

Docket Item # 8
BAR CASE #2006-0127

BAR Meeting
September 6, 2006

ISSUE: Demolition and Capsulation
APPLICANT: James Bognet and Carole Soloman by Linda Serabian
LOCATION: 509 Cameron Street
ZONE: RM/Residential

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Staff recommends approval of the Permit to Demolish and Capsulate.

BOARD ACTION, JULY 5, 2006: The Board combined discussion of docket item #'s 7 & 8. On a motion by Ms. Quill, seconded by Mr. Wheeler the Board deferred the application for restudy. The vote on the motion was 5-0.

REASON: The Board was concerned about any demolition associated with an early 19th century building and with the intact flounder at the rear of the house. The Board also expressed concern that the propose addition would significantly alter the existing house. In addition, the Board requested an elevation drawing showing the east elevation of the proposed addition.

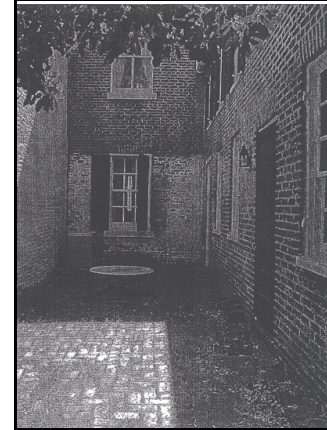
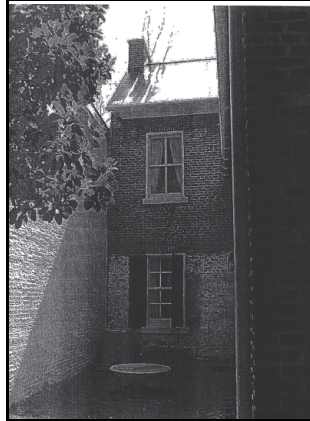
SPEAKERS: Linda Serabian, project architect, spoke in support
Todd Adams, neighbor, 507 Cameron Street, spoke in opposition

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Staff recommends approval of the Permit to Demolish and Capsulate.

(Insert sketch here)

Update: Since the public hearing of July 5th, the applicant has somewhat modified the proposal and has reduced the overall area to be demolished and capsulated. The rear (north) wall of the flounder section is no longer proposed to be demolished and capsulated with a new rear porch.

NOTE: This docket item requires a roll call vote.



I. ISSUE:

The applicant is requesting approval of a Permit to Demolish portions of the residential townhouse at 509 Cameron Street. Those portions to be demolished are the first and second stories of the rear of the house and the east wall of the first floor of the rear flounder section. The demolition will allow for the construction of a new rear and side addition.

II. HISTORY:

509 Cameron Street is a two-story, three bay brick residential townhouse that was constructed in ca. 1804 by William Pomeroy according to Ethelyn Cox in *Alexandria Street by Street* (p.8). The rear flounder appears to be basically contemporaneous with the main historic block.

The Board approved altering the front windows from a one-over-one configuration to a six-over-six configuration in 1960 (4/13/60) and approved a new roof, skylight and a rear stairway in 1981(10/7/81).

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, Criteria 1, 3, 5 & 6 are met in this instance. Staff is generally opposed to demolition of any portions of an early 19th century residential building. Indeed, the Board's guidelines state that the Boards "strongly discourage the demolition of any portion of an 18th or early 19th century structure" (Demolition - Pages 1 & 2). However, staff believes that there are a number of mitigating factors that would permit approval of the Permit to Demolish and Capsulate the rear elevation of the house in this instance. First, the rear of the house is only minimally visible across the public surface parking lot from North St. Asaph Street. Second, the rear has been previously altered as evidenced by the paint ghost marks and the addition of a now demolished two story exterior stairway. And, third, the Board approved the proposed demolition of portions of the early 19th century rear flounder at the residence adjacent to the west at 511 Cameron Street earlier this year (BAR Case #2006-0012, 2/15/06). In that instance, staff had recommended denial of the Permit to Demolish and Capsulate, but the Board believed the minimal visibility of the proposed addition permitted approval of the associated demolition. Based on these factors, staff has no objection to approval of the Permit to Demolish and Capsulate.

IV. STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends approval of the Permit to Demolish and Capsulate.

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:

Revised proposal seems appropriate.

Alexandria Archaeology:

F-1 According to Ethelyn Cox's *Historic Alexandria, Street by Street, A Survey of Existing Early Buildings*, the house on this lot was probably constructed around 1803 by William Pomeroy. It was rented to Thomson F. Mason in 1816. The property therefore has the potential to yield significant archaeological resources which could provide insight into domestic activities in nineteenth-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 applicant must not allow metal detection to be conducted on the property, unless authorized by Alexandria Archaeology.

R-3 The above statements in R-1 and R-2 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 requirements.