

Docket Item #3  
BAR CASE #2005-0231

BAR Meeting  
November 2, 2005

**ISSUE:** Permit to Demolish and Capsulate

**APPLICANT:** Nicholas Lucarelli

**LOCATION:** 715 South Lee Street

**ZONE:** RM/Residential

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**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:**

Staff recommends approval of the permit to demolish.

Note: This docket item requires a roll call vote.

**I. ISSUE:**

The applicant is requesting approval of a Permit to Demolish and Capsulate portions of the two story frame house at 715 South Lee Street. Two areas will be capsulated by additions. First, a small section (approximately 110 square foot) of the rear (west) wall of the historic main block that is currently not covered by the existing 1978 addition will be capsulated by a small infill addition 5.6' wide and 7.8' long. Second, a larger, 13.7' wide by 15.6' long addition will be added to the end of the existing rear addition, capsulating the rear wall of that addition in its entirety. Additional areas of demolition and capsulation are proposed on the south elevations of the existing main block and rear addition.

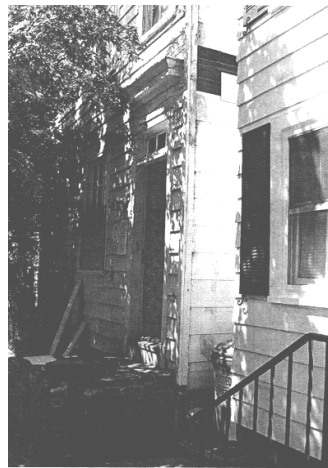


**Figure 1** Existing rear elevation

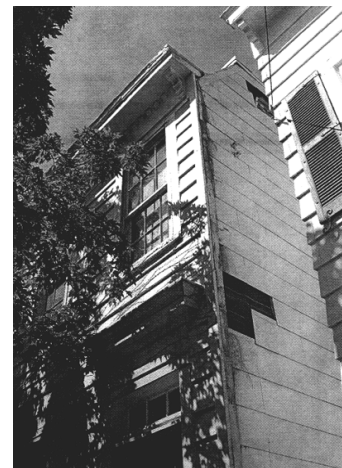
On the existing main block, the existing fenestration, consisting of twelve matching windows, six per floor will be altered in a number of ways. First, a new window opening is proposed at the front of the first story. The area of demolition required for this new opening is approximately 21 square feet. Secondly, the last four windows toward the west end of the elevation will be shifted in location and/or altered in size. On the rear addition, the existing door on the first story and window on the second will be replaced by large areas of ganged windows. The total amount of demolition and capsulation required by these window alterations has not been calculated.



**Figure 2** Front elevation



**Figure 3** Front elevation detail



**Figure 4** Front elevation detail

The front (east) and north and south sides of the house are visible from South Lee Street.

## **II. HISTORY:**

The detached, two story frame house with faux mansard roof and Italianate cornice appears to date to before 1877, as a house with a similar footprint as the existing main block is shown on Plate C of the *G.M. Hopkins Atlas of Alexandria* in the same location, across from the Little Zion Colored Church, now Zion Baptist Church. The area was not mapped again until 1907 when the same footprint appears on the *Sanborn* map of that year. Based on mapping, the 57' long, rectangular main block of the house appears to have been present from the 1870s. The half mansard roof may be a latter alteration.

Prior to 1978 when the existing rear addition was approved, building permits and Board of Architectural Review records reveal only minor alterations including: replacing wood German siding on the front of the house with beveled redwood siding (building permit #10858, 5/28, 1953); replacing front windows, steps and installation of planter (building permit #25463, 6/21/1968 & BAR approval 6/19/68); and installation of pediment over front door (BAR approval 6/10/70). Photographs included with the building permit records indicate the front and south side windows had a two-over-two configuration and that there was a transom but no cornice over the door prior to this series of alterations. The building permit for the existing two story rear addition was issued on October 16, 1978. It appears that Board of Architectural Review approval was not required for the inset addition as it was determined that it would not be visible.

## **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?

Staff believes the proposed demolition and capsulation is generally acceptable and does not rise to the level of the above criteria. The fact that the rear wall of the original main block will be entirely demolished is somewhat troubling. However, approximately 2/3 of this wall has been capsulated for over 25 years by the existing rear addition and the exposed portion of the original rear elevation was further altered by the circa 1978 installation of a french door on the first floor.

The area of *new* capsulation on the rear wall of the main block is actually quite modest: approximately 110 square feet. The rear wall of the historic main block is not visible from the public right-of-way. The other major area of capsulation and demolition is at the rear of the non-historic addition. This area is also not visible. The proposed demolition and capsulation to alter the fenestration on the south elevations of the main block and 1978 addition, which are at partially visible, is relatively minor. For all these reasons, Staff finds the proposed demolition acceptable.

**IV. STAFF RECOMMENDATION:**

Therefore, Staff recommends approval of the permit to demolish.

## CITY DEPARTMENT COMMENTS

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

### Code Enforcement:

- F-1 The existing dwelling has numerous windows along the South face of the structure at the 0 lot line. The proposed plans indicate replacement and addition of windows along this wall. Replacement in kind, without modifications to the existing openings will be permitted. Additional windows or enlargement of existing openings along this wall is prohibited. Furthermore, Code Enforcement recommends the removal of all windows along the South face due to the location of the windows in relation to the interior lot line.
- 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.

Office of Historic Alexandria:

“No comment.”

Alexandria Archaeology:

“There is a low potential for this project to disturb significant archeological resources. No archeological action is required.”