

Docket Item #19
BAR CASE #2005-0189

BAR Meeting
September 7, 2005

ISSUE: After-the-fact approval of a replacement door

APPLICANT: Robert & Rebecca Sutton

LOCATION: 713 South Pitt Street

ZONE: CD/Commercial

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends denial of the application with the condition that the inappropriate door be replaced within 30 days with a six panel wood door to match the original door.

I. ISSUE:

The applicant is requesting after-the-fact approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness for a replacement door at 713 South Pitt Street. The replacement door by Royal Mohagany is a wood door with a decorative center glass panel.

II. HISTORY:

The two story brick dwelling at 727 South Pitt Street was constructed around 1941 as part of the Yates Gardens development.

III. ANALYSIS:

The after-the-fact replacement door complies with zoning ordinance requirements.

The applicant purchased the subject property on March 30, 2005. Less than two weeks later, on April 12, 2005, BAR Staff mailed a postcard to the applicant welcoming them to the historic district and informing them that all exterior alterations to the property require BAR approval. The original door was replaced without approval and this application is before the Board as a result of a citation issued by Staff.

The applicant has provided Staff with seven photographs of similar doors. Of the examples provided, Staff notes that several of the buildings were not included within the historic district when the doors were installed, one example is outside of the historic district, and the remaining examples are appropriate to the Victorian style of the buildings.

On October 20, 2004, the Board of Architectural Review (BAR) heard a similar application for after-the-fact approval of a replacement front door at 1302 Michigan Avenue. The Board denied approval of the after-the-fact installation of the door because it believed that (1) it was architecturally incompatible with the style of the house; (2) that it altered a character defining feature of the house; and, (3) that it disrupted the unity found of the rowhouses in this the row. The new decorative wood and glass door was dissimilar to many of the other front doors in the development and contrasted significantly with the Cotswoldian architectural style of the development. The applicants appealed the decision to City Council who on February 12, 2005 upheld the BAR's decision to deny the door.

In this case, Staff also believes that the replacement door is inappropriate. The door is not compatible with the Colonial Revival style of the building and the Yates Gardens development. Exterior doors are considered a defining element of historic architectural styles of a building. In the case of 713 South Pitt Street, the original six panel wood door is a character defining feature of the building.

The replacement door does not comply with the recommendations of the *Design Guidelines* and should be removed.

IV. STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Therefore, Staff recommends denial of the application with the condition that the inappropriate door be replaced within 30 days with a six panel wood door to match the original door.

CITY DEPARTMENT COMMENTS

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

Code Enforcement:

No comments.

Historic Alexandria:

“An unfortunate style selection in terms of style & character of the building.”