

Docket Item # 8  
BAR CASE #2006-0030

BAR Meeting  
March 15, 2006

**ISSUE:** After-the-fact approval of fencing

**APPLICANT:** Miles Properties

**LOCATION:** 718 Washington Street

**ZONE:** RCX/Residential

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**BOARD ACTION, MARCH 1, 2006:** Deferred due to lack of public notice.

## **STAFF RECOMMENDATION:**

Staff recommends approval of the application with the following conditions:

1. That the fence be painted or stained within four months; and,
2. That a building permit be obtained immediately.

## **I. ISSUE**

The applicant is requesting after-the-fact approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness for an existing fence located on the north side of the property. The property consists of a three building garden apartment complex (718 & 722 South Washington Street and 719 South Saint Asaph Street) facing South Washington Street and arranged around an open central courtyard. A private alley is located on the north side of the property running from South Washington Street to South Saint Asaph Street. The 10' high board fence runs along the north side of the building at 718 South Washington Street parallel to the private alley and enclosing an area approximately 55' long by 24' wide. The fence has "dog eared" tops, a gate in the north side and is currently unpainted.

The fence is readily visible from South Washington Street and from South Saint Asaph Street.

## **II. HISTORY**

The three building complex (718 & 722 South Washington Street and 719 South Saint Asaph Street) was originally known as the Governor Spotswood. Designed by Evan J. Connor for Banks & Lee, Inc., the Colonial Revival style garden apartment complex appears to have been constructed in 1941 (Building Permit #3165, date illegible). In the latter part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century this complex along with several other rental apartment complexes of the same period in the 700, 800 and 900 blocks of South Washington Street were joined under common ownership and were marketed as the Boulevard of Old Town Apartments. More recently, in 2002, the apartments were acquired by a new owner and were known as Archstone of Old Town. Most recently, in 2005, the apartments were converted to condominiums and are known as The Bearings.

The Governor Spotswood complex along with the other adjacent apartment complexes of the period form a significant and highly visible component of Washington Street. These apartments were constructed at the north and south ends of Washington Street from the late 1930s through approximately 1950 and represent the an economical and aesthetically pleasing housing solution during a time when the city's population was rapidly expanding due to the growth of government and businesses in the area. Exhibiting many of the attributes of the garden apartment style, these complexes are typified by generous setbacks, low red brick buildings with Colonial Revival detailing and often incorporate a central courtyard.

At the December 4, 2002 hearing, the Board approved refacing the existing signs at the Boulevard Apartments (BAR Case #2002-0056). On February 2, 2005, the Board approved replacement windows and through-the-wall AC units and denied a replacement roof for the same group of apartment buildings (BAR Case #2002-0300). The roof replacement was subsequently approved by City Council on appeal (April 16, 2005). The work approved for the Governor Spotswood complex included only the window and roof replacement. The new fence was noted

in a recent inspection by Planning and Zoning Staff.

### **III. ANALYSIS**

Proposed fence complies with zoning ordinance requirements. Section 7-202(B)3 of the zoning ordinance states that fences in required rear and side yards may be open or closed, but cannot exceed 6' in height. However, section 7-202(C) of the zoning ordinance permits the BAR to waive or modify the fence rules where the Board finds that the fence is architecturally appropriate and consistent with the character of the district.

The wood board dog eared fence is compatible with the Governor Spotswood complex and surrounding district and complies with the *Design Guidelines* for fences. The fence serves to screen a number of HVAC units. The after-the-fact fence is 10' high. Zoning requirements allow a 6' high fence in this location but permit the BAR to waive the height limit where appropriate. Staff has no objection to the height of the fence in this location and recommends that the Board waive the fence height requirement. Staff does note that the Design Guidelines call for wood fences to be either stained or painted (Fences - Page 3). The fence does not appear to be finished with either stain or paint. Staff recommends that as soon as is practicable, the fence be painted or stained an appropriate color. Lastly, Staff notes that the 10' high fence will require a building permit.

### **IV. STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

Staff recommends approval of the application with the following conditions:

1. That the fence be painted or stained within four months; and,
2. That a building permit be obtained immediately.

CITY DEPARTMENT COMMENTS

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

Code Enforcement:

F-1 The applicant has identified the replaced fence is 10 feet in height. A construction permit is required.

C-1 A construction permit is required for this project.

Historic Alexandria:

“No comment.”