

Docket Item #13
BAR CASE # 2005-0199

BAR Meeting
October 5, 2005

ISSUE: Selective Demolition of Exterior Features

APPLICANT: Jane Slatter

LOCATION: 811 Prince Street

ZONE: RM/Residential

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends approval of the application as submitted.

NOTE: This docket item requires a roll call vote.

I. ISSUE:

The applicant is seeking approval of a Permit to Demolish for the selective demolition of exterior features on the house and in the garden in order to prepare the site for renovation.

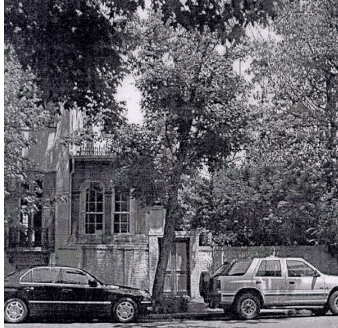


Figure 1 Front elevation



Figure 2 Garden wall facing Prince Street

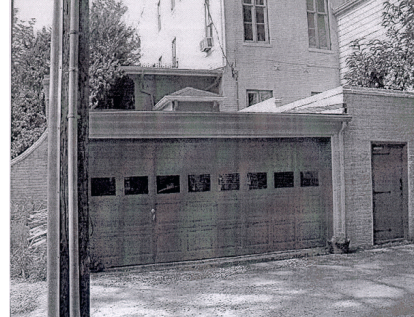


Figure 3 Existing garage door

The features proposed for removal include approximately 15' of the five foot tall masonry garden wall facing Prince Street, which includes the existing portal and piers, a large masonry stoop and stair at the entry to the east wing galleria from the garden, a small frame and glass hyphen connecting the kitchen with the garage at the rear and the existing double wide garage door facing the alley at the north side of the property. The shutters on the street elevation are to be removed as well.

II. HISTORY:

The house at 811 Prince was constructed between 1849 and 1855 by William Bayne. It consists of a three bay wide 3-1/2 story masonry block on the west side of the property which is topped by a strongly bracketed and deeply projecting cornice. The entry is recessed into a deep niche and is characterized by the unique transom which conforms to the segmental arch of the lintel. All window openings have segmental arched lintels as well. The two windows on the first level of the street elevation contain full length jib windows which open onto shallow balconies with iron rails set upon deep brackets.



The east side of the house faces a large garden and consists at the first level of a one story glazed wooden porch or galleria which has been converted to year round use. The octagonal center bay of the porch features round arch window openings which rest upon a paneled dado, while the flanking bays feature elliptical arched windows.

The house is one of the more notable Italianate examples in Alexandria and is distinguished by a very high degree of architectural and historical integrity.

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?

The items proposed for removal or demolition are documented to have been constructed or installed in the mid-20th century and do not contribute to the significance of the house and in fact detract from its integrity although not in irreversible ways.

The existing garden wall was built in the 1960's and is not a superb example of the mason's art and it obscures the rich detailing below the sill line of the porch structure. The masonry steps are intrusive and architecturally inappropriate in this context. The existing hyphen from the kitchen and the garage door are also from the same period and are not distinguished in design or craftsmanship. Similarly, the shutters were determined by noted architectural historian Calder Loth of Richmond to be of recent origin in openings which had no shutters historically.

In the opinion of the staff, none of the above criteria are met.

IV. STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends approval of the permit to demolish the features and elements described in the application as submitted.

CITY DEPARTMENT COMMENTS

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

Code Enforcement:

C-1 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.

Historic Alexandria:

“No comment.”