

Docket Item #19
BAR CASE #2005-0222

BAR Meeting
October 5, 2005

ISSUE: Fencing
APPLICANT: Richard Metzger
LOCATION: 728 South Lee Street
ZONE: RM/Residential

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends approval of the application with the following conditions:

1. That the entire fence be a solid board on board wood fence;
2. That the fence be either painted or stained; and,
3. That the height of the fence be reduced to match the height of the neighboring fences.

I. ISSUE:

The applicant is requesting approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness to replace the existing rear wood fence with a new decorative metal fence at the rear property line and new wood fencing along both side property lines. The existing fence is a board on board fence with a decorative lattice top. The existing fence is higher than all of the other fences in the row. Although no height has been provided for the existing fence, the new fence will be six feet high. A new metal gate will also be installed along the rear property line.

The rear of the property is highly visible from Potomac Street.

II. HISTORY:

Based on historic map research, the house at 728 South Lee Street was constructed as part of a row of seven, two story brick faced cinderblock townhouses that were built between 1921 and 1941. According to oral tradition, the houses were built by Charles Hoof, a prominent local developer of the time.

The Board approved a rear addition to the property in 1988 (BAR Case #88-6, 1/6/88) and alterations to the front balcony in 1989 (BAR Case #89-208, 12/6/89).

III. ANALYSIS:

The proposed fence complies with zoning ordinance requirements.

Staff does not believe that the proposed open metal fence is appropriate for the rear yard. Rear fences are generally designed to provide a sense of privacy for property owners. In addition, closed type fences provide a visual barrier for the public so that tables and umbrellas, etc. are hidden from view.

As shown in the photographs submitted by the applicant, there is an existing metal fence along the Potomac Street sidewalk which is part of the Backyard Boats development. Although the proposed fence coordinates with this existing fence, Staff believes that it is more important to match the existing row of fences at the back of South Lee Street. The metal fence is well removed from the subject property and helps to define the boundaries of the Backyard Boats development which uses metal railings throughout.

Staff believes that it is important to maintain a sense of uniformity in the row. By introducing a new metal open type fence, there will be an awkward transition from wood to metal back to wood. Staff notes that there is one metal fence in the row but it is located at the northern end of the row and therefore does not disrupt the visual unity. Staff believes that the new fence should be a board on board wood fence. Staff also suggests that the wood fence be painted or stained as

recommended by the *Design Guidelines* (Fences - Page 3).

Staff suggests that the new replacement fence be lowered in height to match the neighboring fences. This will allow more air and light into the subject property and will create a uniform height across the entire row of fences.

IV. STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends approval of the application with the following conditions:

1. That the entire fence be a solid board on board wood fence;
2. That the fence be either painted or stained; and,
3. That the height of the fence be reduced to match the height of the neighboring fences.

CITY DEPARTMENT COMMENTS

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

Code Enforcement:

No comments.

Historic Alexandria:

“No comment.”