Docket Item #18
BAR CASE# 2005-0213

BAR Meeting
September 21, 2005

ISSUE: New residential building

APPLICANT: John Sheridan by Stephanie Dimond

LOCATION: 634 South Pitt Street

ZONE: RM/Residential

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:
Staff recommends deferral for restudy. However, should the Board approve the application, the following should be included as a condition:

1. The statement below must appear in the General Notes of the site plan so that on-site contractors are aware of the requirement:

   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.

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

I. ISSUE:
The applicant is seeking approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness for construction of a three story, single family, detached, frame house to replace the existing two story frame house at 634 South Pitt Street. The proposed new house will have an "L"-shaped footprint with the long and narrow front block perpendicular to the street and the wider rear block at the back and extending toward the south property line. The front block will be 16' wide and 28' long and the rear block measuring 24' wide and 21' long. From the front, both blocks will appear to have a mansard roof. However, a broad gable will run east-west the length of the house, terminating just below the mansard at the front. This roof plane will be visible from the sides and rear.

At its highest points, the house will be 32' above grade. The roof will be clad in standing seam metal roofing. The walls will be clad in wood German siding. The width of the siding is not provided, but, based on the drawings, it will have a reveal of approximately 6". The trim will be wood. The windows will be true-divided-light wood windows. The foundation will be brick. It is assumed that the wood elements and siding will be painted, but no colors were provided.

Front (west) elevation:
The 16' wide front block will have three bays with a porch at the first story and two gabled dormers in the third story mansard. The shed roofed porch will rest on brick piers with lattice panels between the piers. The porch will be supported by square section wood posts with chamfered corners. The railing will be wood picket. The first floor of the house will have three full length doors opening onto the porch. The doors will have 8 lights. The door surrounds will consist of flat casing approximately 4" wide. The second story will have three two-over-two windows centered over the doors below. The window surrounds will also consist of flat casing approximately 4" wide with a projecting sill and a simple cap. The second story will terminate in a simple frieze band. The third story mansard will be approximately 7' high and will have two gable roofed dormers. Each dormer will have a four-light casement window.

Figure 1 Front elevation

An 8' wide section of the rear block will project beyond the back of front block on the south side of the house. This section will be set back 28' from the front wall of the house. There will be two ganged two-over-two windows with a multi-light transom above on the first floor and a pair of two-over-two windows on the second floor. As drawn these windows share a sill and apron but are otherwise separate. The third story mansard above this section will be approximately 6' high and will have a single gabled dormer in the center of the roof. Like those on the front block, this dormer will have a four-light casement window.

Rear (east) elevation:
This elevation is the full 24' in width and terminates in an asymmetrical gable roofline. In the first story, there will be two sets of fully glazed french doors with transoms above. The doors will be accessed by brick steps. The drawings are unclear, but it appears that the steps may be a single long set serving both doors. Centered above the doors in the second story will be two two-over-two windows. In the third story at the peak of the gable there will be a small, square two-over-two window.

Figure 2 Rear elevation

North side elevation:
This 49' long elevation has the gently sloping roof profile common to Alexandria's mansard front houses. The roof slopes from 32' at the front to 29' at the rear. Beyond this shed roof form is the intersecting gable that runs the length of the house. The north elevation has four bays. The basement level is lit by four four-light windows which are largely below grade and served by window wells. The first story has only two two-over-two windows located in the first or front and fourth or rear bay, at either end of the elevation. A small square four-light casement window is located in the second bay between the first and second stories. The second story has a two-over-two window located in the first, third and fourth bays. A small square four-light casement window is located in the second bay between the second and third stories. The third story has two square two-over-two windows located in the first and third bays.

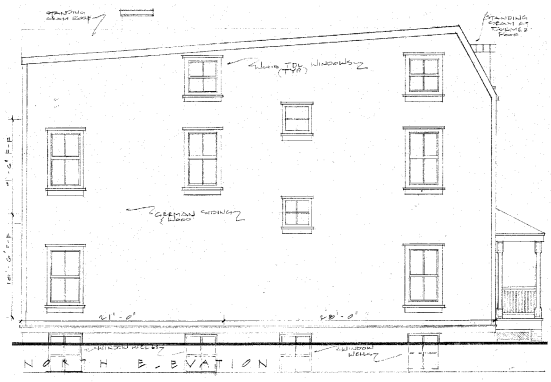

Figure 3 North elevation

Figure 4 South elevation

South side elevation:
The first 28' of this elevation consists of the front block with the second 21' being the rear block.

As on the north side, the roof line slopes from front to back in a shed roof form with the intersecting gable beyond. The front block elevation has two bays. The front or first bay has a two-over-two window in each of the three stories. The uppermost window is a smaller square window. The main entrance to the house is in the second bay. The entrance consists of a multi-paned door with full light sidelights and a simple flat surround. The door is accessed by a set of wood steps with wood rails and simple wood pickets. A two-over-two window is centered above the entrance in the second story. The rear block has two bays with an exterior brick chimney between the bays. There will be a four-light window in each bay at the basement level. These will be largely below grade and served by window wells. In each of the two bays on the first and second stories there will be a two-over-two window.

Site:
The application contains no information concerning changes to the site. However, the architect has confirmed that the submitted plans show the grade raised approximately 2' to meet the existing grade at the front walk. All fencing noted on the site plan appears to be existing. BAR approval would be required for any alteration to these elements The submitted materials do not indicate the location of the HVAC units. It is assumed that they will be located on the ground at the rear of the house. However, the applicant must advise Staff of the location to determine if further approvals are required.

The front and side elevations will be visible from Pitt Street. The rear elevation will be partially visible from Franklin Street and the public alley to the rear.

II. HISTORY:
As discussed in docket #17, the existing two story frame house on the property appears to date to circa 1891 and to have evolved from a 1 ½ story structure to its present form with two major building episodes, the first in 1920, raising the structure to a full 2 stories, and the second in 1938, adding a 2 story rear addition. A small frame store/dwelling was also located on the south side of the lot for a short period in the first half of the 20th century.

III. ANALYSIS:
The proposed new single family house complies with the zoning ordinance requirements. The subject property is zoned RM/residential and is a lot of record as of February 10, 1953. Section 3-1108(c)(2) of the zoning ordinance requires one side yard of at least 5 feet for lots 25 feet to 35 feet wide. The proposed project requires a plot plan submission to be filed with Transportation and Environmental Services.

Staff has no major objection to the proposed new house and believes that it conforms to the *Design Guidelines* for new residential construction. The proposed house appears to reference the architectural spirit, if not the size or utter simplicity, of the existing house. Thus it will provide some sense of visual continuity and acknowledgment of the history of the site. However, its form, materials and detailing draw more widely from the many frame vernacular Italianate houses constructed throughout Alexandria in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Although the majority of these houses were typically only two stories, the three story design of the proposed house appears organic and compatible with the style. The use of a mansard front is a common

motif for houses of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, although most were not of sufficient height to provide habitable space. The bulk of the three story mass is minimized by the use of the sloping or shed roof form as the primary roof form and the higher gable roof as a secondary and less visible form. While the architectural detailing is simple, apparently in deference to the existing house, it provides sufficient visual interest to enliven the facades. The proposed siting of the new house is dictated largely by zoning requirements, but seems both logical and attractive. Lastly, while the proposed new house is considerably larger than the existing, it does not appear out of scale for the setting. The adjacent masonry residences are fairly substantial. Portions of the residential complex at 628-632 ½ North Pitt Street are three stories high and are more than 3' higher than the proposed new house.

Staff does have the following concerns and comments;

1. The dormer proportions should be restudied to appear less squat;
2. The two dormers on the front section are not evenly spaced;
3. The windows on the second story of the front (west) elevation of the rear section should be fully ganged to correspond to the windows below;
4. The gutters and downspouts should be shown on the drawings;
5. The site plan should show the AC unit location; and,
6. Cut sheets and/or materials samples should be provided for the windows, doors, roofing, siding, bricks, exterior light fixtures and new fences or walls, if applicable.

Given these concerns, Staff believes that deferral for restudy is appropriate.

IV. STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends deferral of the application for restudy. However, should the Board approve the project, Staff recommends that the following condition be included in the approval:

1. The statement below must appear in the General Notes of the site plan so that on-site contractors are aware of the requirement:

   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.

CITY DEPARTMENT COMMENTS

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

Code Enforcement:

F-1 The height of the structure exceeds the height and area limitations of the IRC. The structure shall comply with requirements of the USBC.

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 A soils report must be submitted with the building permit application.

C-5 New construction 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.

C-9 Basement and third floor windows shall comply with emergency escape provisions of the USBC.

Historic Alexandria:
"No comment, if there is final approval for the demolition."

Alexandria Archeology:

F-1 The G.M. Hopkins insurance map indicates that structures were present on this block by 1877. The property therefore has the potential to yield archaeological resources that could provide insight into domestic activities in 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 the site plan so that on-site contractors are aware of the requirement.

C-3 New construction must comply with the current edition of the Uniform Statewide Building Code (USBC).

C-4 Alterations to the existing structure must comply with the current edition of the Uniform Statewide Building Code (USBC).

C-5 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.