

Docket Item #11
BAR CASE# 2005-0082

BAR Meeting
May 4, 2005

ISSUE: New garage/workshop
APPLICANT: Frank Conner
LOCATION: 607 N Columbus Street
ZONE: RB/Residential

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends deferral of the application for restudy. In the alternative, if the Board decides to approve the application Staff recommends the following conditions:

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

Note: Docket item #10 must be approved before this item may be considered.

I. ISSUE:

The applicant is requesting approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness for the construction of a detached one story garage and workshop at 607 North Columbus Street. The proposed garage measuring approximately 769 square feet will be located at the rear of the property facing a public alley. The garage extends across the rear of 605 and 607 North Columbus Street, approximately 38' and extends 22' into the rear yard. Although only one story in height, the structure is approximately 19' at its highest point. 605 North Columbus Street is currently a vacant lot used by the property owners as open space and garden.

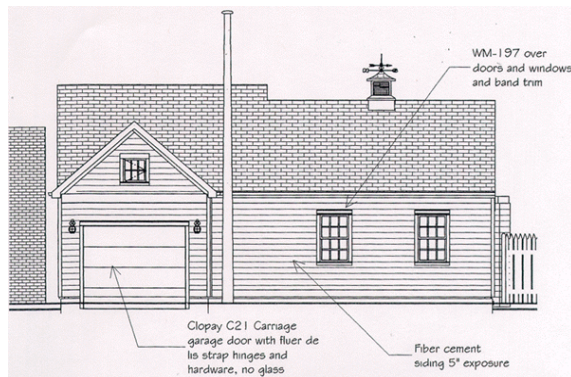


Figure 1 East (alley) elevation

The garage will be clad in fiber cement siding with a 5" exposure and will have a synthetic slate shingle roof. The alley elevation includes a carriage style garage door constructed of steel with a composite overlay. According to the manufacturer information, the door will have a wood grain texture. The door will have decorative fleur de lis hinges and hardware. The door is flanked by two lights. No information has been provided on the proposed light fixtures. A small 6 light casement window will be located above the garage doors. Two six-over-six double hung

windows will also be located on the alley elevation. No information has been provided on the material of the windows. A 26" square cupola will be located on the northern section of the garage. A weathervane will be located on top of the cupola. Specific details on the design of the cupola and weathervane have also not been provided.

The west elevation of the garage includes three six-over-six windows and a door with six lights. A porch 5' in width and 20' in length will be located on the northern end of this elevation. The porch is supported by three 12" in diameter wood columns. The north elevation of the shed does not

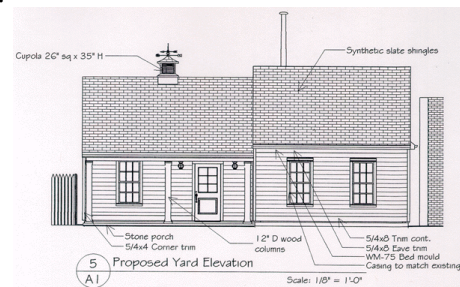


Figure 2 West elevation

include any variation.

The garage will be visible from North Columbus Street, Pendleton Street, North Washington Street and from the public alley located at the rear of the property.



Figure 3 View from Pendleton Street



Figure 4 View from public alley

II. HISTORY:

As mentioned in docket item #10 the house at 607 North Columbus Street is a late 19th century two story Italianate-style row house.

III. ANALYSIS:

On April 14, 2005, the BZA granted side yard variances to build the proposed garage at the rear property line (BZA Case#2005-0011). The proposed demolition of the existing shed and construction of a new garage comply with zoning ordinance requirements.

Garages are, by definition, utilitarian structures that are simple in design and execution. Staff believes that the proposed garage is overly large for a utilitarian structure. The 769 square foot footprint is as large as many houses within the historic district. In this case the proposed footprint of the garage is more than half the size of the existing house, which with the exclusion of the covered porches, is approximately 850 square feet. The garage, spanning two lots is 18' wider than the historic house. That being said, the garage does face an alley and is proposed to be located adjacent to a commercial building of approximately the same width.

The *Design Guidelines* state that “accessory structures should complement, not compete with, the architecture of the main building” (Accessory Structures - Page 2). In addition, accessory structures are often constructed of simpler materials. In the opinion of Staff, the suburban design of the garage, with its cupola and weathervane, and fleur de lis hardware does not complement the late 19th century house. Staff does note however that the only real connection between the main house and the garage will be from North Columbus Street with the view of the more decorative half of the garage blocked by the house.

Staff has no objections to the use of fiber cement siding which meets the following adopted policy of the Board.

1. That fiber cement siding not be installed on an historic structure;
2. That historic materials should not be removed to install fiber cement siding;

3. That fiber cement siding replace other artificial or composite siding;
4. That the nails not show in the installation of the siding;
5. That smooth, beaded siding be installed; and,
6. That BAR Staff may administratively approve the installation of fiber cement siding on *non-historic* buildings (those constructed in 1975 or later).

Staff is concerned by the lack of detail for the proposed garage. The manufacturer cut sheets requested by Staff upon submission have not been provided. Therefore, Staff is unable to recommend approval without detailed information on the windows, doors, lights and cupola.

IV. STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends deferral of the application for restudy. In the alternative, if the Board decides to approve the application, Staff notes the comments of Alexandria Archaeology and recommends that they be included as a condition.

CITY DEPARTMENT COMMENTS

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

Code Enforcement:

- F-1 The applicant shall ascertain whether the alley is public or private. For fire separation distances concerning interior lot lines when located next to alleys, the lot line shall be measured from the edge of the alley lot line for private alleys and from the centerline of the alley for public alleys. See C-1 below for fire separation requirements.
- C-1 All exterior walls within 5 feet from an interior property line shall have a fire resistance rating of 1 hour, from both sides, with no openings permitted within the wall. As alternative, a 2 hour fire wall may be provided. This condition is also applicable to skylights within setback distance.
- C-2 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-3 Roof drainage systems must be installed so as neither to impact upon, nor cause erosion/damage to adjacent property.
- C-4 A soils report must be submitted with the building permit application.
- C-5 New construction must comply with the current edition of the Uniform Statewide Building Code (USBC).
- C-6 Construction permits are required for this project. Plans shall accompany the permit application that fully detail the construction as well as layouts and schematics of the mechanical, electrical, and plumbing systems.
- C-7 Permission from adjacent property owners is required if access to the adjacent properties is required to complete the proposed construction. Otherwise, a plan shall be submitted to demonstrate the construction techniques utilized to keep construction solely on the referenced property.
- C- A wall location plat prepared by a land surveyor is required to be submitted to this office prior to requesting any framing inspection.

Office of Historic Alexandria:

“New building has a very ‘suburban’ look, needs to be more appropriate to this area. (weathervane, etc.).”

Archaeology:

- F-1 During the Civil War, this block was the location of the Washington Street Corral, a Union army facility. While there were no known structures on this lot, the property has

the potential to yield archaeological resources that could provide insight into military activities in Alexandria during the war.

- 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.