

Docket Item #17
BAR CASE# 2005-0029

BAR Meeting
March 2, 2005

ISSUE: Permit to Demolish and Capsulate

APPLICANT: Lisa and Jay McGonigle

LOCATION: 307 S. St. Asaph Street

ZONE: RM/Residential

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends approval of the application with the following conditions:

1. It is recommended that, if at all possible, the proposed addition be designed to preserve the buried shaft *in situ*. Detailed plans for the footing construction should be submitted for review and approval to Alexandria Archaeology to insure continued protection;
2. Contact Alexandria Archaeology (703-838-4399) two weeks prior to any ground disturbing activity (such as coring, grading, filling, vegetation removal, undergrounding utilities, pile driving, landscaping and other excavations as defined in Section 2-151 of The Zoning Ordinance) on this property. City archaeologists will provide on-site inspections to record significant finds;
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; and,
4. The statement in 2 and 3 above must appear in the General Notes of the site plan so that on-site contractors are aware of the requirement.

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 rear wall of the freestanding residential townhouse at 307 S. St. Asaph Street and the east wall of the new garage in the rear of the property to allow the construction of a one story connector between the two. The design of the infill is not before the Board because it is not visible from the public right-of-way.



Figure 1 South elevation



Figure 2 Area of encapsulation

II. HISTORY:

A house was originally constructed on the property in the 1780s by Benjamin Shreve and was part of a pair of twin townhouses together with the property at 305 South St. Asaph (Ethelyn Cox, Alexandria Street by Street, p. 166). A third story was added to the property in the 1850s and the building was re-styled in the then fashionable Greek Revival style. Thus, the cornice and molding seen on this building is very similar in ornamented style to other Greek Revival style buildings constructed in Alexandria during the same period such as 304 South St. Asaph Street and 414, 416 and 418 Duke Street. Between 1959 and 1960 the house was "restored" in a generally unsympathetic manner and much of the Greek Revival detailing including the doorway and surrounds were removed in favor of faux Federal detailing. This re-styling was sanctioned by the Board in their approval of the changeout (Approved by BAR June 8, 1959, Building Permit #15109, July 7, 1959).

The area to be affected by the Permit to Demolish dates from this century. The west end of the existing house was enlarged and the garage constructed in 2000 (BAR Case #99-0024, 3/17/99).

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?

Because the fabric to be altered dates from 2000, it is the opinion of Staff that none of the criteria are met and that the Permit to Demolish and Capsulate should be approved.

Staff notes the comments of Alexandria Archaeology and has included them as a condition.

IV. STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends approval of the application with the following conditions:

1. It is recommended that, if at all possible, the proposed addition be designed to preserve the buried shaft *in situ*. Detailed plans for the footing construction should be submitted for review and approval to Alexandria Archaeology to insure continued protection;

2. Contact Alexandria Archaeology (703-838-4399) two weeks prior to any ground disturbing activity (such as coring, grading, filling, vegetation removal, undergrounding utilities, pile driving, landscaping and other excavations as defined in Section 2-151 of The Zoning Ordinance) on this property. City archaeologists will provide on-site inspections to record significant finds;
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; and,
4. The statement in R-2 and R-3 above must appear in the General Notes of the site plan so that on-site contractors are aware of the requirement.

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.

Office of Historic Alexandria:

Materials?

Alexandria Archaeology:

- F-1 This property is registered as an archaeological site with the Virginia Department of Historic Resources (44AX108). A house was originally constructed on the property in the 1780s by Benjamin Shreve, a Quaker. Throughout much of the early nineteenth century, it was the home of the family of Edward Stabler, also a Quaker, and founder of the Stabler-Leadbetter Apothecary. During the Civil War, the house was used as barracks for soldiers and occupied by “contrabands,” slaves fleeing from bondage in the south. A fire broke out on the second floor in 1864, and the structure was advertised for sale as a “burnt dwelling” after the war in 1866. Given its association with Alexandria’s prominent Quaker families and its use during the Civil War, the property continues to have potential to yield significant archaeological resources that could provide insight into life in Alexandria during the late eighteenth through nineteenth centuries.
- F-2 In 1980, a scatter of trash was found at the rear of the lot, and a brick shaft was discovered along the north boundary line (extending into the lot at 305 S. Saint Asaph). The shaft was excavated by avocational archaeologists with the permission of the owner. This feature, possibly an ice well, was re-exposed in 1998 as a result of activities relating to construction of a garage and was recorded by Alexandria Archaeology with a series of drawings and photographs. The footing for the northeast corner of the garage was designed to preserve as much of the shaft as possible in the ground and incorporates a thick concrete slab over the shaft opening.
- R-1 It is recommended that, if at all possible, the proposed addition be designed to preserve the buried shaft *in situ*. Detailed plans for the footing construction should be submitted for review and approval to Alexandria Archaeology to insure continued protection.
- R-2 Contact Alexandria Archaeology (703-838-4399) two weeks prior to any ground disturbing activity (such as coring, grading, filling, vegetation removal, undergrounding utilities, pile driving, landscaping and other excavations as defined in Section 2-151 of The Zoning Ordinance) on this property. City archaeologists will provide on-site inspections to record significant finds.
- R-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.

R-4 The statement in R-2 and R-3 above must appear in the General Notes of the site plan so that on-site contractors are aware of the requirement.