

Docket Item #8
BAR CASE #2005-0089

BAR Meeting
June 1, 2005

ISSUE: Addition
APPLICANT: Lois Clark by James Noel
LOCATION: 605 South Saint Asaph Street
ZONE: RM/Residential

BOARD ACTION, MAY 4, 2005: The Board combined the discussion of docket item #'s 15 & 16. On a motion by Dr. Fitzgerald, seconded by Mr. Smeallie the Board deferred the applications for restudy. The vote on the motion was 6-0.

REASON: The Board believed that the proposed addition was too large and should be scaled back. The Board suggested a hyphen for the addition or pushing the addition into the rear yard. Additionally, members believed that the addition would compromise the historic fabric of the historic district.

SPEAKERS: James Noel, project architect, spoke in support
Harvey Lester, 603 S. St. Asaph Street, spoke in opposition
Edith Mayo, 607 S. St. Asaph Street, spoke in support

Update: At the public hearing of May 4th the Board deferred this application for restudy believing that a smaller addition was appropriate. In response to the comments of the Board the overall height of the addition has been reduced and other changes made as described below.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends approval of the application with the following conditions:

1. That the nails not show in the installation of the fiber cement siding; and,
2. That the following statement appear in the General Notes of the site plan so that on-site contractors are aware of the requirement:

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.

NOTE: Docket item #7 must be approved before this docket item may be considered.

I. ISSUE:

The applicant is requesting approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness for a new two story addition at the rear of the existing main block. The house currently has 1039 gross square feet of space on the first and second stories. The proposed addition will have 692 gross square feet. However, as it is replacing an existing 190 square foot addition, it is effectively adding only 502 gross square feet of new area.

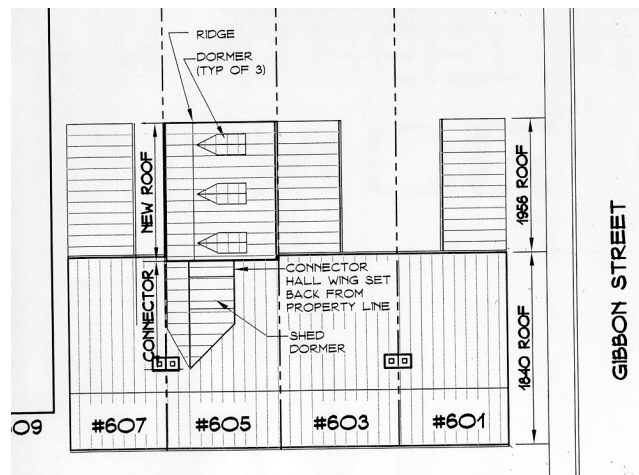


Figure 1 - Roof plan showing proposed addition at 605 S. St. Asaph Street

The addition will be constructed from lot line to lot line and will be 20.9' in length. It will have a catslide roof set perpendicular to the gable of the main block. At its highest point, the addition will be 23'2 3/4" high, approximately 9" lower than the highest point on the existing main block. However, the catslide roof which slopes south to north has reduced the overall height of the addition by approximately 5'. In addition the height has been further reduced by lowering a section just at the rear of the main historic block to appear as a hyphen. This section is

approximately 1' lower than the section immediately to the west. The addition will have a standing seam metal roof to match that of the main block. The roof will have a built-in gutter system with downspouts located at either corner of the rear (west) facade. The addition will be clad in 6" smooth Hardiplank siding painted to match the front facade. The windows and doors will be aluminum clad simulated divided light windows by Weathershield or Loewen. The north and south side elevations of the addition will be blind as they are located on the property line. There will be a series of three small dormers in the north slope of the new roof. A shed dormer type with two four-over-four wood windows will be installed in the north face of the roof of the new addition at the east end.

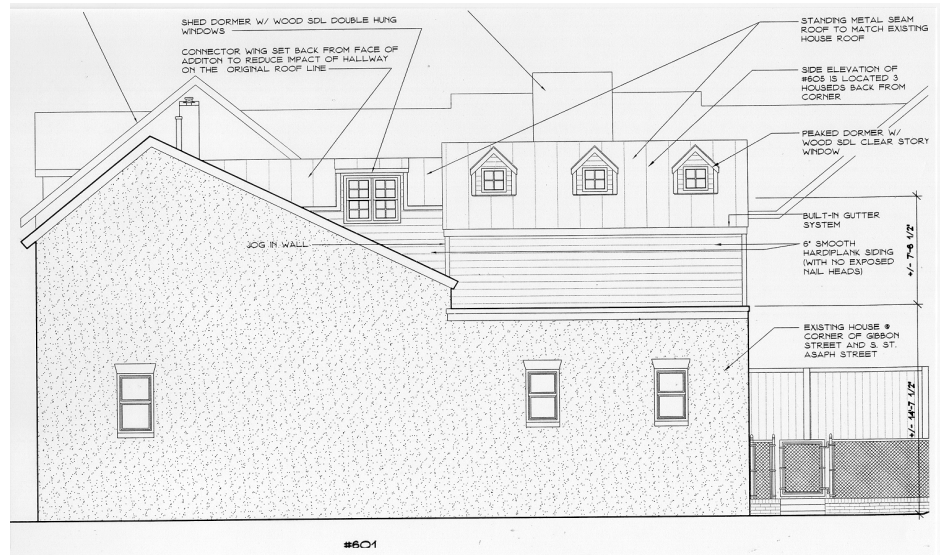


Figure 2 - North side elevation as viewed from Gibbon Street

The rear elevation will have a pair of multi-light french doors on the left side of the first story and a pair of small four-light casement windows to the right. Centered above these in the second story will be two sets of paired four-over-four windows.

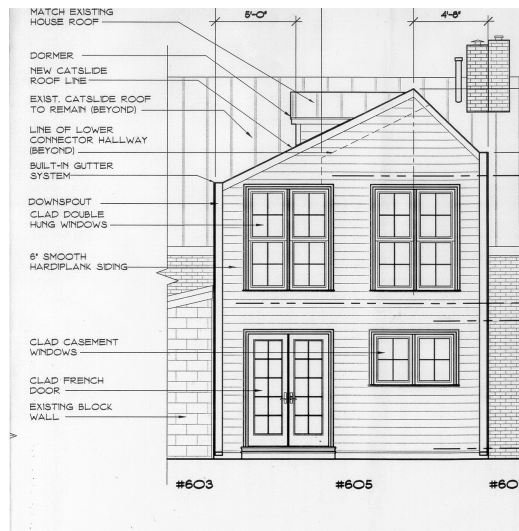


Figure 3 - Rear elevation

The addition will be approximately the same length as the additions to either side, at 603 and 607 South Saint Asaph Street. As the proposed addition will extend to the north lot line, it will block existing windows in the south wall of the rear addition at 603 South Saint Asaph Street. The full-width addition will block the passageway that currently leads from the front of 605 South Saint Asaph Street to the rear yard. The applicant's architect has discussed these matters with Code Enforcement.

The HVAC units will be located at grade at the rear of the addition.

The plans do not include any alterations to the front facade.

The existing house is visible from St. Asaph Street and from Gibbon Street. The rear addition will be readily visible beyond the first three houses in the row from Gibbon Street.

II. HISTORY:

As discussed in docket item #7, the two story, two bay brick house is one in a row of four houses built together in the mid-19th century (Historic Alexandria Street by Street, p. 166). The houses were extensively renovated in 1956.

The Board approved demolition and a new rear addition at 609 South St. Asaph Street (BAR Case #2003-0137 & 0138, July 16, 2003). This large addition is visible behind the 601-607 South St. Asaph Street row when viewed from Gibbon Street. the Board has struggled with a number of similar cases in recent years involving additions to small early and mid-19th century house in rows and has ultimately recommended approval of the demolition and caspulation: 508 North Columbus Street (BAR Case#s 2005-0002 & 0003, 3/16/2005); 510 North Columbus Street (BAR Case #s 2004-0067 & 0068, 7/21/2004 & 8/18/2004); 128 North Payne Street (BAR Case #s 2004-0094 & 0095, 7/21/2004 & 8/18/2004); and, 132 North Payne Street (BAR Case #s 20003-0119 & 0120, 10/15/2003). However, Staff notes that these additions are not as highly visible as this proposed addition.

III. ANALYSIS:

The proposed revised design for the addition complies with the zoning ordinance requirements.

Staff continues to finds the impact of the proposed addition on the existing historic main block and the row of four to be unfortunate. Staff believes that the reduced height is to be applauded, however, the addition will appear to loom over the row, even with the large addition at 609 South Saint Asaph Street as a backdrop. However, there appears to be little in the way of effective alternatives. A flounder form addition with a single pitch roof rising from north to south might help lower the perception of height on the north side, which is visible from Gibbon Street, but would create a taller wall on the south side. The lack of a more positive design solution is even more unfortunate considering that others in the row are likely to request similar additions if this addition is approved.

Staff reluctantly recommends approval of the proposed revised addition.

With respect to the use of fiber cement siding, the Board has adopted the following policy :

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; and,
5. That smooth siding be installed.
6. That BAR Staff may administratively approve the installation of fiber cement siding on *non-historic* buildings (those constructed in 1975 or later).
approved

Thus the use of fiber cement on the new addition is clearly appropriate. The plan notes specify that the siding will be smooth rather than wood grained. Thus the only condition to be met is #4, that the nails not show in the installation of the siding.

While the *Design Guidelines* generally discourage the use of clad windows and doors (Windows - Page 2), Staff believes they will be acceptable in this case. The rear elevation of the addition will not be readily visible and will be viewed from a great distance.

Staff notes the comments of Alexandria Archeology and recommends that they be included as a condition of the approval.

IV. STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends approval of the application with the following conditions:

1. That the nails not show in the installation of the fiber cement siding; and,
2. That the following statement appear in the General Notes of the site plan so that on-site contractors are aware of the requirement:

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.

CITY DEPARTMENT COMMENTS

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

Code Enforcement:

- F-1 The alley passageway parcel shall be combined with the applicant's parcel and recorded in the land records prior to permit application.
- 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 Alterations to the existing structure must comply with the current edition of the Uniform Statewide Building Code (USBC).
- C-7 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-8 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-9 A wall location plat prepared by a land surveyor is required to be submitted to this office prior to requesting any framing inspection.

Historic Alexandria:

“Where is the source for the round window? Are all windows wood?”

Alexandria Archeology:

- F-1 Ethelyn Cox's *Historic Alexandria, Street by Street, A Survey of Existing Early Buildings* indicates that the house on this lot was probably constructed in the mid-1800s. Tax records from 1810 and 1850 indicate the presence of free African American households on this block, but the exact addresses are not known. The property therefore has the potential to yield archaeological resources that could provide insight into life in one of Alexandria's 19th-century African American neighborhoods.
- 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.