

Docket Item # 5  
BAR CASE #2006-0124

BAR Meeting  
January 3, 2007

**ISSUE:** Additions and alterations

**APPLICANT:** Chris & Patsy Randolph by Robert B. Adams & Associates

**LOCATION:** 5 Potomac Court

**ZONE:** RM/Residential

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Staff recommends approval of the application with the following conditions:

1. The stucco color must be submitted to Staff for review and approval;
2. The following statements must be included in the General Notes of all site plans, as well as on all site plan sheets that include ground disturbing actions:  
Contact Alexandria Archaeology (703-838-4399) two weeks prior to any ground disturbing activity (such as coring, grading, filling, vegetation removal, undergrounding utilities, pile driving, landscaping and other excavations as defined in Section 2-151 of The Zoning Ordinance) on this property. City archaeologists will provide on-site inspections to record significant finds;  
Call Alexandria Archaeology (703/838-4399) immediately if any buried historic structural remains (wall foundations, cisterns, wells, privies, 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 to record the finds.
3. The applicant must not allow metal detection to be conducted on the property, unless authorized by Alexandria Archaeology.

(Insert sketch here)

NOTE: Docket item #4 must be approved before this docket item may be considered.

**I. ISSUE:**

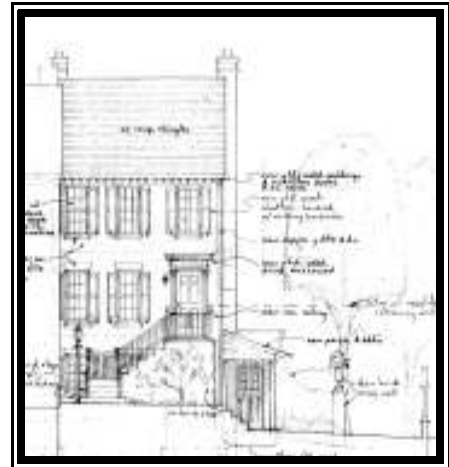
The applicant is requesting approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness for the addition of a front porch, side porch and deck, rear dormer and rear three story bay. In addition, the applicant is requesting a number of alterations to the house and site. The additions and alterations are discussed in detail below:

Front (north) elevation - All windows on the front elevation will have new wood louvered shutters. The shutters will be sized to fit the openings and will be operable. The easternmost shutters will not open fully due to the lack of space between 5 Potomac Court and its neighbor. These shutters will rest against the west wall of the adjacent house. A new painted wood door surround with a dentiled cornice is proposed..

The north elevation of the proposed new screened porch and deck addition will be largely blocked from view by an existing frame shed belonging to 5 Potomac Court and a 13' high retaining wall belonging to the adjacent property. The porch will have brick walls. There will be a large arched opening with screened panels on the north elevation. The porch will have a painted wood cornice. The deck will have painted wood railing consisting of paneled piers and straight pickets.

West side elevation - A new arched opening will be constructed on the west side of the front porch base. A new paneled wood door with multiple lights above will be installed in the frame shed attached to the west wall of the house.

Three new windows and two new doors will be added to this elevation. Two windows will be added at the second story. The northernmost window will be a six over six window to match the window below it in the first level. The second window will be at the center of elevation in the second story. Also a six over six window, it will project approximately 1' from the face of the building. The projecting window will have a copper clad shed roof and will be supported on brackets. One window will be added at the center of the elevation in



**Figure 1** - Proposed north elevation



**Figure 2** - Proposed west elevation

the first story. This window will be a round multi-light window. The doors will be added at the south end of the elevation on the first floor and ground floor levels. Both will be multi-light wood doors. The upper door will lead to the deck and will have a copper clad hood. The lower door will lead to the screened porch. According to the architect, the new windows and doors will all be wood with simulated divided lights.

The new porch will have a footprint 13' wide by 23.5' long. The long west side will have brick piers at the corners and painted wood columns between creating four full-height screened sections.

Rear (south) elevation - A multi-light wood window will be installed in the south elevation of the frame shed attached to the west wall of the house.

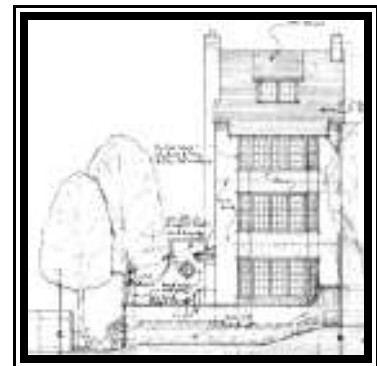
The south elevation of the new porch and deck will match the north elevation.

A new three story bay will be added to the rear elevation, extending from grade to eaves. The bay will have angled sides and wide central section. The shed roof over the bay will be clad in composition shingles to match the main roof of the house. The face of the bay will be stuccoed. The bay will have six over nine light windows on the ground and first story levels and six over nine light windows on the second story level. There will be a window on the sides of the bay on all three levels and a set of three windows across the center face of the bay on all three levels. The windows will be simulated divided light windows.

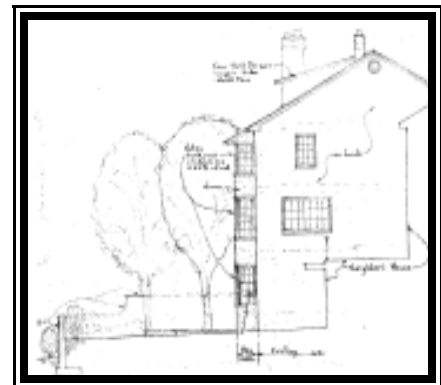
A new shed dormer will be added in the center of the rear slope of the gable roof. The dormer will have paired multi-light windows. The dormer roof will be composition shingles. The sides of the dormer will be copper. The front of the dormer will be wood.

East side elevation - The east side of the porch will have brick piers at the corners and painted wood columns between creating three full-height screened sections. There will be a door in the northernmost section. As on the other elevations, the porch will have a painted wood cornice and the deck will have painted wood railing consisting of paneled piers and straight pickets.

The east elevation of the existing house will not be altered.



**Figure 3** - Proposed south elevation



**Figure 4** - Proposed east elevation

The house at 5 Potomac Court is visible from Potomac Court, Windmill Hill Park and Union Street. A “private alley” or access easement runs across the property.

Site - A new iron lantern will be installed at the base of the steps. A new 6' high iron fence and gate will be installed in the west side yard between the frame shed and the retaining wall at the west property line. A new HVAC unit will be located adjacent to the existing unit to the south the shed. The HVAC unit will not be visible from a public right-of-way due to its placement and numerous visual obstructions. A new 6' high brick wall will be constructed along the east property line and then curving across the bottom of the property toward the west property line. No gate terminating the fence is proposed.

## II. HISTORY:

5 Potomac Court is a two story brick end unit townhouse dating from 1967. The Board approved the development of six attached and semi-attached townhouses on Potomac Court on June 8, 1966. Staff could not locate any subsequent reviews for 5 Potomac Court. In 1986, building permit #25382 allowed a replacement shed to be constructed on the west side of the house (11/12/1986).

The Board previously has approved similar alterations and additions for a number of properties on Potomac Court. In 2004, the Board approved a demolition permit and certificate of appropriateness for an addition at the ground level and a new screened porch at the first floor at the rear of 6 Potomac Court (BAR Case #s 2004-0232 & 0233, 11/3/2004). In the same year, the Board also approved a demolition permit and certificate of appropriateness for a front dormer and three story bay on the south side of 8 Potomac Court (BAR Case #'s 2004-0011 & 0012, 2/18/2004). In 2002, the Board approved permit to demolish and certificate of appropriateness for a dormer on the rear of 9 Potomac Court (BAR Case #'s 2002-0222 & 0223, 9/4/2002).

## III. ANALYSIS:

The proposed dormer, rear and side yard additions and alterations comply with the zoning ordinance requirements.

Staff believes the proposed alterations and additions are appropriate and comply with the *Design Guidelines*. The many changes proposed will substantially alter the appearance of what is now a simple Colonial style late 20<sup>th</sup> century rowhouse. However, Staff believes each of the proposed alterations is compatible with the Colonial style of the development on Potomac Court and the more eclectic styles of the district as a whole. The most radical alterations will be at the rear of the building with the proposed new porch/deck and three story bay. Staff believes these additions which are more elaborate in character and grand in scale than the original house will be acceptable as they will not be readily visible with the more modest front of the house. Staff does have several concerns and comments:

The three story bay will be a large and striking new feature on the house and will be readily visible from Windmill Hill Park. Staff believes the color of the stucco on the bay should be in a darker tone close to the brick color to minimize its visibility. The stucco color should be submitted to Staff for review and approval.

Staff also notes the comments and of Alexandria Archeology and recommends that they be included as part of the approval.

**IV. STAFF RECOMMENDATION:**

Staff recommends approval of the application with the following conditions:

1. The stucco color must be submitted to Staff for review and approval;
2. The following statements must be included in the General Notes of all site plans, as well as on all site plan sheets that include ground disturbing actions:  
Contact Alexandria Archaeology (703-838-4399) two weeks prior to any ground disturbing activity (such as coring, grading, filling, vegetation removal, undergrounding utilities, pile driving, landscaping and other excavations as defined in Section 2-151 of The Zoning Ordinance) on this property. City archaeologists will provide on-site inspections to record significant finds; and,  
Call Alexandria Archaeology (703/838-4399) immediately if any buried historic structural remains (wall foundations, cisterns, wells, privies, 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 to record the finds.
3. The applicant must not allow metal detection to be conducted on the property, unless authorized by Alexandria Archaeology.

CITY DEPARTMENT COMMENTS

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

Code Enforcement:

- F-1 Existing windows are located along an interior lot line. The applicant shall provide documentation of when the windows were installed and approved by Code Enforcement. Windows along interior lot lines shall comply with C-1 below.
- C-1 All exterior walls within 5 feet from an interior property line shall have a fire resistance rating of 1 hour, from both sides of the wall. As alternative, a 2 hour fire wall may be provided. This condition is also applicable to skylights within setback distance. Openings in exterior walls between 3 and 5 feet shall not exceed 25% of the area of the entire wall surface (This shall include bay windows). Openings shall not be permitted in exterior walls within 3 feet of an interior lot line.
- C-2 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.
- C-3 Roof drainage systems must be installed so as neither to impact upon, nor cause erosion/damage to adjacent property.
- C-4 A soils report must be submitted with the building permit application.
- C-5 New construction must comply with the current edition of the Uniform Statewide Building Code (USBC).
- C-6 Alterations to the existing structure must comply with the current edition of the Uniform Statewide Building Code (USBC).
- C-7 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.
- C-8 Permission from adjacent property owners is required if access to the adjacent properties is required to complete the proposed construction. Otherwise, a plan shall be submitted to demonstrate the construction techniques utilized to keep construction solely on the referenced property.

- C-9 A wall location plat prepared by a land surveyor is required to be submitted to this office prior to requesting any framing inspection.

Historic Alexandria:

Several components of this project should be re-considered:

- 1) The shed dormer with the copper sides, which is discouraged in the guidelines;
- 2) The front porch with the copper roof which interrupts the symmetry of the facade;
- 3) The dominant bay windows on the rear elevation. These, in conjunction with the dormer, drastically alter the appearance of the facade.

Alexandria Archaeology:

F-1 This property has potential to yield archaeological resources that could provide insight into domestic activities in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. The 1810 tax records indicate that houses were present on a lot that stretched from Union to Lee Street, parallel to Wilkes on this block. The 1877 G.M. Hopkins atlas shows several structures on the property. There may also be some potential for archaeological evidence of waterfront/industrial activities of the late 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. The east side of Union Street across from this block was the site of Roberdeau's wharf in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, and Roberdeau's distillery was located on the block at the corner of Union and Wolfe streets.

- C-1 Contact Alexandria Archaeology (703-838-4399) two weeks prior to any ground disturbing activity (such as coring, grading, filling, vegetation removal, undergrounding utilities, pile driving, landscaping and other excavations as defined in Section 2-151 of The Zoning Ordinance) on this property. City archaeologists will provide on-site inspections to record significant finds.
- C-2 Call Alexandria Archaeology (703/838-4399) immediately if any buried historic structural remains (wall foundations, cisterns, wells, privies, 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 to record the finds.
- C-3 The applicant must not allow metal detection to be conducted on the property, unless authorized by Alexandria Archaeology.
- C-4 The requirements stated in C-1, C2 and C-3 above, must be included in the General Notes of all site plans, as well as on all site plan sheets that include ground disturbing actions.

Transportation and Environmental Services:

- R-1 City Code Section 8-1-22 requires that roof, surface and sub-surface drains be connected to the public storm sewer system. Where storm sewer is not available applicant must provide a design to mitigate impact of stormwater drainage onto adjacent properties and



to the satisfaction of the Director of Transportation & Environmental Services. (T&ES)

- R-2 Applicant shall be responsible for repairs to the adjacent city right-of-way if damaged during construction activity. (T&ES)
- R-3 Any improvements to the city right-of-way such as curbing, sidewalk, driveway aprons, etc. must be city standard design. (T&ES)
- C-1 Any work within the right-of-way requires a separate permit from T&ES. (Sec. 5-3-61)
- C-2 Roof drains and sub-surface drains shall be connected to the city storm sewer system, if available, by continuous underground pipe. (Sec. 8-1-22)
- C-3 Change in point of attachment or removal of existing overhead utility services will require undergrounding or a variance. (Sec. 5-3-3)