

Docket Item#15
BAR CASE# 2005-0163

BAR Meeting
July 20, 2005

ISSUE: Alterations

APPLICANT: City of Alexandria/DGS

LOCATION: 1 Cameron Street

ZONE: CD/Commercial

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends approval of the application with the following conditions:

1. Gate A and Fence A be painted white to match the existing railings;
2. The circular elements be eliminated from Gate A; and,
3. That the lattice have a rectangular pattern.

I. ISSUE:

The applicant is requesting approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness for alterations to the waterfront behind the Torpedo Factory and Chart House Restaurant. The alterations include new fencing and gates in two areas of the waterfront to comply with US Coast Guard MARSEC Level II requirements and improve public safety.

A 6' tall solid board gate (Gate B) will be installed at the end of the walkway for the Cherry Blossom Boat entrance. New wooden lattice will be installed along the length of the deck above the walkway, to prevent individuals from jumping down to the ramp. The proposed gate and lattice will be left to weather to match the existing wood railings.

The second area, includes two 5' tall decorative metal gates (Gate A) attached to a simple metal picket fence. The fence will be attached to the outer edge of the two closest pilings and will be angled so that the gates are parallel to the floating dock. The fence and gates are proposed to be black.

II. HISTORY:

The public marina behind the Torpedo Factory Art Center was developed in the late 1980s.

In 2001, the Board approved a new ticket/information booth for the Potomac Riverboat Company (BAR Case #2001-0054, 9/5/01).

III. ANALYSIS:

The proposed gates and alterations comply with zoning ordinance requirements.

Staff is concerned about the effect the proposed fences and gates will have on the overall appearance of the waterfront. Applications for alterations should be compatible with other maritime and industrial elements in the immediate area of the waterfront. The Board has previously noted the importance of the waterfront as a place where visitors are introduced to historic Alexandria.

Staff is primarily concerned about the design of Gate A and Fence A. Staff believes that the use of an open style fence and gate is appropriate so that sight lines to the water are not obscured. However, Staff recommends that the gates be simplified to eliminate the circular elements from the top. The waterfront is currently comprised of a number of different fencing styles and materials and Staff believes that these decorative elements will present an additional incompatible element to the waterfront. Staff recognizes the need for security and suggests that the fence and gates be painted white to match the surrounding railings. By matching the color of the existing metal railings and using a softer color, Staff believes that the fence will be less

visually jarring. Staff also notes that the height of the fencing will not read as a 5' high wall as a result of the fencing being located on a lower deck.

Staff has no objections to the wooden gate (Gate B) at the end of the walkway to the Cherry Blossom. While Staff is concerned about the introduction of lattice screening at the waterfront, Staff believes that it is acceptable in this case. The lattice located at the end of the docks behind the Dock Master building will not be highly visible. Staff believes that leaving the lattice unpainted will help minimize the visibility of the lattice by blending into the surrounding railing and not shouting out to pedestrians. Staff believes that the lattice is reversible and could be restudied at a later date as part of a larger waterfront study.

IV. STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Therefore, Staff recommends approval of the application with the following conditions:

1. Gate A and Fence A be painted white to match the existing railings;
2. The circular elements be eliminated from Gate A; and,
3. That the lattice have a rectangular pattern

CITY DEPARTMENT COMMENTS

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

Code Enforcement:

C-1 A construction permit is required for the proposed project.

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).

Historic Alexandria:

“No comment”