

ISSUE: Addition and alterations

APPLICANT: St. Paul's Episcopal Church

LOCATION: 228 S. Pitt Street

ZONE: RM/Residential

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

1. That existing brick be used to the greatest extent possible to infill the arched entrance to the left of the proposed new entranceway;
2. That the BAR approval is conditioned upon approval of an encroachment ordinance by the Planning Commission and City Council;
3. That the BAR Approval is conditioned upon approval of the Special Use Permit to waive the required off-street parking by the Planning Commission and City Council;
4. That the applicant not allow any metal detection to be conducted on the property, unless authorized by Alexandria Archaeology; and,
5. That the notes below be included in the General Notes of all site plans and on all site plan sheets that involve demolition or ground disturbance (including sheeting and shoring and grading) so that on-site contractors are aware of the requirement:

Contact Alexandria Archaeology (703-838-4399) two weeks prior to any ground disturbing activity (such as coring, grading, filling, vegetation removal, undergrounding utilities, pile driving, landscaping and other excavations as defined in Section 2-151 of The Zoning Ordinance) on this property. City archaeologists will provide on-site inspections to record significant finds.

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.

BOARD ACTION, MAY 17, 2006: The Board combined the discussion of docket item #'s 8 & 9. The Chairman called the question of the Staff recommendations which was:

For docket item #8 concerning the demolition and capsulation:

1. Approval of the proposed demolition/capsulation for Damascus House and portions of Wilmer Hall; and,
2. Restudy of the proposed demolition on the second and third stories of the Duke Street elevation of Wilmer Hall.

For docket item #9 concerning the Certificate of Appropriateness for changes to Wilmer Hall and Damascus House:

3. Deferral for restudy of the new Duke Street entrance at Wilmer Hall;
4. Deferral of new two story bay window at Wilmer Hall;
5. Elimination of the proposed changes to the Pitt Street entrance at Wilmer Hall;
6. Deferral for restudy of the trash room door at Wilmer Hall;
7. Deferral for restudy of the door of the proposed addition; and,
8. Elimination of the proposed metal louvers for the basement windows at Damascus House;

If the Board should approve the plans, Staff recommends that the approval include the following conditions:

1. That the BAR approval is conditioned upon approval of an encroachment ordinance by the Planning Commission and City Council;
2. That the BAR Approval is conditioned upon approval of the Special Use Permit to waive the required off-street parking by the Planning Commission and City Council;
3. That the applicant not allow any metal detection to be conducted on the property, unless authorized by Alexandria Archaeology; and,
4. That the notes below be included in the General Notes of all site plans and on all site plan sheets that involve demolition or ground disturbance (including sheeting and shoring and grading) so that on-site contractors are aware of the requirement:

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The vote on the motion was 7-0.

REASON: The Board agreed with the Staff recommendations and believed that Wilmer Hall was an important historic structure in the historic district and that while the overall parti proposed was acceptable, that significant changes in the design were needed to respect the historic building.

SPEAKERS: Thomas Kerns, project architect, spoke in support

Murney Keleher, representing the Historic Alexandria Foundation, spoke in opposition

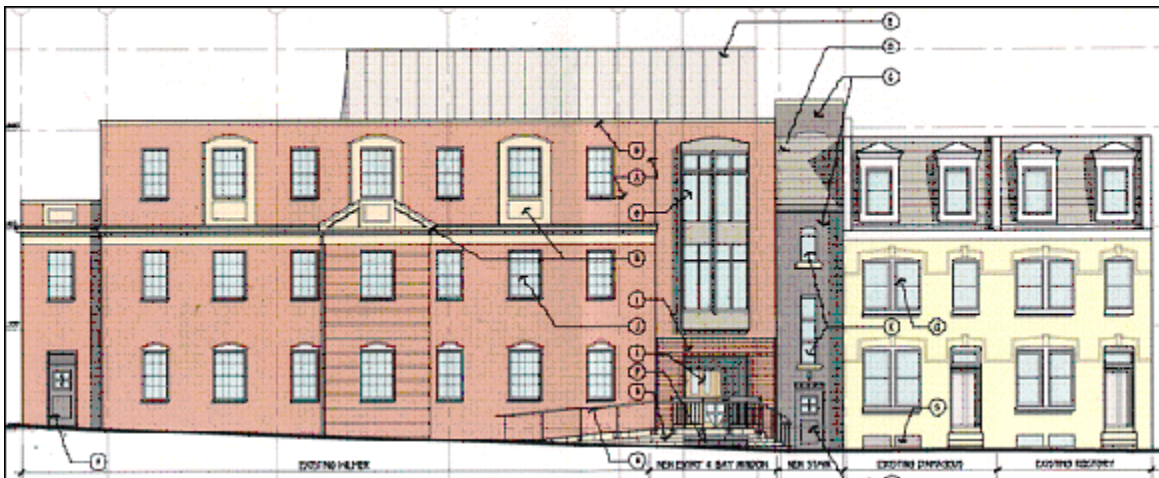
Lawrence O'Connor, 207 South Lee Street, spoke in opposition

(Insert sketch here)

NOTE: Docket item #8 must be approved before this docket item may be considered.

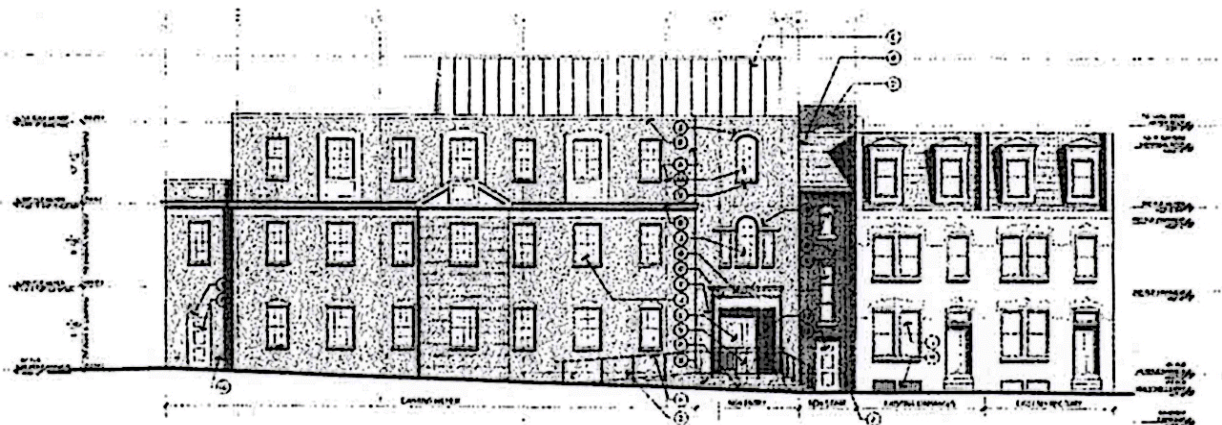
I. **ISSUE:**

The applicant is requesting approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness for a number of alterations at Wilmer Hall, an education building located to the south of St. Paul's Episcopal Church sanctuary on Pitt Street and for an elevator and stair tower addition between Wilmer Hall and Damascus House, a former residence now used for church meeting space and located at 413 Duke Street. The work is part of a major renovation of those two facilities intended to improve functioning and gain handicapped accessibility. The proposed work is described in greater detail below:



Original Proposal, Duke Street Elevation

proposed alterations included new bay window and new large institutional entry



Revised Proposal, Duke Street Elevation, bay window eliminated and entry revised

Wilmer Hall - A new entrance will be created on the south side of the building facing Duke Street in the easternmost bay. The existing window and arched entrance vestibule will be replaced with a new, larger accessible entrance. The area to the left of the new entranceway will be infilled with brick similar to the existing. A brick sample will be available at the hearing. The new entranceway will be centered below the Palladian window in the second story and will have a simple painted wood surround and entablature. The 7' wide entranceway will open onto a 9' wide vestibule area and then to a pair of natural finish wood and glass doors. The doors will have sidelights and each leaf of the doors will have four rectangular lights. There will be recessed down lighting within the vestibule area in front of the doors and thus no exterior lighting fixtures. This proposed new entranceway is somewhat narrower than the previous design and has a lighter, wood surround. Also new is the black pin-mounted letter sign reading "Saint Paul's" on the entablature above the new entranceway.

The new entranceway will be accessed by both a handicapped ramp and a set of stairs. The ramp will extend along the south wall of the building, approaching the entranceway from the west. It will be approximately 18' long, 4' wide and will have a 1/12 slope. The walls of the ramp will be faced in limestone, with a section of stacked slate in front of the doors. The surface of the ramp will be limestone. The steps, will share the landing with the handicapped ramp and will approach the landing from the east. Like the ramp, the steps will be of limestone. A grey painted metal railing will extend along the ramp, across the landing and down the stairs. The railing will consist of widely spaced plain pickets on the ramp and more closely spaced pickets with a curved terminus on the steps. The segment of railing in front of the doors will have more detail, including a centered Episcopal shield. The shield will be monochromatic and handcrafted. A detail of the shield has been provided. There will be recessed lighting in the wall for the ramp and steps. The proposed new ramp and stairs are as previously designed except that the area of contrasting slate on the limestone ramp has been reduced.

On the second floor above the entranceway, the existing tripartite Palladian style window will remain. On the third story, the existing rectangular window head with flat lintel will be replaced an arched window surmounted by an arched lintel of a soldier course of rubbed brick. The two story metal bay that had been proposed for this area in the previous submission has been eliminated.

A new doorway will be inserted in the westernmost bay of the south wall facing Duke Street on the first story where there is now a window. The doorway, which will be off of a trash room, will consist of a white painted wood panel door with wood louvers above. There will be recessed lighting in the wall for this door. The previous plans showed this door to be a grey metal door with metal louvers.

The existing primary entrance on the west side of the building facing Pitt Street will be refurbished. The existing paired wood paneled doors and diamond-pane transom will be

restored, rather than replaced with a single door and clear glass transom as had been proposed in the previous submission.

The existing double hung, true divided light, wood windows will be replaced with new double hung, simulated divided light, wood windows to match the existing in size and configuration (with the exception of the new arched window described above). According to the architect, the windows will be Heritage Series windows by Kolbe and Kolbe. These windows have an aluminum exterior muntin bar with a width of 5/8".

As part of the renovation, a new HVAC system will be installed. A roof top unit (RTU), anticipated to be approximately 8' tall, and ductwork will be located on the roof of Wilmer Hall, toward the northeast corner. The equipment will be screened by an 9' high screen wall clad in grey standing seam metal. The screen wall will extend around all four sides of the equipment area, with a opening on the north side toward the east end. The wall will be slanted in toward the top approximately 5 degrees on the north, west and south sides. Due to space constraints, the wall will not be slanted on the east side. The screen will be 38' back from the front (west) wall, 10' back from the north wall and 9' back from the south wall of the building. The applicant has provided a sightline drawing from the corner of Duke and South Pitt Streets to illustrate the appearance of Wilmer Hall with the screening. The plans for the HVAC and screening have been altered from the previous submission in that the RTU unit itself is smaller and the screen wall has been pulled back somewhat on all sides except the rear (east).

Damascus House - The existing basement level windows are currently covered with wood panels. The plans call for these openings to function as air intakes with painted metal louvers. Decorative metal grills will be placed in front of the louvers. The applicant has provided a specification sheet for these grills. In the previous submission, the metal louvers were proposed without the decorative grills.

Addition - A new three story elevator and stair tower will be constructed in the private alleyway between Wilmer Hall and Damascus House. The 32' long addition will fill the full width of the approximately 7.5' wide alley. It will be set back approximately 2' from the face of Wilmer Hall and slightly more from the face of Damascus House. Only the south facade of the addition, facing Duke Street, will be visible from the public right-of-way. The sheathing of the addition has been revised and it will be now be clad in a dark red/grey brick. A brick sample will be available at the hearing. The addition will have a corbeled brick cornice and mansard-like roof form. The ridge line of this roof will be even with that of the mansard roof at Damascus House. The roof will be clad in grey metal shingles similar to those on Damascus House. The applicant has provided a specification sheet for these shingles. The elevator shaft will rise approximately 9' above the ridge of the shingle clad roof, but is not likely to be readily visible from Duke Street as it will be set back approximately 23' from the face of the addition. The addition will have a grey painted wood panel door with a panel in the lower part and four lights above. There will be

a long window with three parts in the second story and an arched window above in the third story. These will be wood windows and appear to be fixed. There have been minor alterations to this piece of the project. The door has been changed from a metal to wood panel door, there are now what appear to be brick lintels over the windows in the second and third stories and a slightly elaborated corbeled brick cornice above at the roofline.

II. HISTORY:

As discussed in docket item #8, St. Paul's Church was founded in 1809. The Gothic Revival style church building at 228 South Pitt Street was constructed in 1817-1818 according to plans by Benjamin Latrobe. Wilmer Hall was constructed at the corner of South Pitt and Duke Streets in 1955 according to plans by Delos H. Smith. The three story, brick-faced education building mixes liturgical symbolism and Colonial Revival details with a more modern aesthetic. Damascus House, located at 413 Duke Street, a two story brick building with a third story in the mansard, attained its present appearance circa 1905.

On February 10, 1955, the Board of Architectural Review approved the design for Wilmer Hall, the new educational building, as well as the design for the arcade and courtyard between Wilmer and the sanctuary and renovations to Norton Hall. A number of other relatively minor projects including signs, fencing and handicapped accessibility have been approved by the Board for St. Paul's over the years.

III. ANALYSIS:

The subject property is zoned RM, residential. The proposed addition and alterations comply with the zoning ordinance requirements conditioned upon the approval of a special use permit to waive required parking and an encroachment ordinance for the bay window, steps and ramp located in the public right-of way.

The applicant is required to obtain a special use permit approval to waive the required off-street parking because the improvements to the church will exceed 33 1/3 percent of the assessed value of the church. This case (SUP2006-0038) is scheduled for the June 6, 2006 Planning Commission hearing.

The new steps, landing and handicapped ramp facing Duke Street are located in the public right-of-way and will require City Council approval of an encroachment ordinance. The encroachment case (ENC2006-00001) is scheduled for the June 6, 2006 Planning Commission hearing.

Section 3-1106(B) of the zoning ordinance requires each residential lot to provide open and usable space in the amount of 35 percent of the lot or amount existing on June 24, 1992. The subject property is below the 35 percent requirement (8, 239.7 square feet) and is allowed to count all existing open space on the lot, calculated at 5,198 square feet. The proposed elevator

and stair tower addition is located in an area of less than 8 feet in width. Applicants are permitted to build into open space less than 8 feet in width without diminishing complying open space (defined as 8 feet by 8 feet in minimum dimension).

Section 6-403(B) of the zoning ordinance requires that all mechanical equipment be concealed by exterior architectural materials or features of the same type and quality used on the exterior walls of the building.

Staff believes the project goals are appropriate. The addition and alterations seek to upgrade the historic facility to allow for more efficient functioning well into the 21st century and do so with relatively minimal intervention. Staff believes that the recent alterations to the plans address all areas of previous concern. The proposed project respects the varied architecture of the components of the St Paul's campus and complies with the Design Guidelines.

Wilmer Hall entrance bay alterations- Staff believes the new wider entranceway with combined steps and handicapped ramp is an appropriate solution to provide accessibility for Wilmer Hall. This allows the Pitt Street entrance, which was designed as the primary entrance, to remain unaltered. The revised design of the entranceway, with narrower opening and lighter surround is compatible with the Colonial- inspired detailing of Wilmer Hall and with the smaller scale residential entrances of the single family houses along the 400 block of Duke Street. Although the shield motif remains in the railing at the landing, Staff is no longer as concerned about the institutional character of this element, given the other positive changes that have been made to the redesign of this bay. Staff recommended that the applicant use discrete signage, rather than irreversible architectural changes to signal the use of the building and this bay. The applicant is now showing a small sign above the door. Staff does recommend that to the greatest extent possible, existing brick be salvaged to infill the arched entrance to the left of the new entrance, rather than using new brick.

Most notable among the recent changes is the elimination of the proposed new two story metal window. Staff and Board felt that this bay was visually overwhelming and incompatible with the building and surrounding residential neighborhood. In addition, the new bay required the elimination of the existing tripartate Palladian window that Staff believed to be significant to Smith's design for Wilmer Hall. The elimination of the proposed bay window and the scaling down of the entranceway allow this easternmost bay of Wilmer Hall on Duke Street to read as an integral part of the original building. The very minimal alteration proposed for the third story window is compatible with the vocabulary of the 1955 building.

With the elimination of the projecting bay, only the ramp, landing and stairs will require the approval of an encroachment ordinance by City Council.

Wilmer Hall window replacement - Staff has no objection to the proposed replacement of the

existing 50-year-old windows, providing the replacement windows closely replicate the appearance of the existing windows. The Board's Design Guidelines discourage the use of simulated divided light windows on windows that are readily visible from the public way, as is the case here (Windows - page 2). However, the Board has been somewhat more flexible in approving the use of simulated divided light windows for more recent buildings. Staff does note the relatively recent date of construction for Wilmer Hall (1955) and suggests that simulated divided light windows may be acceptable in this instance.

Wilmer Hall rooftop HVAC and screening- Staff understands the need for the installation of a modern HVAC system and is pleased that the multiple window air conditioning units in Wilmer Hall will be eliminated by this upgrade. While the rooftop alterations are unfortunate, Staff believes the applicant has worked to reduce the footprint of the HVAC to the extent possible. As noted above, Section 6-403(B) of the zoning ordinance requires that all mechanical equipment to be concealed by exterior architectural materials or features of the same type and quality used on the exterior walls of the building. The ordinance also allows the Board to waive this requirement if it determines no screening to be more appropriate. In this case, Staff believes screening is preferable to no screening, given the size of the mechanical units. Staff does not believe the use of an architectural screen that is more closely related to the material and style of the building, such as a brick or stucco wall, would be a better solution. Given the height and size of the screenwall, a brick or stucco wall would have the confusing appearance of a fourth story. The proposed grey metal will not read as a story and should recede against the sky. Staff believes the HVAC and screening as proposed are acceptable.

Wilmer Hall west end door - Staff has no objection to the proposed alteration of a single window at the west end of the south facade to a wood paneled door with wood louvers.

Wilmer Hall front entrance - Staff is pleased with the revision to the plans that allows the existing double doors and diamond-pane transom which are original to the building to be retained and restored.

Elevator and stair tower addition - Staff has no major objection to the proposed addition. The footprint and height of the addition have been kept to the minimum required to fulfill the desired function. The addition is set back slightly from the faces of the adjoining building and is respectful in its design. The materials and massing of the addition relate to the residential architecture of the block, particularly to the adjacent Damascus house at 413 Duke Street. Staff notes that the applicant has made a number of changes to meet Staff and Board concerns, including the use of a darker brick that will remain unpainted. The darker brick will relate the addition to the red brick Wilmer Hall while also causing the addition to recede visually. Other positive alterations include the revision of the door from metal to wood panel and the addition of a corbeled cornice and lintels above the windows. These elements serve to connect the addition

to the architectural traditions of the 19th and early 20th centuries as seen in the adjacent buildings.

Damascus House windows - Staff has no objection to the proposed alterations. Decorative metal grills have traditionally been used on basement level windows and they will serve here to screen the new metal louvers.

In addition, Staff notes the conditions of Alexandria Archaeology and has included them as a condition.

IV. STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Therefore, Staff recommends approval of the application with the following conditions:

1. That existing brick be used to the greatest extent possible to infill the arched entrance to the left of the proposed new entranceway;
2. That the BAR approval is conditioned upon approval of an encroachment ordinance by the Planning Commission and City Council;
3. That the BAR Approval is conditioned upon approval of the Special Use Permit to waive the required off-street parking by the Planning Commission and City Council;
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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 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-2 Roof drainage systems must be installed so as neither to impact upon, nor cause erosion/damage to adjacent property.
- C-3 A soils report must be submitted with the building permit application.
- C-4 New construction must comply with the current edition of the Uniform Statewide Building Code (USBC).
- C-5 Alterations to the existing structure must comply with the current edition of the Uniform Statewide Building Code (USBC).
- C-6 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-7 Required exits and facilities shall be accessible for persons with disabilities.

Historic Alexandria:

St. Paul's is a significant structure, designed by Benjamin Latrobe and built in 1817 after a Gothic Revival style. Proposed plans for an ADA ramp near the sanctuary seem appropriate. Although plans for the new entry on Duke Street have a contemporary appearance, they seem compatible with the simplicity of the original design.

Alexandria Archaeology:

- F-1 Designed by architect Benjamin Latrobe, St. Paul's Church was constructed on this lot in 1817. During the Civil War, the property was used as a hospital by the Union army. The property contained a mess house, dead house, pump (well), two sinks (privies), a wood house, and the surgeon's quarters. The property therefore has the potential to yield archaeological resources that could provide insight into religious activities in 19th-century Alexandria and into military use during the war. However, the ground disturbance associated with this project is minimal, and there has been previous disturbance

BAR CASE #2006-0053
June 7, 2006

associated with expansions of the church. None of the known resources on the lot are located in the areas of the proposed ground disturbance.

- 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 Contact Alexandria Archaeology (703-838-4399) two weeks prior to any ground disturbing activity (such as coring, grading, filling, vegetation removal, undergrounding utilities, pile driving, landscaping and other excavations as defined in Section 2-151 of The Zoning Ordinance) on this property. City archaeologists will provide on-site inspections to record significant finds.
- R-3 The applicant should not allow any metal detection to be conducted on the property, unless authorized by Alexandria Archaeology.
- R-4 The above statements in R-1, R-2, and R-3 must appear in the General Notes of all site plans and on all site plan sheets that involve demolition or ground disturbance (including sheeting and shoring and grading) so that on-site contractors are aware of the requirement.