

BAR Case # 2006-066
April 19, 2006

Docket Item # 3
BAR CASE #2006-0066

BAR Meeting
April 19, 2006

ISSUE: Alterations

APPLICANT: Jim and Melanie New by Stephanie Dimond

LOCATION: 109 Duke Street

ZONE: RM/Residential

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Staff recommends approval of the application as submitted.

I. ISSUE:

The applicant is requesting approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness for alterations to 109 Duke Street which include the construction of a new brick wall and a storage shed and garden fence inside of the brick wall. The lot at the rear of the property which has been used for off street parking was recently acquired by the owners of 109 Duke Street. This lot will be added to the existing residential yard to provide additional garden area and a utility area with two private parking spaces and storage shed.

The new brick wall will match the existing wall in brick color, mortar and coursing and extend the existing wall to enclose the expanded lot on the north, east and west sides. The 6.5' high wall will be of red brick laid in a running bond with intermittent piers. An existing pedestrian gate in the east side wall will be replaced with a new wood gate. The gate (Gate 'A') will be of cedar and will be painted black. It will consist of a solid lower portion with a single raised panel and an open upper section with pickets. A new vehicular gate will be located in the east side wall toward the rear. This gate (Gate 'B') will be a painted iron sliding gate consisting of vertical pickets and scrollwork.

An area at the back of the yard and within the brick wall will be divided from the yard with a new wood fence consisting of solid panels below and wood pickets above. The fence panels will be supported by 4 x4 wood posts with chamfered edges and pointed caps. These wood fence sections will be placed between brick piers. The center section will have a 6' wide double leafed gate. The fence and gate will be of cedar and will be painted black. The fenced off area will contain two parking spaces and a new storage shed. The frame shed will be built against the west wall. The shed will be 10' wide and 5' deep and 7' high at its highest point. The shed roof will be clad in standing seam copper. There will be two sets of double leafed doors in the east side of the shed. The shed walls and doors will be clad in painted bead board wood panels.

The brick wall will be visible from the public right of way. The views to the fence and shed in the interior of the yard will be very limited.

II. HISTORY:

According to Ethelyn Cox in Historic Alexandria Virginia Street by Street, the two story brick house was constructed between 1801 and 1803 by Ephriam Mills, a trunk maker (page 19). The side addition was approved by the Board on May 21, and June 4, 1980. The existing brick wall appears to date from the same period.

III. ANALYSIS:

The proposed alterations comply with the zoning ordinances requirements. The subject property is zoned RM, residential and is a lot of record as of February 10, 1951. The applicant is eliminating four off-street parking spaces and providing two off-street parking spaces at the rear of the lot that was previously asphalted and used for parking. Section 7-202(B)(4)(b) of the

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zoning ordinance permits a storage shed 50 square feet in area and no taller than 7 feet in overall height to be placed in a required side and rear yard. Section 7-202(C) of the zoning ordinance permits the BAR to waive or modify the fence requirement where the Board finds that the proposed fence is architecturally appropriate and consistent with the character of the district.

Staff believes the proposed alterations are appropriate and will substantially improve the appearance of the alley and enhance the residential property at 109 Duke Street. The wall, fence and shed utilize traditional materials and detailing and are compatible with the house. The Victorian character of the iron vehicular gate is somewhat at odds with the simple federal style of the historic house and the proposed wooden fence. However, Staff believes it is acceptable as it is not overly ornate and is well removed from the historic house. Although the brick wall will exceed 6' in height, the zoning ordinance does permit the Board to waive the height requirement where appropriate. Staff believes the proposed 6.5' height is acceptable as it continues the existing wall height and is not significantly taller than the permitted height. Therefore, Staff recommends that the Board waive the height requirement for the wall.

IV. STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends approval of the application as submitted.

CITY DEPARTMENT COMMENTS

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

Code Enforcement:

C-1 Construction permits are required for this project.

Historic Alexandria:

This house dates from circa 1801-3 and was built by trunk maker, Ephraim Mills. Proposed plans look appropriate except for the sliding gate, which seems too elaborate for the period. The style should be simplified or preferably made of wood. Also wood fencing should be vertical not horizontal.