

Docket Item # 8
BAR CASE # 2006-0239

BAR Meeting
January 17, 2007

ISSUE: Re-consideration of demolition/encapsulation
APPLICANT: Chris and Melanie Idler by Moore Architects
LOCATION: 224 North St. Asaph Street
ZONE: RM/Residential

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

BOARD ACTION, NOVEMBER 15, 2006: On a motion by Dr. Fitzgerald, seconded by Mr. Smeallie, the Board denied the proposed demolition of the chimney. The roll call vote on the motion was 3-2 (Ms. Neihardt and Mr. Wheeler were opposed).

REASON: The Board believed that the chimney could be preserved in place as a character defining feature of the house and noted that the *Design Guidelines* state: "Existing chimneys should be maintained *in situ* and not removed without a compelling reason and substantial justification." The Board did not find that a compelling reason for demolition had been put forth.

SPEAKERS: Charles Moore, Moore & Associates, project architect, spoke in support
Charles Trozzo, 209 Duke Street, spoke in opposition

STAFF RECOMMENDATION, NOVEMBER 15, 2006: Staff recommends approval of the application as submitted.

(Insert sketch here)

Update: The Board denied the demolition of this chimney at the public hearing of November 15, 2006. Subsequently the applicant appealed the Board's decision to City Council. The Board voted to reconsider the application at the public hearing of December 20, 2006. The reconsideration has been properly advertised and noticed by staff and it is now back before the Board for reconsideration.

The application has been re-docketed for consideration by the Board because a number of members felt that the Board was being inconsistent with regard to the denial of the demolition of the secondary chimney in this application when compared to approvals for other recent requests for approval of demolition including chimneys. For example, in the case of the Robert Memorial Chapel Parish House at 614 South Washington Street the Board approved the demolition of portions of the townhouse including a full height exterior chimney on the south side of the building) by unanimous vote (BAR Caser #2005-00169, 9/20/06.

Furthermore, the Board made it clear in its approval of demolition of portions of the buildings at St. Paul's Church at 228 South Pitt Street that practical concerns regarding re-use of a building including the extent of demolition are overriding factors to be taken into account when considering an application for demolition. In that instance, as in this case, the reason advanced by staff and approved by the Board for demolition included the fact that the "areas to be demolished...are confined to secondary elevations not readily visible to the public rights-of-way" and that the extent of "the proposed demolition/capsulation is relatively minor..." The fact that the building was being retrofitted for another purpose was also deemed by staff and the Board to be an important "mitigating factor" in approving demolition of portions of the St. Paul's buildings (BAR Case#2006-00213, 11/1/06).

Since there has been no change in the substance of the application, staff repeats its previous recommendation for approval of the demolition application as submitted.

NOTE: This docket item requires a roll call vote.

I. ISSUE:

The applicant is requesting approval of a Permit to Demolish the corbelled brick chimney at the west end of the house at 224 North St. Asaph Street.

The demolition of the chimney will facilitate changes to the interior configuration of the house.

II. HISTORY:

224 North St. Asaph Street is a bay front two story brick rowhouse dating from the late 19th century. The exterior is largely unaltered and retains its original footprint.

Staff could not locate any prior BAR reviews for this property.

III. ANALYSIS:

In considering a Permit to Demolish, the Board must consider the following criteria set forth in the Zoning Ordinance, §10-105(B):

- (1) Is the building or structure of such architectural or historical interest that its moving, removing, capsulating or razing would be to the detriment of the public interest?
- (2) Is the building or structure of such interest that it could be made into a historic shrine?
- (3) Is the building or structure of such old and unusual or uncommon design, texture and material that it could not be reproduced or be reproduced only with great difficulty?
- (4) Would retention of the building or structure help preserve the memorial character of the George Washington Memorial Parkway?
- (5) Would retention of the building or structure help preserve and protect an historic place or area of historic interest in the city?
- (6) Would retention of the building or structure promote the general welfare by maintaining and increasing real estate values, generating business, creating new positions, attracting tourists, students, writers, historians, artists and artisans, attracting new residents, encouraging study and interest in American history, stimulating interest and study in architecture and design, educating citizens in American culture and heritage, and making the city a more attractive and desirable place in which to live?

The *Design Guidelines* state: “Existing chimneys should be maintained *in situ* and not removed without a compelling reason and substantial justification.” The justification for the removal of the chimney is on-going work on the interior of the house.

Based upon the above criteria it is the opinion of Staff that none of the criteria are met and the Permit to Demolish should be granted.

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 A construction permit is required for the proposed project.

Historic Alexandria:

Request seems appropriate.