

Docket Item # 5
BAR CASE #2006-0006

BAR Meeting
March 15, 2006

ISSUE: Alterations

APPLICANT: Ted and Dolores Shine

LOCATION: 115 South Alfred Street

ZONE: CD/Commercial

BOARD ACTION, FEBRUARY 15, 2006: The Board combined discussion of docket item #'s 10 & 11. On a motion by Ms. Neihardt, seconded by Mr. Keleher, the Board voted to defer the application for restudy. The vote was 5-0.

REASON: The Board felt an additional structure report by a structural engineer with historic preservation experience was needed in order to determine if the south wall needed to be maintained, partially demolished, or demolished and rebuilt.

SPEAKERS: Ted Shine, applicant, spoke in support
Ron Diehl, 117 South Alfred Street, spoke in opposition
Lawrence O'Connor, representing Historic Alexandria Foundation, spoke in opposition

Update: Since the public hearing of February 15th the applicant has obtained the opinion of a structural engineer with expertise in historic preservation regarding the south wall of the carriage house. In the opinion of the structural engineer the wall is severely compromised and needs to be taken down and rebuilt. Except for the south wall, the opinion of Staff has not changed.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends:

1. Denial of the proposed windows and new wood siding on the west elevation;
2. Approval of the garage doors and lights proposed for the west elevation;
3. Approval of the alterations to the east elevation;
4. Approval of the rebuilding of the south wall with the following conditions:
 - a. New concrete footings of approximately 2'6" in depth x 14" in width;
 - b. Exterior brick work to have a header course every 7th course; and,
 - c. As much as possible the bricks from the existing wall be salvaged and reused; and,
5. Replanting of at least eight trees, or other plant material, on the property to the satisfaction of the Alexandria Historical Restoration and Preservation Commission.

NOTE: Docket item # 4 must be approved before portions of this docket item can be considered.

I. ISSUE:

The applicant is requesting approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness for alterations to the freestanding carriage house at the rear of 115 South Alfred Street.

West elevation

Three new window openings are proposed to be created at the second level. The proposed new windows are wood and will measure 42" x 42" with true divided lights. Two pair of double garage doors are proposed to be installed on the first level to replace the existing wood doors. The applicant has supplied a cut sheet for these doors which will be wood and have multi-lights and be painted green. Two new exterior lights will be installed above the new doors. These will be carriage style lights by Maxim Lighting. The exterior of the west elevation is proposed to be re-sheathed with wood lap siding with a 6" exposure.

East elevation

This elevation is generally not visible from the public right-of-way. A very small area of the second level of this elevation can be seen down the narrow pedestrian alley on the north side of the residence. Several changes are proposed for this elevation including placing windows in the second floor openings, infilling the first floor door opening with brick and replacing the existing door with a new four panel wood door.

North elevation

No changes are proposed for this elevation.

South elevation

The south wall of the carriage house is proposed to be demolished and a replacement wall built.

II. HISTORY:

115 South Alfred Street is a two story brick rowhouse dating from the early 19th century according to Ethelyn Cox in *Alexandria Street by Street* (p.2). The two story brick carriage house at the rear of the property appears to date from the middle of the 19th century.

III. ANALYSIS:

Proposed alterations comply with Zoning Ordinance requirements.

West elevation

As Staff has explained in docket item # 4, creating new openings for windows on the second level of the west elevation will substantially undermine not only the historic architectural integrity of the carriage house but will fundamentally alter the overall public perception of a utilitarian outbuilding. Further, Staff is not convinced that windows on both the east and west elevations are necessary for a building area that is proposed to be used for storage. Staff believes that the outward early 19th century appearance of the building should be maintained and the windows proposed on west elevation should not be installed. Installing windows on this elevation which is highly visible from the surface parking areas behind the carriage house as well as the surrounding public streets will fundamentally alter the public perception of the structure. Thus, Staff cannot support the installation of windows on this elevation.

Staff is also opposed to the installation of wood siding on the west elevation. Staff believes that the metal siding that is presently installed should be maintained so that the overall historic patina of the building is preserved.

Staff has no objections to the installation of the new garage doors and lights on the first level which will allow use of the building for vehicle parking.

East elevation

Staff has no objections to the alterations proposed for this elevation because they are not visible from the public right-of-way.

South elevation

As noted in docket item # 4, Staff can support the demolition and reconstruction of this wall based upon the evaluation of the wall performed by James Madison Cutts. Therefore, Staff recommends approval of the reconstruction of this wall according to the specifications of James Madison Cutts, LLC which are: new concrete footings approximately 2'6" in depth x 14" in width and with the exterior brick work to have a header course every 7th course. Staff has no objection to interior walls of CMU. Further, Staff recommends that as much as possible the bricks from the existing wall be salvaged and reused.

Staff also notes that this property is subject to an open space easement, together with a requirement that the trees on the property be maintained, held for the City by the Historical

Restoration and Preservation Commission. The property owner cut down eight trees in violation of the easement. Therefore, Staff believes that the trees should be replaced or other plant material should be replanted to the satisfaction of the Historical Restoration and Preservation Commission.

IV. STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends:

1. Denial of the proposed windows and new wood siding on the west elevation;
2. Approval of the garage doors and lights proposed for the west elevation;
3. Approval of the alterations to the east elevation;
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5. Replanting of at least eight trees, or other plant material, on the property to the satisfaction of the Alexandria Historical Restoration and Preservation Commission.

CITY DEPARTMENT COMMENTS

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

Code Enforcement:

- 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 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.

Historic Alexandria:

Alterations seem appropriate, but is it necessary to completely replace original brick on south wall?