

Docket Item #19  
BAR CASE #2006-00142

BAR Meeting  
July 19, 2006

**ISSUE:** Demolition/encapsulation

**APPLICANT:** Lyle & Christine Roberts by Robert Bentley Adams

**LOCATION:** 509 ½ S. Fairfax Street

**ZONE:** RM/Residential

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**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 partial demolition/capsulation of the rear porch and steps as part of a project to expand and enclose the rear porch. Much of the existing rear porch will remain to be incorporated into the expanded porch.

The house backs up to the Safeway parking lot in the 500 block of South Royal Street. The alley behind the house is private. The applicant recently obtained Board approval for a new 6' high brick wall to be constructed at the rear of the property. Portions of the rear of the house are visible from Gibbon Street and the Safeway parking lot. However, these views, and particularly those of the first floor level, are limited.



**II. HISTORY:**

5091/2 South Fairfax Street is a two story wood frame Queen Anne/Second Empire Victorian style, duplex townhouse was constructed between 1891 and 1896 according to the Sanborn Insurance Maps. The front facade is simple but well proportioned, with a rectangular bay/tower capped by a polychrome slate hip turret and Mansard roof. The wood trim displays Eastlake style details. The Board approved the existing Victorian style two story rear addition with one story porch in 1992 (BAR Case #92-229, 12/6/1992). This addition was designed by Robert Bentley Adams.

**III. ANALYSIS:**

The proposed addition and alterations comply with the zoning ordinances requirements.

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 believes none of the above criteria are applicable in this case. Those portions of the rear of the house that will be affected by the demolition and capsulation were constructed in 1992.

**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:

F-1 It seems an extensive expansion for a fairly limited, compressed space, especially considering the building's relationship to flanking homes.

F-2 The re-styling of the Victorian facade with screening, more lattice and other elements also seems extreme for the given space.

Alexandria Archaeology:

F-1 Tax records indicate the presence of a free African American household on this street face in 1810 and in 1850, but the exact addresses are unknown. The 1877 G.M. Hopkins Insurance Atlas depicts a structure on the lot. The property therefore has the potential to yield archaeological resources that could provide insight into domestic activities, perhaps relating to free blacks, in 19<sup>th</sup>-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.