

Docket Item #17
BAR CASE #2005-0185

BAR Meeting
September 7, 2005

ISSUE: Demolition and capsulation

APPLICANT: Thomas & Eileen Schultz

LOCATION: 707 South Lee Street

ZONE: RM/Residential

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends deferral of the application for restudy.

NOTE: This docket item requires a roll call vote.

I. ISSUE:

The applicant is requesting approval of a Permit to Demolish for demolition and infilling of portions 707 South Lee Street to accommodate a new two story side (north) addition and a rear (west) second floor addition. Detailed plans showing the full extent of the proposed demolition and encapsulation have not been provided.

The additions will be visible from South Lee Street through the passageway on the north side of the house and from Franklin Street.



II. HISTORY:

The precise date of construction is not known but several datable aspects of the house place it well within the last quarter of the 19th century. Paired houses were a fairly common form of modest dwelling construction in this time frame, and the relatively low pitch of the main house gable as well as that of the flounder wing further confirm the later probable date for the houses. Despite that, the simple but dignified facade, coupled with the traditional form, if not the proportions, of the uniquely local flounder wing, constitute an ensemble in the paired houses with a relatively high, and increasingly rare degree of integrity of the historic form.

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?

Staff believes that criteria #1 & #5 may be met in this case. However, the absence of detailed plans makes cogent analysis of this somewhat complex proposal very difficult to grasp completely. The principal concern in the absence of detailed plans is the degree to which historic fabric will be retained in the north wall of the two story flounder, as it is possible that the encapsulation by the addition could cover the complete removal of a substantial portion of the original wall. Reversibility of changes to historic fabric and architectural features remains a basic tenet of the Guidelines and Standards. A similar concern would apply to the west wall of the flounder at the second level.

A more basic concern is the character altering nature of the two story infill addition and the proposed new west elevation, both of which completely obscure, if not obliterate as well, any sense of the original flounder form, profile or proportions.

Staff recommends that re-study be applied to the issue of how best to obtain new space without endangering so much of the original form and material integrity of this house.

IV. STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends deferral of the application for restudy.

CITY DEPARTMENT COMMENTS

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

Code Enforcement:

- C-1 All exterior walls within 5 feet from an interior property line shall have a fire resistance rating of 1 hour, from both sides of the wall. As alternative, a 2 hour fire wall may be provided. This condition is also applicable to skylights within setback distance. Openings in exterior walls between 3 and 5 feet shall not exceed 25% of the area of the entire wall surface (This shall include bay windows). Openings shall not be permitted in exterior walls within 3 feet of an interior lot line.
- C-2 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.
- C-3 Roof drainage systems must be installed so as neither to impact upon, nor cause erosion/damage to adjacent property.
- C-4 New construction must comply with the current edition of the Uniform Statewide Building Code (USBC).
- C-5 Alterations to the existing structure must comply with the current edition of the Uniform Statewide Building Code (USBC).
- C-6 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.
- C-7 Permission from adjacent property owners is required if access to the adjacent properties is required to complete the proposed construction. Otherwise, a plan shall be submitted to demonstrate the construction techniques utilized to keep construction solely on the referenced property.
- C-8 A wall location plat prepared by a land surveyor is required to be submitted to this office prior to requesting any framing inspection..

Historic Alexandria:

“No comment.”

Alexandria Archaeology:

- F-1 According to Ethelyn Cox’s *Historic Alexandria, Street by Street, A Survey of Existing Early Buildings*, the house on this property probably dates to the mid-19th century. The lot therefore has the potential to yield archaeological resources that could provide insight

into residential life in early 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-3 The statements in R-1 above must appear in the General Notes of the site plan so that on-site contractors are aware of the requirement.