

Docket Item #18
BAR CASE # 2005-0186

BAR Meeting
September 7, 2005

ISSUE: Construction of a new two story addition at the side and the addition of a second story to an existing one story structure at the rear of the house

APPLICANT: Thomas & Eileen Schultz

LOCATION: 707 South Lee Street

ZONE: RM/Residential

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends deferral of this application for restudy.

NOTE: Docket item #17 must be approved before this docket item can be considered.

I. ISSUE:

The applicant is seeking approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness for the addition of a second floor to an existing one story structure at the rear or west elevation and the insertion of a two story addition between the existing two story ell and the north property line.

The frame house at 707 is paired with 709, each with a three bay façade and sidehall plan. A single bracketed cornice extends across the street façade and unites the two parts of the building. The party wall extended to the rear or west forms the ridge for the abutting two story flounder wings, each with a somewhat lower pitch than is typical for flounder wings from the earlier part of the 19th c. Both of the flounders have an additional one story space attached to the west elevation, topped by a shed roof.

The first part of this proposal would infill the second story level, creating in effect an extension of the flounder form. The second part of the proposal would then infill the 3’ wide passage along the north side of the flounder, abutting the now extended flounder for a length of 18’. This part of the project would be roofed with a 6/12 cross gable structure which would extend to the south to cover the second level infill of the flounder.

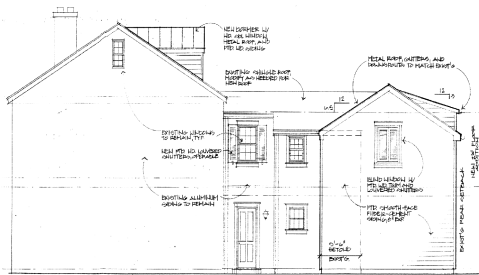


Figure 1 - Proposed north elevation

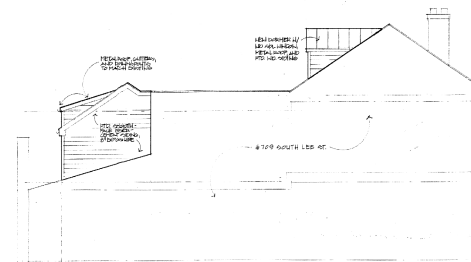


Figure 2 - Proposed south elevation

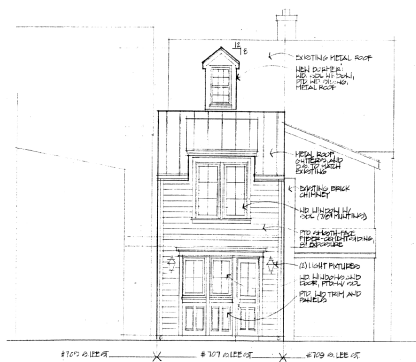


Figure 3 - Proposed west elevation

The newly created west elevation of conjoined flounder and north side addition would be defined by the west pitch of the cross gable roof, with a shed-roofed dormer containing a pair of what appear to be casement sash. The lower level of this new elevation would have a three bay element consisting of a pair of windows above panels and a single four light glazed door with matching panels, the whole within a simplified common entablature. A traditional gabled dormer is proposed for the west pitch of the gable roof on the main block of the house.

Visible surfaces of the new additions are to be clad in fiber cement siding and standing seam metal roofing. Windows and doors as well as casework is to be wood. A blind window opening with closed shutters is proposed for the exposed portion of the north elevation of the addition to relieve the scale of the otherwise large expanse of wall adjoining the property to the north.

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:

The second story infill would add about 72 sf and the two story addition another 116 sf. The two story infill would be visible from the street, but no elevation of this part of the structure was submitted for review. The proposed new west elevation spanning and combining the additions into a unified facade would be partially visible from Franklin Street.

A 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.

A guiding principle in additions to historic buildings has always been recognition of a descending hierarchy of subordinate massing, used to respect the original historic architecture, as well as to differentiate the new from the old. These important demarcations are blurred or non-existent in this proposal.

The architectural vocabulary of the new work is generally acceptable, as is the concept and detail of the proposed new dormer on the main house. It seems as if the modest amount of space gained by these rather substantial and largely inappropriate alterations (188 sf total) is acquired at relatively high cost to the integrity of the house. It is strongly suggested 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 this 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.