

Docket Item # 15
BAR CASE #2006-0013

BAR Meeting
February 15, 2006

ISSUE: Addition and alterations

APPLICANT: Katie & Hack Wiegmann by Robert Bentley Adams

LOCATION: 511 Cameron Street

ZONE: RM/Residential

BOARD ACTION, FEBRUARY 1, 2006: Deferred because action on the demolition application was deferred.

Update: Since the last public hearing, there have been substantial revisions to the application. The brick wall on the west side of the property is proposed to be raised to a height of 9'6" which will hide the one story addition that is proposed to be constructed at the rear of flounder section of the house. Additionally, while the proposed addition will no longer be subject to Board review and approval because it will not be visible from the public right-of-way, the overall height and length of the addition has been reduced somewhat.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends approval of the application with the following conditions:

1. The raised height of the wall be constructed prior to approval of a building permit for the addition;
2. 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; and,
3. 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.
4. To maintain required open space on the property the applicant shall install an appropriate border to separate the driveway and parking space from the rear and side garden areas to the satisfaction of Board of Architectural Review.

I. ISSUE:

The applicant is requesting approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness for a revised fence at the west side of the property of the freestanding residential townhouse at 511 Cameron Street. The revised fence will have a height of 9'6" at the south end (closest to the house) and then step down with a series of swags to 7' and once more toward the north where the current height of the existing brick wall will return.

As noted above, the increased height of the brick wall will obscure any view of a proposed one story addition from the public right-of-way.

II. HISTORY:

As noted in the discussion section for docket item # 14, the street facade and front section of 511 Cameron Street is a Greek Revival style freestanding two story, three bay brick residential townhouse that was constructed in ca. 1850. The rear of the building is a brick flounder style section likely dating from the early 19th century.

III. ANALYSIS:

The proposed addition and alterations comply with the Zoning Ordinance.

Staff is not opposed to the increase in the height of the brick wall. According to oral tradition, the brick wall and that surrounding the parking lot as well as the octagonal parking attendant's booth at the surface parking lot at Cameron and North St. Asaph Street were constructed from

bricks from the house that previously existed on the site. That house at 517 Cameron Street was owned by Rebecca Ramsay Reese, one of the City's most important early preservationists and a former member of the Board. The demolition of the three story late 19th century Italianate house was approved by the Board in 1957 (4/10/57).

The raised height of the brick wall will not only hide the new addition but will provide additional buffering for 511 Cameron Street and the properties immediately to the east from the operations of the surface parking lot.

In the opinion of Staff raising the height of the wall will not compromise the understanding of the evolution of the building history of the house. The form of the flounder as well as its relationship to the front section of the house will continue to be clearly visible from North St. Asaph Street across the surface parking lot without being interrupted by a early 21st century addition.

Staff is recommending approval with conditions that the raised wall be constructed prior to issuance of a building permit for the addition and with a condition that parking area at the rear of the house have a raised border to ensure that the required open space is maintained.

Staff notes the comments of Alexandria Archaeology and has also included them as a condition, if the Board approves the proposed alteration.

IV. STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends approval of the application with the following conditions:

1. The raised height of the wall be constructed prior to approval of a building permit for the addition;
2. 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; and,
3. 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.
4. To maintain required open space on the property the applicant shall install an appropriate border to separate the driveway and parking space from the rear and side garden areas to the satisfaction of Board of Architectural Review.

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.
- C-2 Roof drainage systems must be installed so as neither to impact upon, nor cause erosion/damage to adjacent property.
- C-3 A soils report must be submitted with the building permit application.
- C-4 New construction must comply with the current edition of the Uniform Statewide Building Code (USBC).
- C-5 Alterations to the existing structure must comply with the current edition of the Uniform Statewide Building Code (USBC).
- C-6 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-7 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-8 A wall location plat prepared by a land surveyor is required to be submitted to this office prior to requesting any framing inspection.
- C-9 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 wall 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 line.

Historic Alexandria:

Addition seems appropriate, but is door stoop and railing to be removed original to the house or a slightly later date, making them preferable to retain?

Alexandria Archaeology:

- F-1 According to Ethelyn Cox's *Historic Alexandria Street by Street*, the house on this lot was probably constructed about 1850 by James McVeigh. Alexandria Archaeology records indicate that there is a brick shaft in the basement of the house and a smoke house in the rear of the yard.. The property has the potential to yield significant archaeological resources that could provide insight into domestic 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.