

Docket Item #4  
BAR CASE #2005-0131

BAR Meeting  
July 6, 2005

**ISSUE:** Accessibility alterations  
**APPLICANT:** Virginia Theological Seminary  
**LOCATION:** 3737 Seminary Road  
**ZONE:** R-20/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 for the installation of new entry steps and an accessibility ramp in the front of The Seminary Chapel at the Virginia Theological Seminary. The steps will be oriented east west and lead directly to the front entrance and will be granite with simple metal handrails. The ramp will run north to south across the front of the building a total distance of approximately 445'6" with a total rise of approximately 30". The ramp will be constructed of brick wall to match the Chapel with simple metal hand railings.

**II. HISTORY:**

The Seminary Chapel is individually listed as a 100 Year Old Building under Ordinance 2180. They are part of the Virginia Theological Seminary, established 1823, on a site purchased in 1827.

The Seminary Chapel is a brick building constructed in a Gothic Revival style in 1879.

Last year, the Board approved an accessibility ramp for Meade Hall (BAR Case #2004-0032, 3/17/04). In 1991 the Board approved an elevator tower design and ramp for accessibility for the adjacent Aspinwall Hall and Bohlen Hall which are also individually designated 100 Year Old Buildings (BAR Case #91-225, 10/16/91). Subsequently in 1994, the Board approved alterations to these plans for balusters and handrails (BAR Case #94-073, 5/18/94).

**III. ANALYSIS:**

The accessibility improvements comply with zoning ordinance requirements.

The new ramp will replace an existing exterior metal wheelchair lift.

In the opinion of Staff, the new stairs and ramp are appropriate and similar to the accessibility improvements at the Bohlen-Aspinwall-Meade complex that have been approved by the Board during the last several years. The design of the ramp is simple and will not detract from the general architectural character of the Chapel. Staff recommends approval as submitted.

**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 The handicapped ramp must comply with the requirements of USBC 1003.3.4. The front approach to the exterior door must comply with the landing requirements of USBC 1003.4.5. Handrails must comply with USBC 1003.3.4.7.
- C-2 New construction must comply with the current edition of the Uniform Statewide Building Code (USBC).
- C-3 Alterations to the existing structure must comply with the current edition of the Uniform Statewide Building Code (USBC).
- C-4 Construction permits are required for this project. Plans shall accompany the permit application that fully detail the construction.

### Historic Alexandria:

No comment.