

Docket Item #7
BAR CASE #2005-0284

BAR Meeting
December 21, 2005

ISSUE: Demolition and encapsulation

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

LOCATION: 211 Franklin Street

ZONE: CL/Commercial

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends approval of the application as submitted.

Note: This docket item requires a roll call vote.

I. ISSUE:

The applicant has returned to the Board to seek approval of a Permit to Demolish for the complete demolition of the existing west side wing. The structure to be demolished is frame, measures approximately 12.3' by 12.3', and is two stories in height with a low pitch shed roof. Previously, on October 19, 2005, the Board approved the capsulation of the front (south) elevation, capsulation and/or demolition of the roof and selective demolition of west and north elevations of this frame wing (BAR Case #2005-00227 & 228). In addition, the Board approved demolition and alterations to the original brick main block and rear ell. There are no new changes proposed for the original brick portion of the house.

Previously approved demolition:

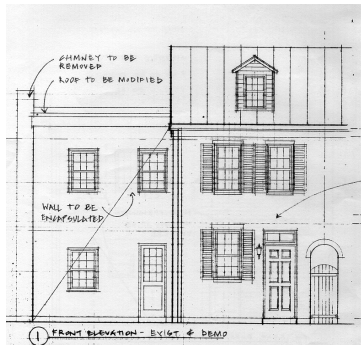


Figure 1 - Front areas of demolition and capsulation

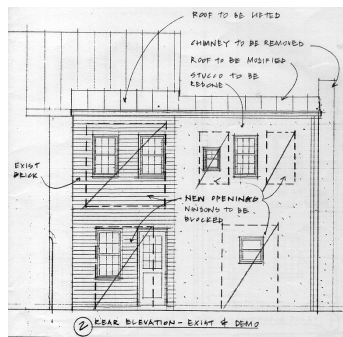


Figure 2 - Rear areas of demolition

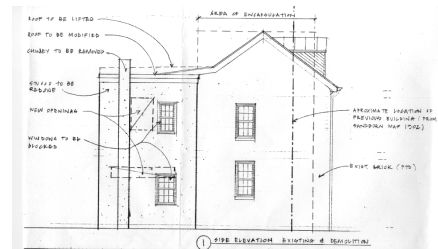


Figure 3 - Side areas of demolition and capsulation

Currently Proposed Demolition:

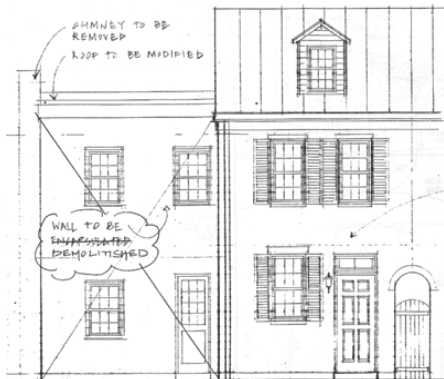


Figure 4 Front elevation of side addition to be demolished

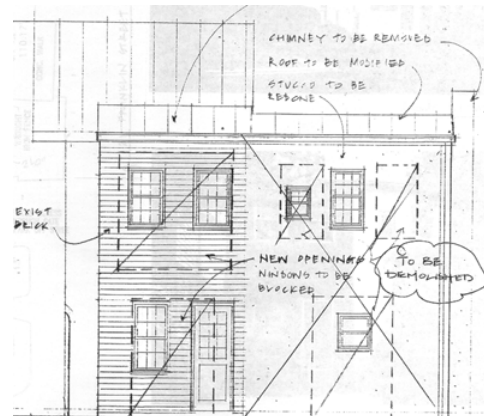


Figure 5 Rear elevation of side addition to be demolished

II. HISTORY:

The modest, two story masonry house at 211 Franklin Street is paired with 209 Franklin Street, 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 19th c. in Alexandria. Each of the houses has only two bays on the principal or street elevation, capped with a transverse gable roof 8:12 pitch. Dormers centered on each house appear to be substantially later in origin. Original exterior masonry is currently painted.

The house at 211 Franklin Street has a two story addition attached to the west side of the rear wing of the original block. It is square in plan, with a low pitched shed roof. The exposed walls on the south and west are clad in rough cast stucco on wood framing, and there are several small windows on each elevation. Although the exact date of this section is not known, the 1902 Sanborn Map does show a two story structure in this location.

In 1951, the original house and west side wing were subjected to fairly substantial renovations (permit #9858, 8/29/51).

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 that none of the above criteria are met as applied to the two story frame addition on the west side of the brick house. The side addition to the original house is a fairly ungainly mass of little distinction which simply abuts the original rear ell of the brick house. Historic map evidence suggests that the turn-of-the-20th century structure existed as a separate dwelling through the 1940s. It may not have been integrated into the house 211 Franklin Street until circa 1951. A building permit from 1951 indicates that numerous alterations to the addition were completed, including reconstruction of the north (rear) wall, reconstruction of the chimney and raising the overall height of the addition to increase ceiling heights on the second story (permit

#9858, 8/29/51). A recent inspection by Code Enforcement found “extensive structural damage to the framing at the north wall and floor” due to termites and water damage (Building Inspection Ticket 12/12/2005).

For these reasons, Staff has no objection to the proposed demolition of the frame wing on the west side of the house at 211 Franklin Street. In addition, Staff notes that the extent of demolition/capsulation previously approved by the Board for this portion of the house was substantial and that the currently proposed demolition represents a relatively modest expansion of that which was previously approved.

IV. STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Therefore, Staff approval of the application as submitted.

CITY DEPARTMENT COMMENTS

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

Code Enforcement:

C-1 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.

Office of Historic Alexandria:

“Need additional information on why the building must be demolished.”

Alexandria Archaeology:

F-1 Research has documented that the existing structure on this property probably dates from the early 19th 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.