

Docket Item #11
BAR CASE # 2007-0002

BAR Meeting
February 7, 2007

ISSUE: Addition and alterations

APPLICANT: Amy & Brien Biondi

LOCATION: 833 South Lee Street

ZONE: RM/Residential

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Staff recommends deferral of the application for restudy of the massing approach to the additions and the design details.

(Insert sketch here)

NOTE: Docket item #10 must be approved before this docket item can be considered.

I. ISSUE:

The applicant is requesting approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness for a new third story and a new front addition for the end unit residential rowhouse at 833 South Lee Street.

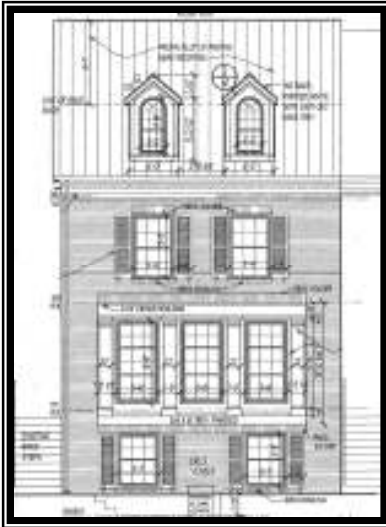


Figure 1 - Proposed east elevation



Figure 2 - Proposed south elevation

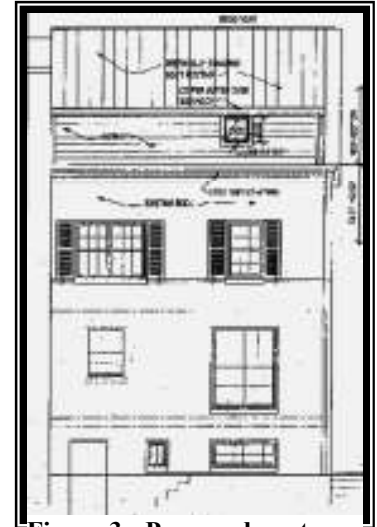


Figure 3 - Proposed west elevation

Additions

A new third story will be added to the existing house and the front of the house will be extended eastward 4' to line up with the plane of the rowhouse immediately to the north.

The roof peak will be raised approximately 6'6" with a new front roof pitch of 10/12 in the front. The raised roof at the rear will slope westward from the peak of the new front gable with a slope of 3.5/12. This new rear section of the addition will be sheathed in HardiPlank. The gable end (south face) of the new third story will be sheathed in brick to match the existing. The roof of the gable slope will be a prefinished standing seam aluminum roof with wood rake boards. The roof on the rear slope of the addition will match.

The west face of the new third floor will have minimal fenestration with three awning style windows on the south side and a single awning style window on the rear (west) elevation.

Front Addition: An addition is proposed to be constructed onto the front of the house. The addition is proposed to be constructed of brick to match the existing. The addition will extend approximately 4' from the face of the existing rowhouse and will be in line with the front façade of the townhouse immediately to the north. The front addition will extend across the full width of the house, approximately 22'4".

The new addition will have a small recessed areaway with a brick surround at the ground level to house a new exterior a/c unit. On the first level there will be two six-over-six windows; on the second level three ganged triple hung six-over-six-over four windows with Doric wood pilasters

between will be recessed slightly into the face of the addition. This window set will be surmounted by brick soldier course with a matching soldier course below.

A pair of gabled dormers with four-over-four windows are proposed for the front slope of the roof of the new façade.

The windows at the first and third levels are proposed to have operable, louvered shutters, painted black.

Alterations:

A new wood door surround with Doric style pilasters and copper flashing will be added to the front door.

II. HISTORY:

833 South Lee Street is a two story, three bay residential rowhouse that was constructed as part of the Yates Garden subdivision in ca. 1954. It is an end unit rowhouse, one of a continuous row of 2 and 3 bay townhouses with alternately projecting and set back facades. The facade is distinguished from its neighbors primarily by its slightly projecting bay window at the first level. The construction of these rowhouses was approved by the Board on 3/12/1953. A garden wall was approved for this house by the Board on 11/12/1958.

III. ANALYSIS:

The proposed addition and alterations comply with zoning ordinance requirements.

While the Board has approved numerous additions to buildings in Yates Garden, Staff feels this current proposal is problematic, in the amount of encapsulation needed and the design approach for the additions. By encapsulating the existing east façade with a new addition on South Lee Street, bringing the façade up 4' and flush with the adjacent rowhouse, the established pattern of recesses and projections along South Lee Street will be interrupted, and the character-defining feature of this intended rhythm and appearance will be lost.

Staff does note that the Board has approved the extending of the fronts of existing buildings to create entirely new rowhouse rhythms in the past. The largest example is found in the Patrick Henry subdivision in the area around South Columbus, Green, Jefferson, Church and South Alfred and South Patrick Streets. There the Board approved extending the fronts of numerous rowhouses and changing the materials of the façades as well as extending the height of numerous buildings. The architect for the changeout of the South Columbus Street rowhouses was Joseph Wisnewski and was approved by the Board in 1979 (4/18/1979). However, as Yates Garden achieves the age of fifty-years (the age defined by the National Park Service in which buildings and structures may be considered historic), it is important to identify and recognize the architectural character-defining features that help establish integrity for this development. Staff would argue that the pattern of front façade recesses and projections is a character-defining feature of the rowhouses of Yates Garden and should be maintained.

Staff also notes that the proposed alterations and additions significantly increase the size of the existing house adding 1,081 square feet to the gross area of the rowhouse, an increase of just

about 50%. As a general rule, the Board has expressed a preference for additions that are no more than 50% larger than an existing house.

Staff has additional concerns about a number of details. For example, the recessed ganged windows on the front elevation are awkward and are not a part of the vocabulary of design elements found in Yates Garden. Similarly staff also finds the proposal for awning style windows fronting on Green Street introduce an awkward element.

While Staff does believe that an addition to this property could be achieved, Staff recommends that the applicant restudy the approach for the addition, and eliminate the addition to the east façade, to maintain the existing pattern of facades along South Lee Street.

IV. STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends deferral of the application for restudy of the massing approach to the additions and the design details.

CITY DEPARTMENT COMMENTS

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

Code Enforcement:

- 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 Alterations to the existing structure must comply with the current edition of the Uniform Statewide Building Code (USBC).
- C-4 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-5 A Construction permit will be required for the proposed project.
- C-6 New construction must comply with the current edition of the Uniform Statewide Building Code (USBC).
- C-7 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.

Historic Alexandria:

No comments received.

Alexandria Archaeology:

- F-1 Tax records indicate that there was a free African American household on this street face by 1810, but the exact address is not known. Quartermaster maps from the Civil War era show that the block bounded by Lee, Green, Fairfax and Jefferson streets was the site of the kitchen, mess room, and barracks for Battery Rogers. While ground disturbance associated with this project is not extensive, particularly in the backyard area where there is greater potential, there is a possibility for development activities to uncover archaeological resources that could provide insight into domestic activities in 19th-

century Alexandria, perhaps relating to African Americans, and into military life during the Civil War.

- 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 applicant must not allow metal detection to be conducted on the property, unless authorized by Alexandria Archaeology.
- R-3 The above statements in R-2 ad R-3 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.

Transportation & Environmental Services

- R-1 The applicant shall submit an annotated house location plat must meet the following criteria:
- No reduced, enlarged or faxed copies will be accepted.
 - The footprint area of the proposed improvements must be drawn to scale.
 - The additional 10' perimeter, construction access and other areas as described above must be shown to scale.
 - The overall dimensions of the proposed improvements must be shown.
 - The actual square footage of the disturbed area must be shown.

The applicant shall be required to provide this information to the Department of Transportation and Environmental Services, Construction and Inspection Division and/or Engineering Division prior to any applications for building permits. (T&ES)

- R-2 The building permit plans shall comply with requirements of City Code Section 8-1-22 regarding the location of downspouts, foundation drains and sump pumps. Refer to Memorandum to Industry dated June 18, 2004. [Memorandum is available online at the City web site under Transportation\Engineering and Design\Memos to Industry.]
- R-3 Applicant shall be responsible for repairs to the adjacent city right-of-way if damaged during construction activity.
- R-4 All improvements to the city right-of-way such as curbing, sidewalk, driveway aprons, etc. must be city standard design.