

Docket Item # 6
BAR CASE #2006-0023

BAR Meeting
May 17, 2006

ISSUE: Demolition/encapsulation

APPLICANT: Ann Sennewald

LOCATION: 326 South Pitt Street

ZONE: RM/Residential

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

(Insert sketch here)

NOTE: This docket item requires a roll call vote.

I. ISSUE:

The applicant is requesting approval of a Permit to Demolish for the complete demolition of the existing one story sunroom addition at the rear of the historic brick building at 326 South Pitt Street and for the re-capsulation of the same rear wall with a new one story sunroom addition. The existing one story frame addition measures approximately 8' long by 10' wide. It capsulates the rear (east) wall of the two story brick ell at the back of the house. The proposed new one story addition will be 11' long by 13'8" wide. It will also capulate the rear wall of the two story brick ell and will extend beyond the ell to the south property line, closing off the dogleg along the south side of the rear ell.



Figure 1 Existing rear elevation

The rear of the house is visible from Wolfe Street, with the view somewhat obscured by the rear fence and the addition at 328 South Pitt Street.



Figure 2 View from Wolfe Street

II. HISTORY:

The row of four houses at 320-326 South Pitt Street were constructed between 1902 and 1907, according to the Sanborn Atlas maps. The two story brick houses were constructed with narrower rear brick ells. The front facades display modest late Victorian detailing. Several of the houses in the row of four, including that at 326 South Pitt Street, have had alterations to front doors and windows which seek to give them an earlier appearance. These additions most likely were made in the last quarter of the 20th century. As early as the 1920s, some of the houses had

frame additions or porches added to the rear and today all four have additions. The house at 326 South Pitt Street had a one story frame addition by 1941, according to the Sanborn Atlas of that year. However, from the footprint on the map, it appears that this addition was smaller than the present addition. Staff did not locate any record of BAR review for the house at 326 South Pitt Street.

III. ANALYSIS:

The proposed addition and alterations comply with the zoning ordinances requirements. On April 13, 2006, the Board of Zoning Appeals granted a request for a variance to replace and enlarge the existing rear one-story sunroom addition reducing required open space from 413 square feet to 368 square feet (44 feet) (BZA Case #2006-0010). However, Zoning Staff had recommended denial of the request. It was the opinion of Staff that there was no hardship and that the proposal would have an adverse affect on the development of the block. The interior of this portion of the block is open and visually unobstructed and Staff is concerned that the proposed addition will continue the pattern of the depletion of limited visual and useable open space.

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 does not believe any of the above criteria are met. The one story addition that is to be demolished is not historic. It appears to post date the apparently smaller addition seen on the 1941 Sanborn Atlas. Certainly the present appearance of the addition, with T-111 siding and full height windows, is that of the latter part of the 20th century. While the rear wall of the historic rear ell will be capsulated, it has been capsulated previously and there will be no new demolition

of this brick wall. Staff commends the applicant for retaining the dogleg. Although the dogleg will not be visible to the public once the new addition has been constructed, the original footprint and massing of the house will be retained and will be visible from the interior of the property.

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 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 be taken to prevent the spread of rodents from the construction site to the surrounding community and sewers.

Historic Alexandria:

The design of the addition seems incompatible with the simplicity of the neighboring homes. Also, the HVAC unit on the roof would be prominently visible, even with screening.

Alexandria Archaeology:

There is low potential for this project to disturb significant archaeological resources. No archaeological action is required.

Transportation and Environmental Services:

R-1 City Code Section 8-1-22 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 & Environmental Services. (T&ES)

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)