

Docket Item #6
BAR CASE #2005-0250

BAR Meeting
November 16, 2005

ISSUE: Permit to Demolish and Capsulate

APPLICANT: Darren and Cynthia Blue

LOCATION: 410 South Lee 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 and Capsulate the rear brick wall at the lower/basement level of 410 South Lee Street. An existing six-over-six, double-hung wood window and a French door will be removed and a new double French-style door will be installed with side lights. This area of proposed demolition is not visible from the public right-of-way. The rear yard of 410 South Lee Street is surrounded by high masonry walls and a private alley is in the rear.

The area to be demolished is approximately 46 square feet. This includes removal of the existing window and door and a section of brick area between. Brick will be infilled on either side of new sidelights as necessary.

II. HISTORY:

410 South Lee Street was constructed around 1850 by Emanuel Francis, as one of six rowhouses constructed of masonry with standing seam metal roofs. Emanuel Francis purchased lots 406, 408, 410, and 412 in April 1849 according to Ethelyn Cox's *Historic Alexandria, Virginia: Street by Street*, page 90.

This section of South Lee does not appear on the Sanborn maps until 1902.

There does not appear to be any earlier requests for BAR approvals for 410 South Lee Street.

III. ANALYSIS:

The proposed demolition meets the zoning ordinance requirements.

As the applicants were doing interior work on the basement level, the removal of interior paneling revealed that the interior wythe of bricks and mortar were heavily deteriorated and posed structural issues. The applicant notified BAR Staff and brought in images showing the deteriorated interior brick. BAR Staff met on-site with the applicant, the applicant's contractor, and a Code Enforcement Inspector from the City of Alexandria. The exterior wall was constructed of a double layer of brick. On-site inspections by BAR Staff found the interior layer of brick in an advanced deteriorated state with mortar failure. The code inspector noted that the brick and mortar failure was compromising the wall and could risk collapse. The code inspector directed the applicant's contractor in an inspection ticket, to begin immediately reshoring of the rotted wood lintels and repointing and grouting of the interior wythe of masonry.

Due to the possible risk of structural failure and the fact that the area proposed to be demolished was not visible from a public right-of-way, BAR Staff agreed to grant an administrative approval to allow for the emergency demolition of the wall in order for the applicant to proceed with the direction of the code inspector and decrease the possibility of structural failure of the entire rear

wall.

IV. STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends approval of the application as submitted.

CITY DEPARTMENT COMMENTS

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

Code Enforcement:

- C-1 New construction must comply with the current edition of the Uniform Statewide Building Code (USBC).
- C-2 Alterations to the existing structure must comply with the current edition of the Uniform Statewide Building Code (USBC).
- C-3 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.

Historic Alexandria:

“Prefer wood doors and windows, cannot tell from description if this the case. Need information on significance, period of this structure before removal/demolition original fabric.”