures 9' high by 11.5' wide. This area will be capsulated within a new one story addition.



Figure 1 Existing rear elevation

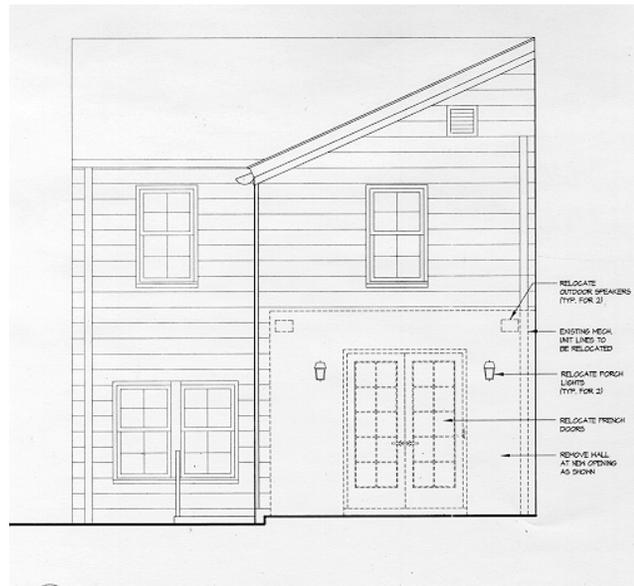


Figure 2 Proposed demolition

The rear of the house is minimally visible in views through the block from Wilkes Street to the south.

II. HISTORY:

According to Ethelyn Cox in Street by Street, the two story, frame, gable roofed house at 418 South Fairfax Street was probably constructed in the early 19th century and altered with Italianate detailing added to the front facade in the last quarter of the 19th century (Historic Alexandria Street by Street, p. 49). The date of construction of the rear flounder section is unknown, but it appears to be present on the 1877 Hopkins Atlas. A rear extension of the same footprint as the existing flounder also appears on the 1902 Sanborn Map, the first year the area was first included in the Sanborn mapping. The 1902 map shows a single story porch at the end of the flounder. Photographs included with a 1964 building permit show a shed roofed porch in the same location, but do not clearly show the wall beyond (Building Permit #21099, 9/30/1964). Since the 1964 photograph, a window has been added in the second story of the rear wall of the flounder and the porch has been removed. Although no records could be located, the existing french doors on the first story are assumed to have been added after the removal of the porch,

perhaps when the kitchen was remodeled in 1987 (Building Permit #43976, 7/9/1987).

The Board has reviewed projects at 418 South Fairfax on at least two prior occasions. On August 12, 1964, the Board approved a third story to be added on top of the two story rear flounder. This addition was never constructed. On August 5, 1970, the Board approved replacement gutters at 418 South Fairfax Street (Building Permit #27523, 8/10/1970).

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?

Staff believes that the above criteria are not met. While the flounder may be an early 19th century structure, the area to be demolished and capsulated was previously altered with the removal of the porch and addition of the french doors and may have been subject to other alterations besides these. The demolition and capsulation is confined to a 103.5 square foot area on the first story and the area is only minimally visible from the public right of way.

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 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 be taken to prevent the spread of rodents from the construction site to the surrounding community and sewers.

Historic Alexandria:

“This is an early 19th century building, according to Street by Street. I do not know the date of the “flounder” shown here. Before going forward with this, information is needed. I am not sure I can appreciate the square box-like addition to the flounder.”

Alexandria Archeology:

F-1 This property has the potential to yield archaeological resources which could provide insight into residential life in Alexandria, perhaps related to African Americans, during the nineteenth century. According to Ethelyn Cox’s *Historic Alexandria, Virginia, Street by Street, A Survey of Existing Early Buildings*, the existing structure on this lot was probably built in the early 19th century. Tax records indicate that free African Americans lived on this block of Fairfax Street in 1830 and 1850, but the exact addresses are unknown; it was part of the free black neighborhood known as Hayti. An occupant of the block, Dennis Hackett, was one of 43 freedmen to sign the 1831 petition in the wake of the Nat Turner rebellion, declaring that they would become informants in the event of a slave uprising in the city.

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 the site plan so that on-site contractors are aware of the requirement.