

Docket Item #6  
BAR CASE #2005-0095

BAR Meeting  
May 18, 2005

**ISSUE:** Alterations

**APPLICANT:** Michael & Chantal Jennings

**LOCATION:** 10 Potomac Court

**ZONE:** RM/Residential

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## **STAFF RECOMMENDATION:**

Staff recommends approval of the application as submitted.

### **I. ISSUE:**

The applicant is requesting approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness to replace the existing wood fence at the rear of the property facing Union Street with a brick wall. The wall will match the height of the existing wood fence. It will be approximately 6'8" high at the north end where it joins the neighboring brick wall at a right angle and will rise in a series of steps to a height of 7'4" at the south end. There will be a wood gate with a curved top at the south end of the property. The top of the wall will be capped with a rowlock course of brick.

The wall will be visible from Union Street and Windmill Hill Park. However, the substantial holly hedge that screens much of the existing fence from public view is assumed to remain and will likewise obscure much of the proposed wall.

### **II. HISTORY:**

10 Potomac Court is one of several lots with circa 1967 row houses facing on Potomac Court and elevated rear yards overlooking Union Street at the eastern end of the Wilkes Street Railroad Tunnel. The only record of prior BAR review that Staff could locate for 10 Potomac Court was for an unpainted cedar fence to replace an existing fence (BAR Case #87-200, 11/18/1987). This may be the permit for the existing fence. More recently, several neighboring properties have requested approval to replace the wood fences at the rear of their properties. In 2002, 6 Potomac Court was approved to replace its wood fence with a 6' high metal picket fence (BAR Case #2002-171, 7/17/2002) and in 2001, 8 Potomac Court was approved to replace its wood fence with a 6' high wood fence (BAR Case #2001-250, 11/7/2001).

### **III. ANALYSIS:**

Section 7-202(B)(2) of the zoning ordinance permits closed and open fences that do not exceed 6' in height in any required yard except a front yard. Section 7-202(C) of the zoning ordinance permits the BAR to waive or modify the fence rules if they find the proposed fence will be architecturally appropriate for the district. The proposed alterations comply with zoning ordinance requirements if BAR waives the height restriction.

Staff has no objection to the proposed brick wall. It is compatible with the district in its design and materials and is similar to the wall at the adjacent property located at 409 South Union Street. Staff acknowledges that the introduction of a brick wall in what was once a consistent line of wood fences will create more of an appearance of variety in the long fence line that separates the rear yards of the Potomac Court houses from the park. However, the proposed wall does conform to the Design Guidelines and much of the appeal of the Old and Historic District lies in its abundant variety. Moreover, the Board already approved a metal fence at 6 Potomac Court.

As noted above, the zoning requirement that fences not exceed 6' in height can be waived by the Board of Architectural Review if it determines that it is appropriate for the district. Staff

believes the height of the proposed fence is appropriate. It matches the height of the existing fence and is compatible with the heights of the wall to the north and fences to the south.

**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 New construction must comply with the current edition of the Uniform Statewide Building Code (USBC).
- C-2 Construction permits are required for this project.
- C-3 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.

### Historic Alexandria:

No comment.