

Docket Item #16
BAR CASE #2005-00130

BAR Meeting
July 6, 2005

ISSUE: After-the-fact painting previously unpainted masonry

APPLICANT: Linda Cole

LOCATION: 727 South Pitt Street

ZONE: RM/Residential

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends denial of the application with the additional direction to the applicant to remove the paint that has been applied to the front of the building within 90 days.

I. ISSUE:

The applicant is requesting after-the-fact approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness for painting previously unpainted masonry at 727 South Pitt Street. The applicant has recently painted the front elevation of the house and is also proposing to paint the rear elevation.

II. HISTORY:

The two story brick dwelling at 727 South Pitt Street was constructed around 1941 as part of the Yates Gardens development.

III. ANALYSIS:

The alterations comply with zoning ordinance requirements.

This application is before the Board as a result of a citation issued by Staff for painting the unpainted brick on the building.

The *Design Guidelines* are explicit on the issue of painting unpainted masonry. They state that “as a general rule, brick and masonry buildings should not be painted” and that “the Boards strongly discourage the painting of a previously unpainted masonry surface.” Underlying this principle is the belief that red brick buildings are one of the chief distinguishing characteristics of the historic district.

The Board has reviewed several after-the-fact requests for painting previously unpainted masonry. Most recently, the Board reviewed a case for 715 Princess Street where all but one side of the building had been previously painted. The Board approved the after-the-fact painting of the remaining wall (BAR Case #2005-0100, 5/18/05). In several other cases, the Board has denied the painting and ordered that the paint be removed. Examples of this include 305 Duke Street. (BAR Case #2002-0140, 6/19/02), 428 S Washington Street (BAR Case # 2001-00312, 1/16/02), and 629 South Fairfax Street (BAR Case #98-0093, 6/17/8).

Generally in cases where Staff supports the painting of masonry, there have either been substantial alterations to the building or the brick is mismatched or of poor quality. The majority of the houses on this block face are unpainted. Staff notes that at the time of construction, select houses within the Yates Gardens development were painted white. In this case, the building at 727 South Pitt Street was not one of the original painted buildings and was not intended to be painted.

IV. STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Therefore, Staff recommends denial of the application with the additional direction to the applicant to remove the paint that has been applied to the building within 90 days.

CITY DEPARTMENT COMMENTS

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

Code Enforcement:

No comment

Historic Alexandria:

“No comment”