

Docket Item #23
BAR CASE #2005-0067

BAR Meeting
April 20, 2005

ISSUE: Alterations

APPLICANT: John Robinson by Paul Davis Restoration and Remodeling

LOCATION: 211 Ramsey Alley

ZONE: CD/Commercial

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Therefore, Staff recommends approval of the replacement shutters and deferral of the front (south) and east side replacement windows for restudy.

I. ISSUE:

The applicant is requesting approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness to replace nine windows, install iron security bars on one rear window and install operable wood shutters and hardware on the two story wood and frame structure located in Ramsay Alley.

Windows

The existing windows are single glazed true divided light windows in a variety of multi-light configurations and types, including double hung and single and double casements. The applicant proposes to replace the sash and frames of nine of the twelve existing windows. The three six-over-six double hung windows in the first story front of the brick section will be retained. The proposed replacement windows are wood simulated divided light double glazed windows with a 7/8" muntin bar made of a composite wood material manufactured by MW Windows. The sills will be composite wood while the rest of the frame and trim will be wood. Based on the quote order form, the following windows will be used in the following locations:

Front (south) elevation - The two second story windows in the brick section (currently double casements with 6 lights per sash) will be replaced with 9-light single casement windows. The one first story and one second story window in the frame section (currently six-over-six double hung) will be replaced with six-over-six double hung windows.

East side elevation - The first and second story windows (currently six-over-six double hung) will be replaced with six-over-six double hung windows.

Rear (north) elevation - The eastern window on the second story (currently a single casement with 4 lights) will be replaced with an awning window with four lights. The western window on the second floor (currently a double casement with six lights per sash) will be replaced with a single casement with 9 lights. The window on the first story (currently a double casement with 8 lights per sash) will be replaced with a double casement with 8 lights per sash.

Security bars

There are currently no security bars on any of the windows. The applicant proposes to install custom- made black wrought iron bars on one window on the rear (north) elevation. This first story window is nearly at grade and faces a parking lot. According to the applicant, the bars will "follow the lines of the muntin pattern."

Shutters

There are currently wood louvered shutters on the frame portion of the building. The applicant proposes to replace these shutters with solid wood panel shutters. The new shutters will be operable and will be painted a dark green color (Black Forest Green by Benjamin Moore). New cast iron hinges and hold backs will be installed.

The building is located on Ramsay Alley. It is set back from the alley edge by approximately 20' and partially obscured by the adjacent structure at the rear of 113 North Fairfax Street. A portion of the front (south) and the entirety of the east side are visible from the alley. The rear (north) elevation is partially visible from Fairfax Street, looking through the private parking lot adjacent to 115 North Fairfax Street. However, the windows are located in a portion of the rear wall that is not visible from the right-of-way and thus are not under the Board's purview.

II. HISTORY:

211 Ramsay Alley is a two story brick and wood frame building. It was probably constructed ca. 1796-1797 as part of 115 North Fairfax Street which was built by Guy Atkinson as residences according to Ethelyn Cox in Alexandria Street by Street (p.39). It is likely that the brick section of this building served an ancillary use to the main house, for example, as a kitchen. Staff inspection of the property circa 1997 pointed to an 18th century date of construction. The frame addition on the original brick section appears to date from the early part of the 19th century. According to notes for the Alexandria Tour of Old Homes in 1953, one of the mantels on the first floor was removed from 115 North Fairfax Street and installed in this building.

In 1994, the Board approved the installation of a wood fence on the south property line of 211 Ramsay Alley (BAR Case #94-0129, 9/21/1994). In 1997, the Board approved alterations to the front stoop and brick wall at 211 Ramsay Alley (BAR Case #97-0147, 9/21/1994).

III. ANALYSIS:

The proposed alteration complies with the zoning ordinance requirements.

As explained above, the proposed alterations at the rear of 211 Ramsay Alley, including replacement sash, frames, trim and security bars, will not be visible from the public right-of-way and thus is not under the Board's purview.

Staff believes the proposed operable wood panel shutters are appropriate.

On the other hand, Staff does not believe the replacement window sash, frames and trim proposed for the front (south) and east side of the building is appropriate. The building dates to the late 18th century. Although the windows are well removed from the public way, Staff believes that for a building of this early period, every effort should be made to retain the existing windows and, if replacement is necessary, the replacement windows should replicate the historic in every way. The proposed replacement windows are simulated divided light and utilize composite materials in the muntin bars and sills. In addition, the replacement windows proposed for the front of the brick section do not match the historic in configuration or type. The existing windows are double casements with 6 lights per sash and the proposed replacements will be 9-light single casement windows.

Staff believes the replacement windows at the front (south) and east should be deferred for restudy to consider either retention of the existing window or replacement windows that more closely replicate the existing.

IV. STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Therefore, Staff recommends approval of the replacement shutters and deferral of the front (south) and east side replacement windows for restudy.

CITY DEPARTMENT COMMENTS

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

Code Enforcement:

C-1 A construction permit is required for the proposed project.

C-2 Security bars shall comply with USBC 702.4 and R310.4 pertaining to emergency escape.

Historic Alexandria:

Generally the use of security bars/grillwork in not desirable. Are all the windows wood?