

Docket Item # 12
BAR CASE# 2006-0095

BAR Meeting
June 7, 2006

ISSUE: Construction of a new outbuilding

APPLICANT: Douglas and Grace Marie Turner by Stephanie Dimond

LOCATION: 415 Wolfe Street

ZONE: RM/Residential

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

1. The cornice of the new outbuilding be corbelled rather than dented;
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;
3. 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; and,
4. The above statements must appear in the General Notes of the site plan so that on-site contractors are aware of the requirements.

(Insert sketch here)

I. ISSUE:

The applicant is requesting approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness for the construction of a new freestanding brick outbuilding at the residential townhouse at 415 Wolfe Street. The new outbuilding will be located just to the south of the existing pool area in an open area of the front yard. The garden/mechanical/pool equipment house will be approximately 12'6" in overall height, 16' in length and 11' in width. It will be constructed of brick to match the existing historic structure with a dentiled cornice with a return at each end and a standing seam metal roof at an 8/12 slope. The side elevations (north and south) will have three window openings with decorative metal grilles in a crossed pattern. The east and west elevations will each have a pair of wood doors with decorative metal grilles in a pattern to emulate the windows in the side elevations with a circular glazed window with wood muntins centered above each pair of doors.

II. HISTORY:

415 Wolfe Street is a freestanding two story brick flounder center hall plan residential townhouse whose nucleus dates from ca.1788 according to Ethelyn Cox in *Alexandria Street by Street* (p.199). The east wing and loggia were largely re-worked by Ward Brown in ca. 1930. Brown was a prominent local who had been classically trained in Paris at the *Ecole des Beaux-Arts* as an architect. Brown had been responsible for the 1930 proposal for the restoration of the 100 block of Prince Street that served as an early impetus for the renovation of private buildings in Old Town. He was the first appointed architect member of the Old and Historic Alexandria District Board of Architectural Review when it was originally established in 1946.

Last year, the Board approved an addition (BAR Case #2005-0023, 3/2/05) as well as a new, enlarged front porch, skylights, fence and other alterations to this residence (BAR Case #2005-0151, 7/6/05).

III. ANALYSIS:

Proposed pool house complies with applicable, setbacks, floor area and open space requirements in the RM zone.

The new outbuilding is visible through the open gates into the yard of the house, but is otherwise screened by the brick wall surrounding the property.

Staff has no objection to the construction of the new pool equipment building at this property. However, Staff does have concerns regarding the design detailing of the proposed building. In the opinion of Staff, the design detailing of the proposed new outbuilding is too literal in its rendition of the character and details of the existing historic architecture of the residential complex. For example, the proposed use of matching brick and brick dentiled cornice will serve to confuse an observer of the date of construction, in the opinion of Staff.

The *Design Guidelines* for New Residential Construction note that "direct copying of buildings

is discouraged.” and that “abstraction of historic design elements [is] preferred.” (p. 4)

Staff, therefore, suggests that the design of the outbuilding be somewhat simplified. For example, replacement of the proposed cornice with a somewhat simpler corbelled brick cornice would serve to differentiate the new pool equipment house from the historic architecture of the main historic block.

Staff notes the comments of Alexandria Archaeology and has included them as a condition.

IV. STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends approval of the application with the following conditions:

1. The cornice of the new outbuilding be corbelled rather than dentiled;
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;
3. 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; and,
4. The above statements must appear in the General Notes of the site plan so that on-site contractors are aware of the requirements.

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 New construction must comply with the current edition of the Uniform Statewide Building Code (USBC).
- C-4 Alterations to the existing structure must comply with the current edition of the Uniform Statewide Building Code (USBC).
- C-5 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.

Office of Historic Alexandria:

No comments were received.

Alexandria Archaeology:

- F-1 This property has the potential to yield significant archaeological resources dating to the 18th and 19th centuries. The possibility exists for the recovery of materials that could provide insight into the lives of Quakers and African Americans in Alexandria. The primary significance of the site stems from its association with John Butcher, a merchant and member of one of City's prominent Quaker families. The nucleus of the house at 415 Wolfe may date from at least the 1780s, and in 1783, the first Quaker meeting in Alexandria may have been held in John Butcher's residence on the property. In addition, the 1877 G.M. Hopkins Insurance Atlas indicates that there were at least three other residences on the current lot near the corner of Wolfe and S. Royal Streets. The corner property also served as a barbershop for Jimmy Redd, an African American businessman. While the proposed addition is small and is not in the vicinity of any of the known structures on the lot, there is the potential for construction activities to uncover buried evidence of past activities.

- .R-1 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-2 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-3 The above statements in R-1 and R-2 must appear in the General Notes of the site plan so that on-site contractors are aware of the requirements.