

BAR Case #2006-0071
April 19, 2006

Docket Item # 10
BAR CASE #2006-0071

BAR Meeting
April 19, 2006

ISSUE: Addition and alterations

APPLICANT: Robert Bentley Adams

LOCATION: 513 S. Fairfax Street

ZONE: RM/Residential

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Staff recommends approval of the application with the following conditions:

1. That the rear stoop and steps be no higher than 2';
2. That the fiber cement siding be smooth and that the nails not show in the installation; and,
3. That the following statement must appear in the General Notes of all site plans so that on-site contractors are aware of the requirement:
Call Alexandria Archaeology immediately (703-838-4399) if any buried structural remains (wall foundations, wells, privies, cisterns, etc.) or concentrations of artifacts are discovered during development. Work must cease in the area of the discovery until a City archaeologist comes to the site and records the finds.

NOTE: Docket item #9 must be approved before this docket item may be considered.

ISSUE:

The applicant is requesting approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness for a new two story addition and an attic (third story) addition.

The new two story addition will start at the back wall of the main block of the house, demolishing and wrapping the existing addition on all sides. Approximately 40' long, it will cover the full width of the lot and will extend out 14.6' beyond the rear wall of the existing addition. It will project beyond the existing two story additions at 511 and 517 South Fairfax Street and the proposed one story addition at 515 South Fairfax Street (BAR Case #s 2006-0072 and 0073) also on this docket.

The addition will consist of a two story flat roofed section extending off the rear wall of the main block. A narrow slot, 3' wide and 14.5' long on the south side property line will be cut out from the addition. This section will be only one story high and will create an "areaway" permitting two windows on the recessed portion of the south wall of the addition on the second story. The rearmost section of the addition will consist of a block that is two stories in height the full width of the property with a steeply pitched shed roof, sloping from east to west.

The third story addition consists of a small shed roofed projection from the north side of the gable roof of the main block. The shed roof will slope from north to south. The addition will be 11' wide and 11' deep.

The new construction will be clad in fiber cement siding. All roofs except that on the rearmost section will be clad in rubber membrane roofing. The more visible roof on the rearmost section will be clad in asphalt shingles. The windows and doors will be wood, simulated divided light.

The north elevation of the new construction will project beyond the rear wall of the neighboring property at 711 South Fairfax Street approximately 7.5' on the second story. This segment of wall will be blind.

The south elevation will have one six-over-six window in the third story addition. There will be a wood lattice railing at the top of the second story addition running between the third story addition and the rearmost section. An HVAC unit will be located in this area and will be screened by the lattice. As described above, there will be two windows in the recessed south facing second story wall of the two story addition. These windows will be six-over-six.

The west elevation will have two six-over-six windows in the second story and a set of three multi-light french doors across the first story. The doors will have two light transoms and a simple entablature spanning the three opening. There will be carriage type light fixtures on either

side of the center door. The doors will open onto a brick stoop with an antique iron railing and brick steps to either side. Due to open space limitations, the stoop must be no higher than 2', approximately 6" lower than shown on the plans. There will be one six-over-six window in the west wall of the third story addition. This section will be partially obscured by the roof of the rearmost section of the two story addition.

The house backs up to the Safeway building in the 500 block of South Royal Street. The alley behind the house is private and there is a 7' high brick wall at the back of the property. Views to the rear of the house are very limited now and Staff does not anticipate that the proposed addition would be significantly more visible.

II. HISTORY:

As discussed in docket item #9, the two story brick house at 513 South Fairfax Street was constructed c.1817 along with its twin, 511 South Fairfax Street. The modest two bay brick federal townhouse retains a high degree of integrity on the street facade. Based on historic mapping, the current two story rear brick ell at 513 South Fairfax Street appears to have been constructed between 1907 and 1912.

III. ANALYSIS:

The proposed alterations and addition comply with the zoning ordinances requirements. The rear brick stoop must be no higher than 2' to ensure that the required open space remains.

Staff believes the proposed addition and alterations are acceptable. Staff would prefer a smaller addition as more than half the house will now consist of new construction. In addition, Staff finds the proposed addition to be overly complex with its various height levels and roof forms. However, Staff believes that the addition will not be readily visible from any public right-of-way. Staff notes the Board's policy regarding the use of fiber cement siding:

1. That fiber cement siding not be installed on an historic structure;
2. That historic materials should not be removed to install fiber cement siding;
3. That fiber cement siding replace other artificial or composite siding;
4. That the nails not show in the installation of the siding; and,
5. That smooth (not wood grained) siding be installed.

Items 4 and 5 should be noted and included in the conditions of the approval. Staff believes the use of simulated divided light windows is entirely appropriate here as the windows will be installed in new construction and will not be readily accessible to public view. Lastly, Staff notes the comments of Alexandria archeology and recommends that they be included in the conditions of the approval.

IV. STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends approval of the application with the following conditions:

1. That the rear stoop and steps be no higher than 2';
2. That the fiber cement siding be smooth and that the nails not show in the installation; and,
3. That the following statement must appear in the General Notes of all site plans so that on-site contractors are aware of the requirement:
Call Alexandria Archaeology immediately (703-838-4399) if any buried structural remains (wall foundations, wells, privies, cisterns, etc.) or concentrations of artifacts are discovered during development. Work must cease in the area of the discovery until a City archaeologist comes to the site and records the finds.

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 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.

Historic Alexandria:

The proposed re-design of the facade, especially the lower elevation, is incompatible with the early 19th century date of the house- too elaborate with railings, lattice, double stoop steps and doors.

Alexandria Archaeology:

- F-1 Tax records indicate the presence of free African American households on this street face in the early and mid-19th century, but the exact addresses are unknown. According to *Historic Alexandria, Virginia, Street by Street* by Ethelyn Cox, the house on this property probably dates to around 1817, when the lot was purchased by Levi Pickering. The property therefore has the potential to yield archaeological resources that could provide insight into domestic activities, perhaps relating to African Americans, in 19th-century Alexandria.
- R-1 Call Alexandria Archaeology immediately (703-838-4399) if any buried structural remains (wall foundations, wells, privies, cisterns, etc.) or concentrations of artifacts are discovered during development. Work must cease in the area of the discovery until a City archaeologist comes to the site and records the finds.
- R-2 The above statement must appear in the General Notes of all site plans so that on-site contractors are aware of the requirement.

Transportation and Environmental Services:

- R-1 City Code Section 8-122 requires that roof, surface and sub-surface drains be connected to the public storm sewer system. Where storm sewer is not available applicant must provide a design to mitigate impact of stormwater drainage onto adjacent properties and to the satisfaction of the Director of Transportation and Environmental Services.
- R-2 Applicant shall be responsible for repairs to the adjacent city right-of-way if damaged during construction activity.
- R-3 Any improvements to the city rightof-way such as curbing, sidewalk, driveway aprons, etc. must be city standard design.
- C-1 Any work within the right-of-way requires a separate permit from T & ES. (Sec. 5-3-61)
- C-2 Roof drains and sub-surface drains shall be connected to the city storm sewer system, if available, by continuous underground pipe. (Sec. 8-1-22)
- C-3 Change in point of attachment or removal of existing overhead utility services will require undergrounding or a variance. (Sec. 5-3-3)