

Docket Item #14
BAR CASE #2005-0159

BAR Meeting
July 20, 2005

ISSUE: Addition and alterations

APPLICANT: Amanda Lenk and Boyd Walker

LOCATION: 922 Cameron and 119 North Patrick Street

ZONE: RM/Residential

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends deferral of the application for restudy.

In the alternative, if the Board determines to approve the application, Staff recommends the following conditions:

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; and,
2. The above statement must appear in the General Notes of all site plans so that on-site contractors are aware of the requirement.

NOTE: Docket item #?? must be approved before this docket item can be considered.

DISCUSSION:

ISSUE:

The applicant is seeking approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness for construction of a two level porch and enclosure on the Patrick Street side elevation of the corner house located at 922 Cameron Street. The proposed new construction will create a narrow open porch at the first level of the house and an equally narrow but fully enclosed gallery at the second level.

The space to contain the new work measures 4' x 33' and is the recessed niche connecting the main block of the house facing Cameron St. and a service wing at the rear of the lot which may be an earlier addition. There is no fenestration on the west wall of the main block but there are four window openings on each level of the recessed wall, one of which on the second level has a sill at floor elevation and a solid panel below the bottom rail of the lower sash. There is a deeply projecting portion of the roof of this wing, supported on three large brackets, which terminates flush with the main wall plane at the street. Current exterior grade level in the recessed area is raised to the level of the expressed masonry water table on the adjoining blocks of the house and contained within an existing painted masonry wall.

As proposed, the basic composition consists of three fairly heavy posts, dividing the space into four equally spaced bays. The posts appear to rest upon the masonry wall at the first level, and rise to a 12" deep fascia at the second floor level. The posts are picked up at the second level and rise to a new 8" fascia which abuts the existing eave at the projecting roof. At the first level, the posts terminate at the fascia in simple brackets, but have no plinths. No plinths or brackets are shown on the second level. A three foot tall picket railing extends the full width of the porch at the lower level. On the upper level, the three main bays are further defined by three sets of 2/2 sash proportioned to complement the existing 2/2 sash throughout the side elevation of the building. There is a heavy sill detail, below which is shown a solid panel with raised trim, but no base. It is not known whether or not the sash are to be operable.

The net effect of this proposal upon the historic fabric of the house consists of changing two existing window openings to doors on the rear portion of the main block which currently face the

recessed area. Additionally, two new door openings are proposed on each level at the center of the wall.

HISTORY:

This house as built in its original configuration, is typical of many contemporary examples from the last decade of the 19th century.

ANALYSIS:

The proposed new construction will create an open porch of 132 square feet at the lower level, and 132 square feet of enclosed gallery at the second level. Proposed alterations and addition comply with zoning ordinance requirements.

As noted above, the existing context of the recessed area on the side elevation has evidence (roof, raised grade, former door opening at 2nd level) which suggests the distinct possibility that there had been some form of a porch/gallery on the house in the past. Whether or not there has been, the general concept of this proposal complies with the intent and overall sense of the BAR Guidelines for Porches, and the simple generic detailing as shown is generally compatible with and subordinate to the original architectural features. Staff therefore recommends that the proposal be approved in concept.

The request for new door openings in existing window openings is reasonable and will not significantly affect the visual or structural integrity of the original building. The request for new openings on the more visible long wall raises some questions about reversibility as well as proportional relationships between the openings and the new porch structural bays. The new opening at the second level would be nominally not visible as it would be behind the new glazed wall. But as noted, if there had been an opening at this level historically, is there any reason that it could not be re-opened, thus avoiding the further loss of historic fabric on a more visible part of the façade? At the first level, the new door as shown is centered on the wall panel, but eccentric with the middle post. While only slightly jarring visually, the apparently carefully replicated masonry detailing of the opening suggests an “original” opening. If this opening is needed, then it should be detailed to differentiate its origin, (*ie*, a flat lintel as opposed to the segmental arch as shown).

Despite Staff’s recommendation regarding the overall design, Staff does not believe that the application can be approved without specific detail and larger scale on all elements of the new porch including posts, brackets, windows and glass doors, masonry openings and relevant brick mold and other misc. trim, to ensure the final evolution of the concept will comply with both spirit *and* detail of the Guidelines.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Therefore, Staff recommends deferral of the application for restudy.

In the alternative, if the Board determines to approve the application, Staff recommends the following conditions:

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; and,

2. The above statement must appear in the General Notes of all site plans so that on-site contractors are aware of the requirement.

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 Alterations to the existing structure must comply with the current edition of the Uniform Statewide Building Code (USBC).
- C-3 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.

Historic Alexandria:

“This drastically alters the appearance of this facade. I do not support this change.”

Alexandria Archaeology:

- F-1 Tax records indicate the presence of a free African American household on this corner in 1850. It is therefore possible that this property could yield archaeological resources that could provide insight into the lives of free blacks in early 19th-century Alexandria.
- 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 all site plans so that on-site contractors are aware of the requirement.