

Docket Item #7
BAR Case #2006-0007

BAR Meeting
February 1, 2006

ISSUE: Reapproval of demolition/capsulation

APPLICANT: Mike Margiotta

LOCATION: 217 North Saint Asaph 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 proposed demolition/capsulation is the same that was previously approved by the Board on October 15, 2003 and November 5, 2003 (BAR Case #2003-0238) except that it now includes the demolition of the garage at the rear of the property. Please note that while the drawing notes say that the alterations to the existing main block and ell are not in the scope of the architectural drawings and are for “illustrative purposes only,” the applicant is seeking approval for the alterations to the existing house as well as the new addition.

House

The applicant is requesting approval of a Permit to Demolish/Capsulate to remove the existing one-and-a-half story section at the rear of the house and add a new two story addition, capsulating the back (east) wall of the two story rear ell. The section to be removed is frame covered in stucco and measures 14'6" wide by 12'6" long. In addition, an archway and a recessed 7 ½' wide by 10' high section of wall containing an entrance door and with sidelights located at the west end of the south wall of the rear ell on the first story will be removed. Lastly, the existing front stoop will be removed and replaced.



Figure 1 - Front



Figure 2 - Rear



Figure 3 - South side

Garage

The existing garage is to be demolished to accommodate the construction of the addition. The applicant has indicated that he may seek to build a new garage at a future date.

The house at 217 North Saint Asaph Street is highly visible from Saint Asaph and along the south side and rear (east) due to the open parking lot which extends from the south property line to Cameron Street. The roof of the garage is visible from Cameron Street while both the garage and rear of the house are visible from Pitt Street through a short east-west alley.

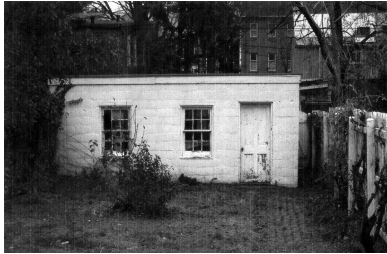


Figure 4 - yard side of garage

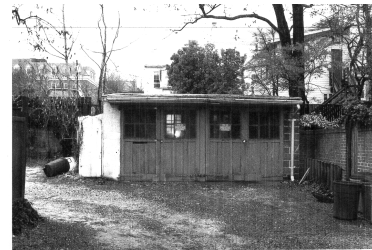


Figure 5 - alley side of garage

II. HISTORY:

The two story, gable roofed, frame house with rear ell appears on the 1877 Hopkins Atlas and probably dates to the early or mid-19th century. The door surround suggests that it was constructed in the period of Greek Revival popularity in Alexandria, circa 1820 to 1860. The existing configuration with the gable roofed main block, followed by a two story flounder, terminating in a small, one-and-a-half story shed roof addition appears to date at least to 1885, based on the footprint depicted in the Sanborn Fire Insurance Map of that year, the earliest available for the city. Over the years, the house has been subject to a number of alterations. In 1936 the clapboard sided house was encased in stucco finished to look like stone on the front (west), south and east sides and with a rough finish stucco on the less visible north side (Permit #2656, 6/30/1936). In 1938 the wooden front steps were replaced with the existing concrete steps finished with stucco to match the walls (Permit #2678, 7/14/1938). In 1940 a second floor bath was added above the side entrance at the west end of the rear ell where it meets the main block (Permit #3496, 4/2/1940). Prior to this, the rear ell had jogged in on both the first and second stories before connecting to the main block. In 1962, the standing seam metal roof was replaced with an asphalt shingle roof (Permit #18373, 5/18/1962). More recently, the windows were replaced with vinyl windows with sandwich muntins and the window trim was wrapped in vinyl. There is no record of Board review of this window replacement or of any other alteration to the property until the recent approvals. The Board approved the demolition and capsulation of portions of the house on October 15, 2003 and November 5, 2003 (BAR Case #2003-0238).

In considering a Permit to Demolish and/or Capsulate, the Board must consider the following criteria set forth in the Zoning Ordinance, Sec. 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 the opinion of Staff, the proposed demolition/capsulation does not meet any of the above criteria. The shed-like rear addition, while possibly dating to the mid-19th century, does not appear to be particularly significant architecturally. It is small in size, extremely simple in character and has had numerous alterations since its construction. The front stoop is a 1938 alteration and is not significant. Similarly, the cinder block garage, which was constructed in 1923 (Building permit #243, 2/24/1923), does not appear to have any particular significance.

Staff had previously opposed the infilling of the small inset area at the west end of the central ell section where it meets the main block and the Board called for restudy of this portion of the proposed demolition at the October 15, 2003 hearing. Map research indicates that this section of the house was historically indented on the first and second stories and served as an entry point for the service wing of the house. Similar connectors are known to exist in houses constructed in the first part of the 19th century. However, on November 5, 2003, the applicant brought a revised design to the Board which incorporated a 1' inset in this area, thereby retaining a sense of the original condition and satisfying the Board's concerns. Staff is in agreement that the demolition and capsulation proposed for this area is relatively minor and that the retention of an inset at this location will help to recall the original condition. To conclude, Staff has no objection to the proposed demolition/capsulation.

IV. STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends approval of the Permit to Demolish 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 be taken to prevent the spread of rodents from the construction site to the surrounding community and sewers.

Historic Alexandria:

No comments received.

Alexandria Archeology:

F-1 According to Ethelyn Cox's *Historic Alexandria, Virginia, Street by Street, A Survey of Existing Early Buildings*, a structure was built on this lot during the 19th century. The property is also adjacent to the McVeigh Hospital lot, which was utilized by the Union Army during the Civil War. The property therefore has the potential to yield archaeological resources which could provide insight into domestic and military activities in 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.