

Docket Item #'s 14 & 15  
BAR CASE # 2005-0200  
BAR CASE #2005-0201

BAR Meeting  
October 5, 2005

**ISSUE:** Exterior Alterations & a Waiver of Rooftop HVAC Screening

**APPLICANT:** Jane Slatter

**LOCATION:** 811 Prince Street

**ZONE:** RM/Residential

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**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:**

Staff recommends approval of the application as submitted.

**NOTE:** Docket item #13 must be approved before this item may be considered.

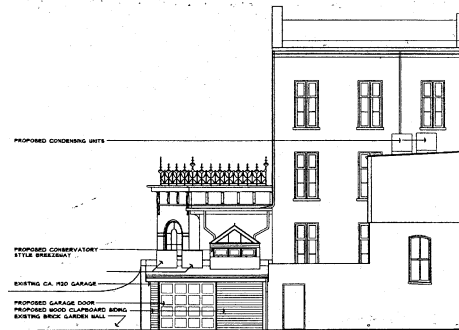
**I. ISSUE:**

The applicant is seeking approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness for exterior alterations to features which are not part of the historic fabric of this important architectural resource. The applicant is also seeking a Waiver of Rooftop HVAC Screening Requirement.

In the front part of the house, the features proposed for alteration include a new iron gate installed in a new opening in the existing masonry garden wall. The gate would be comprised of two leaves, with a solid decorative panel below and an open rail section above, hung from new masonry piers. The new gate would align with a new metal stair structure which will provide access to the east wing of the house from the garden. This light stair structure will be painted and is intended to replace the heavy masonry stair which currently obscures the architecture of the east wing porch or galleria. The approach to the stair will be enclosed behind a short section of new masonry wall perpendicular to the existing wall and will abut the wood framed east wing at the corner. This arrangement will permit the decorative panels below the sill of the east wing to become once again visually accessible from the street as they were historically, until enclosed in the 1960's.



**Figure 2** Proposed south elevation



**Figure 1** Proposed north elevation

At the rear of the property, the proposed alterations are comprised of a glass and wood enclosed breezeway/hyphen connecting the kitchen to the existing garage. It will have a metal roof and decorative embellishments which render it more compatible with the overall architectural context. The structure itself is only partially visible from the alley and not at all from the street.



**Figure 3** Proposed east elevation

On the existing garage, the former double wide opening will be partially infilled with masonry and a single leaf, paneled overhead door installed in the remaining space. This change would introduce a more compatibly scaled surface on the alley elevation. The roof of the garage would be the location for new a/c condensing units, partially hidden by the low parapet wall, visible from the alley but not at all from the street.

## **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:**

The proposed alterations comply with zoning ordinance requirements.

All of the areas proposed for renovation are documented to have been constructed or installed in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century and none contribute to the significance of the house. The proposed new construction in the front, consisting of the altered wall and gate, and the new entry stoop, are more appropriate and reversible design solutions which are compatible with the architectural character of the main house and its wing.

The only area which might be rethought is the short section of new masonry wall abutting the wood porch; in the absence of large scale details, this junction is a concern. The thought here is that a more appropriate response might be to consider the use of an open iron railing similar to that used on the new gate and entry stoop from the garden.

The proposed new hyphen is a modest but clearly contemporary infill structure which respects the original building fabric and design and which provides access to the garage in a more dignified and safe manner than was possible previously. The other alterations to the garage, an undistinguished modern "background" structure, will improve its appearance on the alley side. The proposed location of the a/c condensers on the roof of the garage will not detract in any way from the visual and architectural significance of the house and in fact this represents a very safe and practical alternative to mounting

them on the main house itself. The requirement for screening would add an unnecessary and intrusive architectural feature, calling more attention to this location than is warranted.

**IV. STAFF RECOMMENDATION:**

Staff recommends approval of the Certificate of Appropriateness as noted above; staff recommends approval of the Waiver of HVAC Screening.

## 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.
- C-2 Roof drainage systems must be installed so as neither to impact upon, nor cause erosion/damage to adjacent property.
- C-3 A soils report must be submitted with the building permit application.
- 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.”