

Docket Item # 15
BAR CASE # 2007-0292

BAR Meeting
January 17, 2007

ISSUE: Demolition/encapsulation
APPLICANT: Kathleen Trepper by Robert Bentley Adams
LOCATION: 635 South St. Asaph Street
ZONE: RM/Residential

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends approval of the application with the following condition:

1. The following 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
2. 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.

(Insert sketch here)

NOTE: This docket item requires a roll call vote.

I. ISSUE:

The applicant is requesting approval of a permit to demolish for demolition and encapsulation at the rear of the house to allow for a new two story addition. The applicant is proposing to remove all but the northernmost 1.3' sliver of the one story cinderblock addition at the rear (west end) of the house. This narrow section encroaches on the neighboring property and will be retained. In addition, the rear (west) wall of the two story frame rear ell will be demolished on the second story, except for the northernmost 1.3' sliver which encroaches on the neighboring property and which will be retained. The portion of the rear ell to be removed is clad in wood siding and has a single multi-light window. Portions of the roof of the rear ell will be demolished or capsulated to allow for the connection to the new gable roof on the proposed addition.

In addition, the applicant proposes to make alterations to the south wall of the two story rear ell which will entail both demolition and capsulation. The existing first story window will be enlarged substantially for a new pair of French doors. The existing door opening on the first story will be closed in for a window. The existing window on the second story will be removed and the opening closed in while a new window opening will be created to the east.

The rear of the house is visible from Franklin Street.

II. HISTORY:

According to Ethelyn Cox in Historic Alexandria Street by Street, the two story, gable roofed, frame house was constructed in the early 19th century as a double house with 637 South Saint Asaph (p. 166). The two houses share a horse alley and are part of a cluster of 19th century houses in the 600 block of South Saint Asaph. Staff could not locate any record of prior BAR reviews for this property. Sanborn mapping indicates that the main block and rear ell were extended between 1921 and 1941 and is seen in the existing two story construction. The single story, wood sided, cinder block addition was added subsequently.

III. ANALYSIS:

In considering a Permit to Demolish/Capsulate, 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 house?
- (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?

In the opinion of Staff, the proposed demolition and encapsulation are acceptable and portions of the building that will be affected do not meet any of the above criteria. The largest portion of the demolition consists of the removal of the post 1941 cinder block addition. The other areas of demolition and encapsulation involve the rear (west) and south walls of the two story rear ell. This construction dates to sometime between 1921 and 1941. These secondary elevations do not possess any significant architectural value. The south wall is not even visible from the public right-of-way.

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

IV. STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends approval of the application with the following condition:

The following 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:

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.

CITY DEPARTMENT COMMENTS

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

Code Enforcement:

C-1 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.

Historic Alexandria:

No Comments.

Alexandria Archeology:

- F-1 According to *Historic Alexandria, Virginia, Street by Street, A Survey of Existing Early Buidlings* by Ethelyn Cox, the house on this property dates to the early 19th century. Tax records from 1810 and 1850 indicate that there were free African American households on this street face, but the exact addresses are not known. The property therefore has the potential to yield archaeological resources that could provide insight into domestic activities in 19th-century Alexandria, perhaps relating to free 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.