

Docket Item # 5
BAR CASE #2005-0295

BAR Meeting
January 4, 2005

ISSUE: Alteration

APPLICANT: Robert J. Semnewald

LOCATION: 212 Wolfe Street

ZONE: RM/Residential

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness for the new railings.

I. ISSUE:

The applicant is requesting approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness to install iron railings on both sides of the front steps at 212 Wolfe Street.

Staff has confirmed with the applicant that the proposed railings will be black wrought iron, with a simple design, 36" in height, and will be installed on both sides of the front door, approximately 6' from the door surround. The applicant is installing the railings for safety purposes, due to steepness of the brick steps.

II. HISTORY:

The two story, three bay semi-detached, brick house at 212 Wolfe Street was built between 1845 and 1851 according to Ethelyn Cox in *Alexandria Street by Street* (p.196). It has had a number of additions.

212 Wolfe Street received a Permit to Demolish and Encapsulate from the Board on October 20, 2004, BAR # 2004-0217.

III. ANALYSIS:

According to the guidelines, “stoops, steps, and railings should be appropriate to the historic style of the structure. For example, turned wood balusters and newel posts on entrance steps are a common feature of Victorian architecture. Decorative cast iron steps and railings are also a common feature of Victorian buildings. Stoops, steps, and railings should not hide, obscure or cause removal of historic architectural details. For example, railings should not interfere with the operation of door shutters...Materials should be appropriate and compatible with the historic architecture of the building. ... Black is also an appropriate color for metal stoops, steps, and railings...Stoops, steps, and railings should not be added in an attempt to make a structure appear older than it actually is.”

Staff believes the proposed railings meet the requirements of the Design Guidelines and are visually compatible with the architecture of 212 Wolfe Street.

IV. STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Therefore, Staff recommends approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness for the new railings.

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

“Although iron railing seems appropriate, it is not clear based on the information provided what the dimension of the stoop to be installed will be, or if the stairs and railing will project farther onto the sidewalk. This house appears on Alexandria Street by Street, p. 196; built by William Markley; renovated after 1871 fire; no railing originally?”