

Docket Item #9  
BAR CASE #2005-0228

BAR Meeting  
October 19, 2005

**ISSUE:** Addition and alterations

**APPLICANT:** Thomas Jeffers by R.B. Adams & Assoc.

**LOCATION:** 211 Franklin Street

**ZONE:** CL/Commercial

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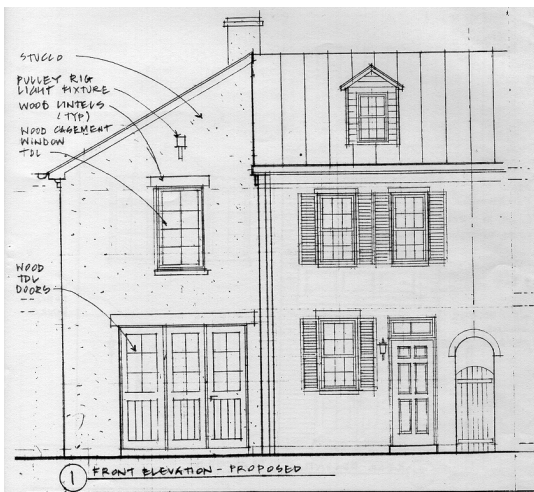
**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:**

Staff recommends deferral of the application for restudy.

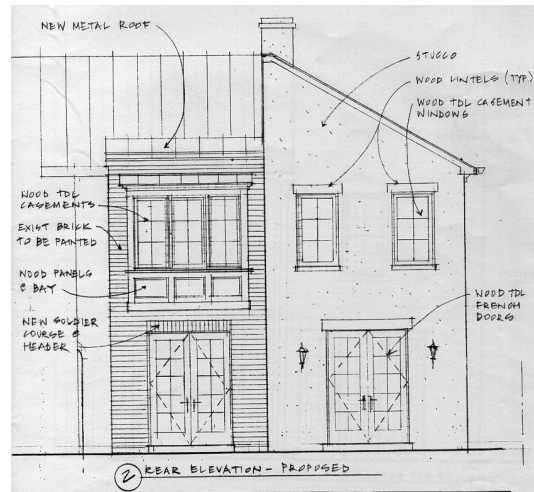
NOTE: Docket item #8 must be approved before this docket item can be considered.

**I. ISSUE:**

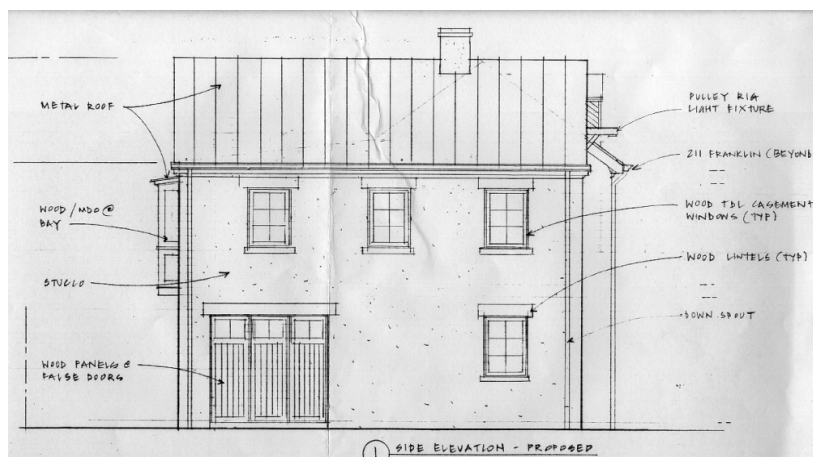
The applicant is seeking approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness for exterior alterations in the form of new openings in existing walls of the rear wing and an early 20<sup>th</sup> c. addition, as well as for the construction of a two story addition adjacent to the west wall of the original house. Also proposed is the raising of the roof of the original rear wing.



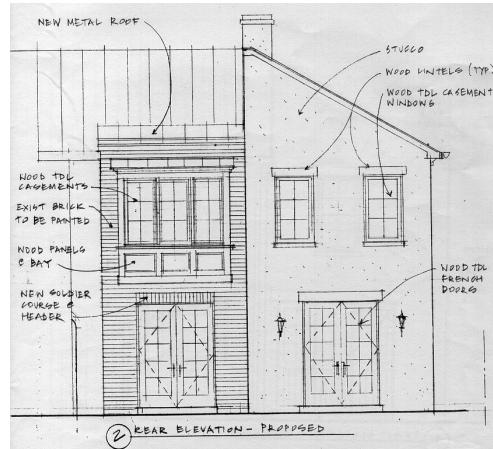
**Figure 1 - Front elevation**



**Figure 2 - Rear elevation**



**Figure 3- Side elevation**



**Figure 4 - Rear elevation**

The proposed addition would create a new structure adjacent to the exposed west wall of the original house in the form of a flounder house, with a 6:12 roof extending from front to back, including new roof structure over the previous addition which had a low shed roof. The ridge of the flounder is proposed to be at the same elevation as the gable ridge of the original house. The street elevation of the new flounder form would have a single casement window at the 2<sup>nd</sup> level and a three bay door opening at grade, on the scale of a garage door. The new west elevation of the flounder would have three casement sash on the upper level, one on the lower as well as another three bay simulated door opening. The individual door panels in both openings would have a transom and vertical board panels. The rear elevation of the flounder would have a single casement sash and a pair of French doors at grade. The flounder would be clad in stucco to match the existing wing, and the roof would be standing seam metal.

## **II. HISTORY:**

As mentioned in docket item #8, the modest, two story masonry house at 211 Franklin is paired with 209, sharing a party wall at the second level separated at grade level by an open air passageway. The houses were in existence at the time the Hopkins map of 1877 was published and demonstrate detailing typical of vernacular masonry houses of the first third of the 19<sup>th</sup> c. in Alexandria.

## **III. ANALYSIS:**

The new openings proposed for the later addition are largely matters of re-arranging the fenestration patterns in walls which are neither significant, nor highly visible. No loss of historic fabric would be accomplished in these actions. The proposed new patterns of fenestration are generally compatible in form and scale with the overall patterns of the house and could be approved as submitted.

The proposed new openings on the rear elevation of the original house would require removal of a substantial amount of historic fabric (over 55% of the wall area) and would result in a fenestration pattern considerably out of scale with the features and proportions of the original house. Some alteration of these openings may be achievable, but as currently proposed, these changes are not consistent with the *Design Guidelines*.

Similarly, the proposed raising of the roof of the rear wing would require the loss of historic fabric (160 sf of roof deck and framing) and the proposed reconstruction at a different pitch alters the original form of this portion of the house.

The use of casement sash on the flounder addition is an appropriate means to differentiate this work from the original and may have been inspired by the sash in the building to the east of # 209. Similarly, the door vocabulary is also easily noted as non-imitative. Stucco is not a traditional material in wide spread application in Alexandria, but with the precedent on site, it is an acceptable choice for the new work. One assumption is that the addition is supposed to be characterized as a working structure, not a residential one, if the gambit of the simulated pulley /light fixture is to be considered.

The principal concern with the addition as proposed is the scale and form relationship with the original house. A fundamental precept of additions to historic houses is that of establishing a subordinate relationship between the new and old, a sense of which is lacking in the relationship as proposed. The new flounder makes little if any attempt to mitigate the sharp contrast of form and scale as it abuts and obscures the west wall of the original house, leaving visible to the east, a wide triangular section of wall rising above the gable plane of the house. Although the footprint of the addition is set back 2' from the front wall of the house, it is not sufficient to suggest subordination in this area as well .

The net effect of the addition, despite its own relatively innocuous design and even compatible elements, is to both disregard and then overwhelm the scale, sense of form, integrity and setting of the original house, which renders it thus incompatible with the intent and letter of the guidelines for additions to historic structures. It may be possible to achieve an addition in this location which is more respectful of the original house, but the roof form and its relationship to the house must be revised substantially.

#### **IV. STAFF RECOMMENDATION:**

Staff recommends deferral of the application for restudy to limit the impact of the addition and proposed alterations on the original historic building.

## CITY DEPARTMENT COMMENTS

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

### Code Enforcement:

- 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 Alterations to the existing structure must comply with the current edition of the Uniform Statewide Building Code (USBC).
  
- C-7 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-8 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-9 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:

“This is a major change in use of open space by evaluating requirements in relation to the 2<sup>nd</sup> lot, and a major change to the original facade. Also a great deal of encapsulation.”

Alexandria Archaeology:

- F-1 Research has documented that the existing structure on this property probably dates from the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. In addition, tax records indicate the presence of a free African American household on the 600 block of Fairfax Street, but the exact address is not known. The lot therefore has the potential to yield archaeological resources that could provide insight into residential life, possibly relating to free African Americans, in early 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 statements in R-1 must appear in the General Notes of all site plans so that on-site contractors are aware of the requirement.