

Docket Item #23  
BAR CASE #2006-0146

BAR Meeting  
July 19, 2006

**ISSUE:** Addition and alterations

**APPLICANT:** Robert Bentley Adams

**LOCATION:** 513 S. Fairfax Street

**ZONE:** RM/Residential

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

1. That the fiber cement siding be smooth and that the nails not show in the installation; and,
2. That the following statement must appear in the General Notes of all site plans so that on-site contractors are aware of the requirement:  
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.

(Insert sketch here)



double casement window in the existing opening. The new window will be wood and will have simulated divided lights.

A new HVAC condenser unit will be located on the roof of the existing brick addition against the west (rear) wall of the proposed new third story addition. It will be screened with a wood lattice enclosure.

The house backs up to the Safeway building in the 500 block of South Royal Street. The alley behind the house is private and there is a 7' high brick wall at the back of the property. Views to the rear of the house are limited now and Staff does not anticipate that the proposed addition would be significantly more visible. Also before the Board is a proposed two story addition at 515 South Fairfax, the property to the south (BAR Case #s 2006-0135 & 0136). If approved, this addition will further block views to the proposed addition at 513 South Fairfax.

## **II. HISTORY:**

According to Ethelyn Cox in Historic Alexandria Virginia Street by Street, the two story brick house at 513 South Fairfax Street was constructed circa 1817 along with its twin, 511 South Fairfax Street. The modest two bay brick federal townhouses retain a high degree of integrity on the street facade. Based on historic mapping, the current two story rear brick ell at 513 South Fairfax Street appears to have been constructed between 1907 and 1912. The twin at 511 South Fairfax Street was extended to the rear before 1907 and then again more recently.

In 1967, the Board approved the restoration of the windows at 513 South Fairfax Street (7/12/67). On April 19, 2006, the Board approved demolition/capsulation for a new addition which was to start at the back wall of the main block of the house, demolishing and wrapping the existing addition on all sides (BAR Case #2006- ). A larger addition than the current proposed addition was also approved on April 19, 2006 (BAR Case #2006- ). The previously approved addition was two stories, approximately 40' long, covering the full width of the lot and extending out 14.6' beyond the rear wall of the existing addition. A one story section infilled the dogleg and a small third story addition extended out from the gable roof of the main block.

## **III. ANALYSIS:**

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

Staff believes the proposed additions and alterations are acceptable and comply with the Design Guidelines. The additions are extremely modest in size, adding a total of 306.5 gross square feet to the existing 1950 gross square feet. Moreover, as noted above, the additions will not be readily visible from the public right-of-way. The application proposes to clad the additions in fiber cement siding. The Boards have developed the following policy regarding the use of fiber cement:

1. That fiber cement siding not be installed on an historic structure;
2. That historic materials should not be removed to install fiber cement siding;
3. That fiber cement siding replace other artificial or composite siding;
4. That the nails not show in the installation of the siding; and,
5. That smooth (not wood grained) siding be installed.

As the addition is new construction, the use of fiber cement is acceptable. Items 4 and 5 should be noted and included in the conditions of the approval. Staff believes the use of simulated divided light windows is entirely appropriate here as the windows will be installed in new construction and will not be readily accessible to public view. The application does propose a simulated divided light casement window to replace an existing double hung, true divided light window in the circa 1910 brick addition. As this window on the first story of the south elevation is not visible to the public, Staff has no objection. Lastly, Staff notes the comments of Alexandria archeology and recommends that they be included in the conditions of the approval.

**IV. STAFF RECOMMENDATION:**

Staff recommends approval of the application with the following conditions:

1. That the fiber cement siding be smooth and that the nails not show in the installation; and,
2. That the following statement must appear in the General Notes of all site plans so that on-site contractors are aware of the requirement:  
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 All exterior walls within 5 feet from an interior property line shall have a fire resistance rating of 1 hour, from both sides of the wall. As alternative, a 2 hour fire wall may be provided. This condition is also applicable to skylights within setback distance. Openings in exterior walls between 3 and 5 feet shall not exceed 25% of the area of the entire wall surface (This shall include bay windows). Openings shall not be permitted in exterior walls within 3 feet of an interior lot line.
- C-2 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-3 Roof drainage systems must be installed so as neither to impact upon, nor cause erosion/damage to adjacent property.
- C-4 A soils report must be submitted with the building permit application.
- C-5 New construction must comply with the current edition of the Uniform Statewide Building Code (USBC).
- C-6 Alterations to the existing structure must comply with the current edition of the Uniform Statewide Building Code (USBC).
- C-7 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-8 Permission from adjacent property owners is required if access to the adjacent properties is required to complete the proposed construction. Otherwise, a plan shall be submitted to demonstrate the construction techniques utilized to keep construction solely on the referenced property.
- C-9 A wall location plat prepared by a land surveyor is required to be submitted to this office prior to requesting any framing inspection.

Historic Alexandria:

The proposal seems appropriate. A double hung window is more suited to the early 19<sup>th</sup> century date of this house and would be preferable to the proposed casement window on the south elevation.

Alexandria Archaeology:

- F-1 Tax records indicate the presence of free African American households on this street face in the early and mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, but the exact addresses are unknown. According to *Historic Alexandria, Virginia, Street by Street* by Ethelyn Cox, the house on this property probably dates to around 1817, when the lot was purchased by Levi Pickering. The property therefore has the potential to yield archaeological resources that could provide insight into domestic activities, perhaps relating to African Americans, 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.

Transportation and Environmental Services:

- R-1 City Code Section 8-122 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 and Environmental Services.
- R-2 Applicant shall be responsible for repairs to the adjacent city right-of-way if damaged during construction activity.
- R-3 Any improvements to the city rightof-way such as curbing, sidewalk, driveway aprons, etc. must be city standard design.
- 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)
- C-3 Change in point of attachment or removal of existing overhead utility services will require undergrounding or a variance. (Sec. 5-3-3)