

Docket Item # 16  
BAR CASE #2006-0171

BAR Meeting  
September 6, 2006

**ISSUE:** Replacement windows  
**APPLICANT:** Shawn Thorne  
**LOCATION:** 1322 Michigan Avenue  
**ZONE:** RB/Residential

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**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:** Staff recommends approval of the application as submitted.

(Insert sketch here)

**I. ISSUE:**

The applicant is requesting approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness for replacement windows at the residential rowhouse at 1322 Michigan Avenue. The new windows are proposed to be Anderson wood casement windows with simulated divided lights and a muntin pattern that matches the existing ones of the casement windows.

**II. HISTORY:**

1322 Michigan Avenue is a two story stone and brick end unit residential rowhouse, part of the community known as Fagelsons's Addition, most of which was constructed in 1939 and 1940. This area of Michigan Avenue was included within the original boundaries of the 1946 historic district in order to help protect the George Washington Memorial Parkway viewsheds. However, much of the area, including 1322 Michigan Avenue, is currently visually screened from the Parkway by the Mason Hall Apartments on West Abingdon Drive which were constructed in 1951. Today, the attractive Tudor Revival style houses are well over 60 years old and comprise a coherent neighborhood that is itself architecturally and historically significant, not unlike the Yates Garden neighborhood located at the south end of the historic district.

In 2001 the Board approved demolition of portions of the first story of the rear of this house including the removal of existing windows and portions of the masonry wall as part of a kitchen remodeling project. The rear of the house is not visible from the public right-of-way and, therefore, the Board did not review the design of the alterations to the rear of the rowhouse (BAR Case#2001-0267, 11/20/01).

**III. ANALYSIS:**

The window replacement complies with the zoning ordinance requirements.

Last year the Board reviewed replacement windows for one of the nearby rowhouses on Michigan Avenue and indicated that wood casement windows were an acceptable type of replacement window. However, as the case evolved over the course of almost a year the Board in the end approved aluminum clad wood casement windows with simulated divided lights (1308 Michigan Avenue, BAR Case #2004-0106, 3/2/05). In a number of other instances the Board has indicated a strong preference for aluminum clad casement windows as a replacement for metal casement windows.

Staff is aware that a number of houses in this immediate area have had replacement windows installed without the approval of the Board.

Windows are prominent features of any building, and particularly so for these houses. The small rowhouses are designed in a vaguely Tudor style vocabulary, including the use of brick and masonry veneers, steep gables and casement windows. Although a relatively modern technology at the time, metal casement windows were used in the Tudor style houses from the 1920s through

the 1940s to evoke the multi-light leaded windows of Tudor England. Here casements of varying sizes and configurations are combined in a variety of ways, including with transoms, to lend visual interest to the relatively simple houses. While there has been considerable unapproved window replacement, the majority of the houses in this development still retain their original windows. Fortunately, many of the window replacements, though unapproved, attempt to replicate the appearance of the original multi-light casement windows.

In recent years the Board has reviewed several a number of other projects in the immediate vicinity of 1322 Michigan Avenue. For example, earlier this year the Board approved a rear porch at the rowhouse at 700 Chetworth Place (BAR 2006-0015, 2/15/06). Other Board approvals have included a stone wall at 708 Devon Place (2004-0220, 10/10/2004), an addition and alterations at 706 Chetworth Place (BAR 2003-0146 & 0147, 7/16/2003) an air conditioning unit and screening at 1314 Michigan Avenue (BAR Case #2002-0134, 6/19/2002) and air conditioning unit screening and fence at 1326 Michigan Avenue (BAR Case #2002-0281, 11/20/2002). In 2004 the Board reviewed an after-the-fact replacement front entry door at 1302 Michigan Avenue (BAR Case #2004-0013, 10/20/2004). The Board denied the replacement door, believing it to be inappropriate for the style of the house. The applicant appealed the Board's decision to City Council which upheld the decision.

The Board has considered the replacement of metal casement windows in a substantial number of other instances in the historic district. For example, the Board has approved the replacement of metal casement windows for a number of rowhouses in the 400 block of Gibbon Street. In 1991 the Board denied after-the-fact installation of vinyl replacement windows at 413 Gibbon Street. That decision was appealed to City Council which upheld the Board's decision. In 2001 the Board approved the request to replace the original steel casement windows with aluminum casement windows with fixed exterior muntins matching the original windows in configuration and operation at 408 Gibbon Street (BAR Case #2001-208, 9/5/01). That same year the Board approved after-the-fact the installation of vinyl casement windows with interior muntins at 412 Gibbon (BAR Case #2001-254, 3/6/2002). In 2002 the Board approved the replacement of the existing non-original vinyl windows with wood casement windows with fixed exterior muntins in a configuration similar to the original steel windows at 406 Gibbon Street (BAR Case #2002-173, 7/17/02). The following year in 2003 the Board approved the installation of wood casement windows with fixed exterior muntins in a configuration similar to the original steel windows at 421 Gibbon Street (BAR Case #2003-169, 10/1/2003). The next year, in 2004, the Board approved wood replacement windows for the metal casement windows at 419 Gibbon Street (BAR Case #2004-0061, 5/5/04).

In the 600 block of South Pitt Street the Board also approved replacing existing metal casement windows with new wood true divided light casement windows in a rowhouse (612 South Pitt Street, BAR Case #2001-0128, 6/6/01). Additionally, on a number occasions members of the Board have expressed the opinion that metal casement windows are not a character defining

feature of a house.

In previous cases, the Board has also acknowledged that the repair of this type of window is difficult and expensive. However, the Board has recently approved the rehabilitation of metal casement windows as well as the use of new steel casement windows as part of a project for the rehabilitation of a dwelling and construction of a new addition at 211 Lee Court (BAR Case #2006-00116, 7/5/06).

While staff is of the opinion that metal casement windows are a character defining feature of these Cotswoldian style cottages, Board members have expressed the opinion that metal casement windows are not an essential part of the visual characteristics that are significant to this rowhouse style.

Thus, the Board has considered this style of window on a number of occasions and has approved a wide variety of treatments for replacement windows for houses with metal casement windows as well as the restoration of existing metal windows.

In the case of this application, therefore, staff believes that the proposed wood replacement windows can be considered consistent with the Board's previous approvals for replacement of metal casement windows and recommends approval of the application.

**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 Basement windows shall comply with the provisions for Emergency Escape and Rescue in the USBC if the basement area meets the requirements for such windows.

Historic Alexandria:

Request seems appropriate.