

Docket Item # 10
BAR CASE #2006-0060

BAR Meeting
June 7, 2006

ISSUE: Demolition and Capsulation
APPLICANT: David Canfield by Linda Serabian
LOCATION: 219 North Royal Street
ZONE: RM/Residential

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Staff recommends denial of the Permit to Demolish and Capsulate. In the alternative, if the Board recommends approval of the Permit to Demolish and Capsulate, staff recommends the following conditions:

1. Large scale 4" x 5" negative black and white record photographs to Historic American Building Survey Standards are to be made of the facade and rear of building as well as interior and exterior of the area to be demolished. These photographs are to be approved by staff prior to the issuance of a building permit. Two sets of these photographs together with the one set of negatives are deposited at both the Special Collections, Alexandria Pubic Library as well as the Alexandria Archives and Record;
2. Measured drawings prepared to Historic American Building Survey Standards of the interior and exterior of the area to be demolished are to be made and approved by staff prior to the issuance of a building permit. The drawings are to be deposited at both the Special Collections, Alexandria Pubic Library as well as the Alexandria Archives and Record; and,
3. Physical design detail elements that are to be removed may be retained by the City of Alexandria to be determined at the discretion of the Director of the Lyceum and deposited in the collections of the Lyceum in consultation with Staff of the Department of Planning & Zoning.

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 residential rowhouse at 219 North Royal Street. Those portion to be demolished and capsulated include: the southern portion of the rear roof, measuring approximately 11'6" in width. This section of the roof would be demolished entirely including the dormer and replaced with a new reconfigured roof. Portions of the rear flounder, its roof and a portion of the rear (west) wall of the existing house will also be demolished to permit construction of a new third floor addition at the rear.

II. HISTORY:

219 North Royal Street is a two-story, three bay residential rowhouse that was constructed between 1811 and 1814 by James McGuire according to Ethelyn Cox's *Historic Alexandria, Virginia: Street* (pp.150-151). The house was fully completed by 1814 because tax records show that Noblett Herbert was the tenant of 219 North Royal Street at that time.

McGuire (1772-1850) was a well known "House Joiner" in the late 18th and early 19th centuries who built numerous houses in Alexandria including 217 North Royal Street (ca. 1796, restyled in the late 1850s) which was his residence; 221 North Royal Street (ca. 1832); 1117 and 1119 Prince Street (1816-1818); 312 Queen Street (1796, see, Marilyn Burke, *312 Queen Street: A History of an 18th Century Alexandria House*, 1987) and 319, 3221, 323 and 325 Queen Street (1818). Over his long career, McGuire continued to build essentially the same house even though architectural styles and fashions changed considerably over his lifetime. Maguire was one of Alexandria's most prominent citizens according to Penny Morrill (*Who Built Alexandria? Architects in Alexandria 1750-1900*, 1979, p.30). McGuire was the first commander of the Friendship Fire Company represented the Booke Masonic Lodge at the banquet honoring the Marquis de Lafayette in Alexandria in 1825 and appointed Superintendent of Police. In 1830 he was appointed by President Andrew Jackson as Surveyor of the District of Columbia and Inspector of Revenue for the Port of Alexandria.

219 North Royal Street was the home of Mangum Weeks and his wife in the late 1930s and 1940s. Weeks was one of the band of prominent early 20th century historic preservation advocates and was responsible for the re-discovery of the copper plate of the 1798 Gilpin Map of Alexandria which he published in a limited edition in 1944. The map was drawn by Col. George Gilpin, engraved by Thomas Clarke of New York in 1798 and published by John V. Thomas at Alexandria in 1799. The Gilpin map is the classic rendition of the expanded 18th century town plan of Alexandria.

The exterior and interior of 219 North Royal Street when it was the Weeks home was published in Derring Davis, Stephen Dorsey and Ralph Cole Hall, *Alexandria Houses, 1750-1830* (New York, Bonanza Books, 1946), pp.76-77, although these authors mis-characterize the house as "well illustrat[ing] pre-Revolutionary masonry." However, they do note that the house has a "characteristic...long 'flounder' ell..."

While Staff has no specific information regarding the date of construction of the rear ell, however, the western section is likely contemporaneous with the construction of the main historic block. The easternmost portion has been extensively re-worked and is essentially a 20th century addition.

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?

In the opinion of Staff, this is an important early 19th residential structure that is significant for its architecture, builder and associational values and meets criterion #'s 1, 2, 3, 5 & 6. Staff believes that the proposed demolition represents a significant loss of the early architectural patrimony of the historic district. The *Design Guidelines* state: "The Boards actively seek to retain the existing historic fabric of the historic districts and strongly discourage the demolition of any portion of an 18th or early 19th century structure." Therefore, staff recommends that the Permit to Demolish and Capsulate be denied.

In the alternative, if the Board approves the proposed demolition, staff believes that this is such an important structure that the section to be demolished should be recorded both by photographs and measured drawings to the standards of the Historic American Building Survey. The recordation must be approved by staff prior to the issuance of a demolition or building permit. Two copies of such recordation must be approved and deposited at the Local History Collections of the Alexandria Public Library and at the City of Alexandria Archives.

IV. **STAFF RECOMMENDATION:**

Staff recommends denial of the Permit to Demolish and Capsulate. In the alternative, if the Board recommends approval of the Permit to Demolish and Capsulate staff recommends the following conditions:

1. Large scale 4" x 5" negative black and white record photographs to Historic American

Building Survey Standards are to be made of the facade and rear of building as well as interior and exterior of the area to be demolished. These photographs are to be approved by staff prior to the issuance of a building permit. Two sets of these photographs together with the one set of negatives are deposited at both the Special Collections, Alexandria Public Library as well as the Alexandria Archives and Record;

2. Measured drawings prepared to Historic American Building Survey Standards of the interior and exterior of the area to be demolished are to be made and approved by staff prior to the issuance of a building permit. The drawings are to be deposited at both the Special Collections, Alexandria Public Library as well as the Alexandria Archives and Record; and,
3. Physical design detail elements that are to be removed may be retained by the City of Alexandria to be determined at the discretion of the Director of the Lyceum and deposited in the collections of the Lyceum in consultation with staff of the Department of Planning & Zoning.

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.

Historic Alexandria:

The windows should be wood clad, not aluminum. The proposed window designs should be reconsidered. In proposed elevation 1, removing the dormer window and installing the indicated fixed windows would not be appropriate for this early 19th century house.