

Docket Item #7
BAR CASE #2005-0251

BAR Meeting
November 16, 2005

ISSUE: Permit to Demolish and Capsulate

APPLICANT: Carl & Beverley Patton

LOCATION: 227 South Pitt Street

ZONE: RM/Residential

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 three story brick house to allow for a two story addition at the rear of the house. The pergola over the back patio, the south side wall and rear (west) wall of the existing two story ell and the rear (west) wall of the main block at the first and second stories will be removed. The new addition will capsulate the full width of the main block on the first and second stories, an area of approximately 318 square feet.

The rear of the house is partially visible from the east side of the 200 block of South St. Asaph Street, in a view down the private alley running perpendicular to the lot at 227 South Pitt Street. In addition, the upper portion of the rear of the house is visible in a through-the-block view from the 500 block of Duke Street.

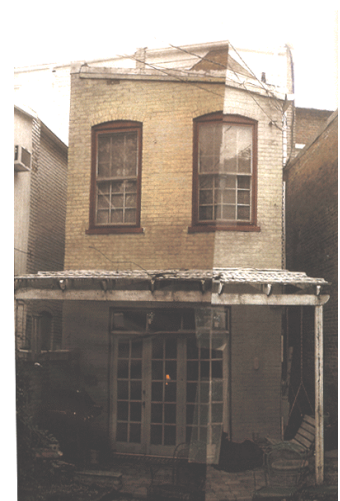


Figure 1 Rear elevation

II. HISTORY:

The three story brick Victorian rowhouse at 227 South Pitt Street is the southernmost unit in a row of six houses (217-227 South Pitt Street) constructed between 1896 and 1902, according to the Sanborn Insurance maps. The facades are dominated by alternating square and angled two story bays. The houses were constructed with two story brick ells at the rear.

In 1989, the Board approved a two story addition at 217 South Pitt Street (BAR Case#88-159, 9/21/1989). In 1993, the Board approved the enclosure of the second story porch at 225 South Pitt Street (BAR Case #93-15, 1/19/1993). This enclosed porch is above a first-story addition of unknown date. More recently, In 2003, the Board approved demolition/capsulation for a single story addition at 221 South Pitt Street (BAR Case #2003-0036, 4/2/2003). The addition at 221 South Pitt Street was not visible from the public right-of-way and thus was not reviewed for a certificate of appropriateness. For the subject property, the Board approved alterations to the windows at the front of 227 South Pitt Street in 2003 (BAR Case #2003-0060, 6/18/2003).

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?

In Staff's opinion, none of the above criteria are met. The demolition/capsulation will occur on the rear facade of a turn-of-the-century rowhouse. The pergola is of an unknown date, but clearly recent construction. The demolition/capsulation of much of the c. 1899 rear ell and the rear of the main block on the first and second stories is of more concern, mostly for the loss of the original footprint which is typical of rowhouses of this period. However, the Board has routinely approved similar demolition and capsulation at the rear of turn-of-the century structures to allow for additions. In addition, 227 South Pitt Street is one of six houses constructed as a row, two of which (217 & 225 South Pitt Street) already have two story rear additions and one (221 South Pitt Street) with a single story rear addition. Consequently, the row no longer reads as a unit at the rear.

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:

- 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:

- F-1 Fire insurance records note that houses were present on this street face during the 18th century. The G.M. Hopkins insurance map of 1877 depicts a structure on this lot. The property therefore has the potential to yield archaeological resources which could provide insight into domestic activities in late 18th- and 19th-century 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 statement must appear in the General Notes of all site plans and on all site plan sheets that involve demolition or ground disturbance (including sheeting and shoring and grading) so that on-site contractors are aware of the requirement.