

Docket Item #27
BAR CASE# 2005-0150

BAR Meeting
July 6, 2005

ISSUE: Permit to Demolish and Capsulate

APPLICANT: Douglas and Grace Marie Turner by Stephanie Dimond

LOCATION: 415 Wolfe Street

ZONE: RM/Residential

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends approval of the application as submitted.

Note: This docket item requires a roll call vote.

I. ISSUE:

The applicant is requesting approval of a Permit to Demolish portions of the freestanding residential townhouse at 415 Wolfe Street. Those portions to be demolished and capsulated include the existing front porch on the east side of the main house for the construction of a larger front porch and a section of the east elevation of the addition facing the pool to allow the installation of French doors.

II. HISTORY:

The residential structure at 415 Wolfe Street is a freestanding two story brick flounder center hall plan townhouse whose nucleus dates from ca.1788 according to Ethelyn Cox in *Alexandria Street by Street* (p.199). The east wing and loggia were largely re-worked by Ward Brown in 1935. Brown was a prominent local who had been classically trained in Paris as an architect. Brown had been responsible for the 1930 proposal for the restoration of the 100 block of Prince Street that served as an early impetus for the renovation of private buildings in Old Town. He was the first appointed architect member of the Old and Historic Alexandria District Board of Architectural Review when it was first established in 1946.

III. ANALYSIS:

In considering a Permit to Demolish/Capsulate, the Board must consider the following criteria set forth in the Zoning Ordinance, §10-105(B):

- (1) Is the building or structure of such architectural or historical interest that its moving, removing, capsulating or razing would be to the detriment of the public interest?
- (2) Is the building or structure of such interest that it could be made into a historic house?
- (3) Is the building or structure of such old and unusual or uncommon design, texture and material that it could not be reproduced or be reproduced only with great difficulty?
- (4) Would retention of the building or structure help preserve the memorial character of the George Washington Memorial Parkway?
- (5) Would retention of the building or structure help preserve and protect an historic place or area of historic interest in the city?
- (6) Would retention of the building or structure promote the general welfare by maintaining and increasing real estate values, generating business, creating new positions, attracting tourists, students, writers, historians, artists and artisans, attracting new residents, encouraging study and interest in American history, stimulating interest and study in architecture and design, educating citizens in American culture and heritage, and making the city a more attractive and desirable place in which to live?

The front porch clearly pre-dates 1935 because it is shown on Ward Brown's plans for the addition of that date, however, a larger front porch is depicted on the Sanborn Fire Insurance Map of 1931. Therefore, the current front porch appears to have been constructed in the early 1930s.

The east elevation of the 1935 addition has obviously been reworked in the late 20th century because the type of windows that have been installed were not available until that date.

It is the conclusion of Staff that the areas proposed to be demolished all date from the mid-to-late 20th century. Based upon this, it is the opinion of Staff that none of the criteria are met and that the Permit to Demolish should be approved.

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 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.

Office of Historic Alexandria:

This changes the entire facade and puts a large porch with railings into an area which was far simpler.