

Docket Item # 15
BAR CASE #2006-0168

BAR Meeting
September 6, 2006

ISSUE: Alterations
APPLICANT: Carlos Cecchi
LOCATION: 724 South Lee Street
ZONE: RB/Residential

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Staff recommends approval of the application with the condition that the shutters be operable and sized to fit the openings.

(Insert sketch here)

I. ISSUE:

The applicant is requesting approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness to install shutters on the front of the house at 724 South Lee Street and to change the second level window on the rear of the house to a door. The two story gable roofed house is located on a steep grade so that the rear (east facade) of the house has a fully exposed basement and appears as three stories. Although constructed as separately, the house at 724 South Lee Street recently has been joined internally to the house to the south at 726 South Lee Street.

On the front, the applicant is seeking to link the two houses visually through the addition of shutters at 724 South Lee Street to match the existing shutters at 726 South Lee Street. The proposed shutters will be wood, louvered shutters painted a dark grey to match those on 726 South Lee Street. The applicant had intended to paint both houses the same color, but now only intends to repaint the already painted house at 726 South Lee Street. Staff encouraged the applicant to consider leaving 724 South Lee Street unpainted so as not to obscure the history the house as one in a row of seven similar size rowhouses, rather than an appendage to 726 South Lee Street. The house at 724 South Lee Street appears as though it may have been painted at one time, but now has what appears to be primarily an exposed red brick facade mottled with white. The applicant intends to leave this condition as is and not paint it.

On the rear, the applicant proposes to install a multi-light french door with fixed side lights where there is currently a tripartate window in the second story. The new door assembly will be the same width as the existing window assembly but will extend to the floor. (The area to be demolished is less than 25 square feet, the trigger for a Permit to Demolish). The new door assembly will be a French-style door, with simulated-divided lights, with spacer bar manufactured by Anderson. There will be a 3'6" high, painted iron railing at the bottom of the new window opening. The railing will have a simple picket design. A new exterior light will be installed beside the basement level doors at the rear of the house.

The lot at 724 South Lee Street extends from Lee Street at the front through to Potomac Street at the rear. There are very limited views to the rear of the house from Potomac Street.

II. HISTORY:

Based on historic map research, the house at 724 South Lee Street was constructed as an interior unit in a row of seven, two story brick faced cinderblock townhouses that were built between 1931 and 1941. Real Estate records indicate that the development was constructed in 1940. This date corresponds to that of the nearby Yates Garden neighborhood, which was developed by Edward Carr starting in 1940. Like Yates Garden, the modest rowhouses in the 700 block of South Lee exhibit high design standards, employing a variety of early American styles, staggered facades and rooflines and high quality materials. The row is located in the "Hooff Addition" section of Alexandria and oral tradition holds that the houses were built by Charles Hooff, a prominent local developer of the time.

In 2004, the Board approved a request for Permit to Demolish and Certificate of Appropriateness for a three story addition and alterations at 726 South Lee Street (BAR Case #s 2004-0025 & 0026).

III. ANALYSIS:

The proposed alterations comply with the zoning ordinance requirements.

Staff has no objection to the proposed installation of shutters at the front of 724 South Lee Street. Shutters are in the design vocabulary of this vaguely Colonial style house. In accordance with the *Design Guidelines*, the new wood shutters must be mounted on hardware to be operable and sized to fit the openings. Staff has no objection to the proposed replacement of the existing tripartate window in the rear with a french door and sidelights. The multi-light door and sidelights are similar to the existing window assembly and in keeping with the vocabulary of the house and its neighbors. Although no materials were provided for the proposed new exterior light, staff is satisfied that the light will be minimally, if at all visible, from the right-of-way due to the brick wall surrounding the yard and great distance between the rear of the house and Potomac Street.

IV. STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends approval of the application with the condition that the shutters be operable and sized to fit the openings.

CITY DEPARTMENT COMMENTS

Legend: C - code requirement R - recommendation S - suggestion F- finding

Code Enforcement:

- C-1 New construction must comply with the current edition of the Uniform Statewide Building Code (USBC).
- C-2 Alterations to the existing structure must comply with the current edition of the Uniform Statewide Building Code (USBC).
- C-3 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.

Historic Alexandria:

According to the color chart of historically accurate paint colors, an ochre yellow would be more appropriate.