

Docket Item # 17
BAR CASE #2006-0044

BAR Meeting
March 15, 2006

ISSUE: Demolition and capsulation

APPLICANT: King Rug Gallery

LOCATION: 923 King Street

ZONE: KR/King Street Urban Retail

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends:

1. Approval to demolish the existing 1970 storefront; and,
2. Denial of the proposal to demolish the window openings on the first level on the west side of the building.

NOTE: This docket item requires a roll call vote.

I. ISSUE:

The applicant is requesting approval of a Permit to Demolish and Capsulate portions of the commercial building at 923 King Street. Those portions to be demolished and capsulated include: the existing storefront on King Street as well as its return on North Patrick Street and the two infilled window openings on the first level on the west elevation of the building. The demolition is proposed to enlarge the existing storefront and to accommodate new storefront windows.

II. HISTORY:

923 King Street is a three story, three bay brick building that was built by Francis Peyton in the late 18th to early 19th century. According to Ethelyn Cox's *Alexandria Street by Street*, Peyton acquired the quarter block of land on which the building sits in 1797 and pledged the building in a deed of trust in 1826. The first floor storefront alterations were built prior to the establishment of the Old and Historic Alexandria District. The storefront was altered to its present configuration in 1970 (Approved by the Board, 12/16/1970).

The Board approved signage for the last retail tenant, Conklyn's Florist, in 1982 (7/7/82) and again in 2002 (BAR Case #2002-0230, 9/18/02).

III. ANALYSIS:

In considering a Permit to Demolish, the Board must consider the following criteria set forth in the Zoning Ordinance, §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 shrine?
- (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?

Staff has no objection to the demolition of the existing storefront windows which were constructed in 1970 to accommodate new and larger storefront windows.

However, Staff is concerned about the proposal to demolish the existing window openings on the North Patrick Street (west) side of the building. In the opinion of Staff, criteria #'s 1, 3, 5, & 6 are met in this instance. The window openings are original to the late 18th/early 19th century date of construction of the building. The windows (and openings) are character defining features of the building and reflect the historic architectural character of the building. In the opinion of Staff, demolishing the existing windows openings and replacing them with modern storefronts will seriously compromise the historic architecture of the building. Staff recommends denial of the Permit to Demolish and Capsulate.

IV. STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends:

1. Approval to demolish the existing 1970 storefront; and,
2. Denial of the proposal to demolish the window openings on the first level on the west side of the building.

CITY DEPARTMENT COMMENTS

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

Code Enforcement:

- C-1 New construction must comply with the current edition of the Uniform Statewide Building Code (USBC).
- C-2 Alterations to the existing structure must comply with the current edition of the Uniform Statewide Building Code (USBC).
- C-3 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-4 Required exits and accessibility within the building for persons with disabilities must comply with USBC Chapter 11.

Historic Alexandria:

Size of the proposed windows and lintels on the west elevation seem unproportionally large and disruptive to the design.