

Docket Item # 5
BAR CASE # 2006-0247

BAR Meeting
November 15, 2006

ISSUE: Alterations
APPLICANT: Katherine Eltzroth
LOCATION: 500 Jefferson Court
ZONE: RM/Residential

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 a number of alterations to the existing mid-20th century, free-standing house on Jefferson Court. The alterations are described in detail below:

Windows – The house currently has 16 double hung wood windows with a six-over-six configuration located on the front (west) and the north and south sides. These single glazed windows with true divided lights are probably original to the building. There are exterior storm windows over each of the windows. The applicant proposes to replace all 16 windows and storm windows with new Pella Architect Series thermal windows. The new windows will be wood and will have insulated glazing with 7/8” wide “integral light technology grilles.” The new windows will have a six-over-six configuration and will have a white finish. Each new window will fit the existing opening except for the four on the first story of the front façade. The applicant proposes to elongate these openings by 10”. The four enlarged windows will be 65” long rather than 55”. The width will not change. The brick sills on the four elongated windows will be rebuilt to match the existing.

Window Heads - The applicant also proposes to install decorative window heads matching the proposed new door head over the four elongated windows on the front façade. The heads will be constructed of wood.

Shutters – New louvered wood shutters matching the existing shutters will be installed on the four new elongated windows. The shutters will be sized to fit the window opening but *will not be operable*, to match the existing condition.

Front Door - The existing six panel wood door is proposed to be replaced with a new four panel wood door of the same dimensions.

Storm Door - The existing full view storm door will be replaced in kind.

Door Head – The applicant proposes to replace the existing pedimented door head with a new wood door head with a flat entablature similar to that at 512 Jefferson Court.

II. HISTORY:

The Jefferson Townhouse development, located on the south side of the 400 block of Wilkes Street, was constructed circa 1966 and includes 9 houses, with six facing Jefferson Court and three facing Wilkes Street. The house at 500 Jefferson Court is very similar to the house at 508 Jefferson Court. The other houses in the development have substantially different massing and orientation. The houses were constructed with modest Neo-Colonial detailing, most notably exhibited in the front door surrounds which are quite varied. Apparently, the houses have been subject to little alteration. The only record of BAR review of a project at a Jefferson Court property that Staff could locate was a recent approval of replacement windows at 508 Jefferson Court (BAR Case #2005-0296, 1/4/2006).

III. ANALYSIS:

The proposed replacement windows and doors comply with the zoning ordinance requirements.

While a number of the proposed alterations are not entirely consistent with the *Design Guidelines*, Staff believes the alterations are acceptable because they are all relatively modest, because the house dates to the mid-1960s and because the location in Jefferson Court is not as prominent as if on a main street.

Windows - The *Design Guidelines* recommend the use of true divided light windows and discourage the use of simulated divided light windows except in the least visible areas (Windows – Page 2). However, in recent years, the Board has approved the use of simulated divided light replacement windows for a number of properties and, most significantly, approved them for the house at 508 Jefferson Court, located immediately to the south of the subject property. The Board justified the use of simulated divided lights in this case because the house dated to the 1960s and was removed from a major street, and thus removed from ready access by the public. The house at 500 Jefferson Court is of the same age and the proposed simulated divided light wood windows by Pella are of the highest quality. Staff notes that the north façade of the house is directly adjacent to the sidewalk along Wilkes Street. However, Staff does not feel this is reason enough to deny the request for simulated divided light windows in this case.

Staff has no objection to lengthening the windows on the first floor of the front (west) façade. The houses in the development were designed to have some variation in features. The proposed alteration is a modest extension of that principle and is compatible with the overall design of the house.

Window Heads – Similarly, Staff has no objection to the addition of the window heads on the four first floor window of the front (west) façade. As stated above, the houses in the development were designed to have some variation in features. The proposed alteration is a modest extension of that principle and is compatible with the overall design of the house.

Shutters - While the *Design Guidelines* (Shutters – Page) recommend against the use of fixed shutters, Staff believes that they are acceptable in this case. The existing fixed wood shutters are thought to be original to the house and are typical of the Neo-Colonial buildings of the mid- to late-20th century. To require the four new longer shutters to be installed on hardware while the others remain flush against the wall would create an odd appearance.

Front Door – Staff has no objection to the proposed new front door. While a six panel door may be somewhat more consistent with the vaguely Colonial character of the house, the four panel door can not be deemed inappropriate for this mid-20th century house.

Storm Door –The proposed new full view door is exactly the type recommend by the *Design Guidelines* (Exterior Doors – Page 3).

Door Head – Staff believes the proposed door head is acceptable. The houses in the development have a variety of door surrounds that appear to have been selected randomly. The proposed change to a flat entablature is compatible with the house at 500 Jefferson Court and will not substantially diminish the sense of variety conveyed by the surrounds in the development.

IV. STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Therefore, 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 Alterations to the existing structure must comply with the current edition of the Uniform Statewide Building Code (USBC).

C-2 Additions and alterations to the existing structure and/or installation and/or altering of equipment therein requires a building permit (USBC 108.1). Five sets of plans, bearing the signature and seal of a design professional registered in the Commonwealth of Virginia, must accompany the written application (USBC 109.1).

C-3 A Construction permit will be required for the proposed project.

C-4 New construction must comply with the current edition of the Uniform Statewide Building Code (USBC).

Historic Alexandria:

No comments were received.