

Docket Item # 10
BAR CASE #2006-0037

BAR Meeting
March 1, 2006

ISSUE: Alterations to Previously Approved Plans

APPLICANT: Steve and Vallery Stylianoudis

LOCATION: 508 North Columbus Street

ZONE: RB/Residential

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends approval of the following items:

- After-the-fact approval of replacement of the standing seam metal roof;
- After-the-fact approval of demolition of the rear exterior brick wall;
- New black metal railing, stair, and landing at the front door;
- New metal fence along front property line and abutting sidewalk
- Burglar bars on the front basement windows
- Metal railings on new rear deck
- Three sets of operational two-panel wood shutters on the front facade
- New brass address plate
- New full-view glass storm door at front door
- Audio camera at front door
- New gas lamp with final design to be approved by Staff
- New solar electric system on the flat roof of the addition
- Amendment to the exterior material of the new addition as requested by applicant

Staff recommends deferral for restudy of the proposed fiberglass canopy on the front elevation.

I. ISSUE:

The applicant is requesting approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness for alterations to previously approved plans for 508 N Columbus. The alterations include:

- Install a black metal railing, stairs, and landing at the front of the building. The railing at the base of the stair will curl to one side slightly;
- Install a metal fence on the property line between 508 and 506 N Columbus Street and abutting the front sidewalk parallel to N Columbus Street. The proposed metal fence will match the railing proposed for the front steps, with the exception that there will be no embellishment of decorative pieces; the fencing will be 42" high, and the gate will be 36" wide;
- Install black metal burglar bars on the front basement windows. The bars will be attached inside the window casing, not on the surrounding brick;
- Install metal railing on the new rear decks off the first and second floors. The previously approved spiral stairs are metal. The proposed metal deck railing will match the spiral stairs in color, design, and material as the proposed front entry stairs and the front garden area fencing;
- Install three sets of operational, two-panel wood shutters, manufactured by Timberline, sized to fit the windows, and painted black, with black metal shutter dogs;
- Install a brass oval plate to display house address number, attached on the exterior facade next to the front door. The proposed oval address plate will have a brown background with the border and numbers in brass;
- Install a metal-framed full view glass front storm door at the main entrance, manufactured by Protect-all Security Storm doors;
- Install an audio camera at the front door, with the dimensions of 5.5"x4"x1.75", in a metal weatherproof case. The unit contains a camera, audio, and doorbell;

- Install a glass lamp at the front door. The applicant has not decided what the final proposed gas lamp will be at this time and requests opportunity to work with Staff to determine final lamp to coordinate with number plaque and door hardware;
- Install a canopy for the front door to provide protection in inclement weather. The proposed canopy is manufactured by Insta-Canopy, Inc. and will be 62" wide, 39" deep, and 33" tall. The canopy consists of a single fiberglass shell with PVC strips glued onto the shell to represent seams. There is an aluminum tube attached to the canopy to allow it to be attached to the exterior facade. A Z-bracket is fastened to the wall with 2 bolts and the canopy is hung on the bracket. Some supplemental fasteners will be used through the 3' flange that abuts the wall. The canopy will be in copper and bronze color tones;
- Install a solar electric system on the flat roofs of the additions. The approved roof for the addition includes a parapet on the rear and sides which should obscure the solar electric system, which is a flat photovoltaic module.

In addition to these new items, the applicants are requesting an amendment to the previous BAR approval that all exterior walls of the addition be entirely in Hardi-plank or in brick. The applicants are seeking approval to install brick in the rear west exterior addition walls of both 508 and 510 N Columbus Street and Hardi-plank on the north wall of the addition of 510 N Columbus Street. According to the applicants, the neighbors at 512 N Columbus Street would prefer Hardi-plank on the elevation adjacent to their property and have indicated they are planning to propose a rear addition which would obscure the elevation of the applicants new addition.

Also, the applicants are requesting after-the-fact approval of the removal of the existing standing seam metal roof and replacement with a new standing seam metal roof of the same design. During the rehabilitation of the project since the last BAR approval, the applicants' contractor discovered that the roof trusses had deteriorated to such a degree that merited replacement, which would lead to the removal of the existing metal roof. Looking at the approved drawings, the applicants and their contractor believed that they had approval to remove the existing metal roof should the roof trusses need to be replaced. The existing metal roof and support system was removed, after which time the applicants meet with Staff to discuss the situation. During the period in which the roof was removed, 508 and 510 N Columbus Street and adjacent properties began to experience impact caused by exposure to the elements. In addition, City Code officials would not let the applicants proceed with interior work without having proper roof coverage. After looking at the situation and to prevent further compromises to the historic structure, Staff granted an administrative approval to install a new standing seam metal roof, matching the configuration of the prior roof, in a metallic green color.

The applicants are also requesting after-the-fact approval of the demolition of the entire brick rear wall of 508 N Columbus Street. The BAR has previously approved a new addition to the rear of 508 N Columbus Street with limited demolition and encapsulation of the existing rear elevation. However, the BAR had previously approved for 510 N Columbus Street permission to demolish the entire existing rear elevation with the encapsulation by a new addition. The applicants understood they had approval to demolish the entire existing rear brick wall of 508 N Columbus Street and proceeded to do so. This elevation will be completely encapsulated by the

approved new addition.

II. **HISTORY:**

508 North Columbus Street is a two story, gable-roofed, brick rowhouse that is located in a row of eight similar houses that were constructed together as a row (506-520 North Columbus Street). The houses were constructed prior to 1863, as they appear in a birds eye view of Alexandria with that date.

Survey information in the Office of Planning and Zoning indicates that the row was constructed in the Federal period, prior to 1830. An early- to mid- 19th century date is supported by the massing of the houses, the brick coursing and the brick cornice. The houses were constructed as relatively simple, vernacular worker housing. Each of the houses has a side hall plan, two bays in width, two stories plus high basement, a continuous standing seam metal roof and shared front and back chimneys. Staff believes the row is unusual for the number of units built simultaneously. Smaller rows of four or less were more typically constructed in Alexandria in the 19th century.

The early date of the houses is supported by the fact that the houses were constructed without rear service wings. According to Mrs. Helen Miller, who was born in 508 North Columbus Street in 1916, the kitchen and dining room were located in the basement. Due to a change in grade from front to back, the basement level is fully exposed at the rear of the house has both a door and window. Based on Sanborn mapping and BAR records, the row of eight houses remained without rear additions until the early 1950s and possibly until the early 1980s. In the subsequent years, there have been a number of changes to these houses. However, four of the eight, 508, 510, 512 and 520 North Columbus Street, remain without additions. The front of the row retains a substantial degree of integrity, despite minor alterations. A 1946 building permit recently located by Staff, requests “to demolish west wall and rebuild on concrete footings” for the five houses at 508-516 North Columbus Street. Physical evidence suggests extensive repair or rebuilding was carried out at some point on the west wall of the row. 508 North Columbus has had its windows, door and stoop replaced on the front and, until recently, had formstone applied to the front. The Board approved the application of the formstone on September 11, 1952 and BAR staff gave administrative approval for its removal on November 19, 2004.

On July 21, 2004, the Board of Architectural Review approved the demolition of the rear wall of 510 North Columbus Street (BAR Case #2004-0067) and on August 18, 2004, approved the renovation of the existing house at 510 North Columbus Street and a new three level rear addition (BAR Case #2004-0068). Board records indicate that the additions at 518, 506, 514, and 516 North Columbus Street were approved on 8/13/1953, 6/2/1982, 1/3/1990 (BAR Case #89-211) and 7/18/1990 (BAR Case #90-154) respectively. The addition at 518 North Columbus covers the basement and first story only. The other three additions capsule the second story as well as basement and first story. The Board approved further alterations and an addition for 508 N Columbus Street on February 2, 2005, matching the approval for 510 N Columbus Street (BAR CASE #2005-0002).

III. ANALYSIS:

Proposed alterations comply with Zoning Ordinance requirements.

In the opinion of Staff, the majority of the proposed alterations are appropriate to the building and sympathetic to the architectural style and age of the building. Similar features such as metal railings and stairs are found within the adjacent row. However, the proposed fiberglass canopy is problematic and changes the architectural appearance of the front facade. While Staff understands the desire of the applicants to have coverage from inclement weather, Staff believes that any type of canopy or awning changes the simplistic character of this mid-19th century building and would alter the appearance of the 8-unit row.

In regards to the removal of the existing standing seam metal roof, it is unfortunate that the roof was removed prior to Staff having the opportunity to examine the condition of the truss system and seeks ways to mitigate the loss of the entire metal roof. However, from the material submitted by the applicant, it is apparent that the truss system had to be replaced, which resulted in the removal of the existing standing seam metal roof. The applicant did consult with Staff to ensure that the replacement roof matched the previous roof in material and configuration and was an appropriate color. Due to the concern of additional compromise and loss of historic fabric on the structure, Staff believed it was appropriate to administratively approve the new standing seam metal roof to replace the prior roof.

In respect to the removal of the entire rear brick wall, the loss of the historic fabric is certainly of concern to Staff. However, the Board had approved the rear addition which will encapsulate the entire rear wall elevation, and thus would have obscured any remaining exterior historic brick once completed.

IV. STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends approval of the following items:

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CITY DEPARTMENT COMMENTS

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

Code Enforcement:

- F-1 The proposed burglar bars shall comply with the provisions of the USBC pertaining to emergency escape and egress.
- 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.
- C-10 The handicapped elevator must comply with the requirements of USBC Chapter 11 and related requirements of the USBC.

Historic Alexandria:

“Regarding other architectural embellishments requested the canopy does not seem appropriate to the period of the house, neither its placements on the structure nor its proposed fiberglass material. It would have been helpful for the applicants to submit a photo of the facade of the house to better judge the impact of the proposed alterations especially railings, gas lamps, etc. It is unclear where the photos of the homes with similar canopies were taken.”