

Docket Item #15  
BAR CASE #2006-0196

BAR Meeting  
September 20, 2006

**ISSUE:** Alterations

**APPLICANT:** Thomas and Kathleen Valentine

**LOCATION:** 200 North Alfred Street

**ZONE:** RM/Residential

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**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:** Staff recommends approval of the brick wall and new gate with the following conditions:

1. Fence is entirely on applicant's property;
2. A running bond pattern be used for the brick work of the fence;
3. The decorative pattern of the gate be simplified;
4. 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; and,
5. The above statement 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 requirement.

(Insert sketch here)

**I. ISSUE:**

The applicant is requesting a approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness for a replacement fence and gate at the residential rowhouse at 200 North Alfred Street. The proposed fence will be constructed of brick in an English bond pattern and be approximately 27' in length and 6' in height with intermediate piers and will be capped with half round bricks. A new metal will be installed at the entrance to the sideyard. The gate will be 6' in height with a round arch above for a total height of 8' and will have decorative vine filigree pattern.

**II. HISTORY:**

200 North Alfred Street is a two story, three bay brick rowhouse dating from 1908 that was built by L.M. Dinwiddie and is one of three similar style townhouses in a row.

Staff did not locate any records of previous B.A.R. applications with respect to this property.

**III. ANALYSIS:**

Proposed fence and gate comply with zoning ordinance requirements. Fence must be located on applicant's property.

Staff has no objection to substituting a brick fence for the existing wood fence along Cameron Street. However, staff has a number of concerns about the design of the proposed fence and gate. First, staff does not believe that an English bond brick wall is appropriate. English bond is an archaic bond pattern that had largely lost favor in the colonies by the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century and is only rarely found on 18<sup>th</sup> century buildings in the historic district and then generally only in utilitarian applications (the one major exception being the Alexandria Academy building which is entirely laid up in English bond). Staff finds English bond to be an inappropriate bonding pattern for decorative brick fencing for an early 20<sup>th</sup> century residence. Staff believes that a more modern style bonding pattern such as running bond or seven or eight course American bond is more appropriate for this fence and its prominent location in the historic district.

Second, staff is concerned that the foliated vine pattern proposed for the new gate is more elaborate than that normally associated with early 20<sup>th</sup> century buildings. While decorative ironwork was widely used in the last quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, by the end of the first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, when this house was built, decorative arts were becoming more simplified than the complex surface decoration found on many objects during the Victorian era. Staff believes that the decorative pattern for the proposed gate should be somewhat simplified.

Staff notes that the existing fence is approximately .9 feet over the property line on west side. The replacement fence must be located so that it is entirely on applicant's property. Staff has therefore included a condition that the replacement fence be located entirely on the applicant's property.

Staff notes the comments of Alexandria Archaeology and has included them as a condition.

**IV. STAFF RECOMMENDATION:**

Staff recommends approval of the brick wall and new gate with the following conditions:

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4. 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; and,
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CITY DEPARTMENT COMMENTS

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

Code Enforcement:

C-1 A construction permit is required for the proposed project.

Historic Alexandria:

Request seems appropriate.

Alexandria Archaeology:

- F-1 Tax records indicate that structures were present on this street face by 1810, but the exact addresses are unknown. The G.M. Hopkins insurance atlas shows structures on the property in 1877. The property was located in a free African American neighborhood in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. The lot therefore has the potential to yield archaeological resources that could provide insight into life in 19<sup>th</sup>-century Alexandria, perhaps relating to African Americans.
- 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 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 requirement.