

Docket Item #10  
BAR CASE # 2007-0028

BAR Meeting  
March 7, 2007

**ISSUE:** Demolition/encapsulation  
**APPLICANT:** Temple & Marty Moore by Robert Bentley Adams  
**LOCATION:** 207 North Fairfax Street  
**ZONE:** RM/Residential

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**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:** Staff recommends denial of the application for the Permit to Demolish and Capsulate.

**BAR CASE #2007-0028**  
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(Insert sketch here)

NOTE: This docket item requires a roll call vote.

**I. ISSUE:**

The applicant is requesting approval of a Permit to Demolish and Capsulate portions of the rear elevation of the freestanding residential townhouse at 207 North Fairfax Street in order to permit the construction of a new rear porch.



Figure 1 - East elevation



Figure 2 - Upper portion of east elevation



Figure 3 - South elevation



Figure 4 - Center section of east elevation



Figure 5 - Northern end of east elevation

**II. HISTORY:**

207 North Fairfax Street is a freestanding one and half story frame and brick townhouse dating from ca. 1760 and appears to be the earliest standing structure in the City.

It is one of the most historically and architecturally significant residential buildings in the historic district and was part of the extant nucleus of the 18<sup>th</sup> century town that was the object of the creation of the historic district.

The building was built by John Dalton, an original founder of Alexandria and the partner of John Carlyle. Staff notes that John Carlyle's house is now operated as a historic house museum by the Northern Virginia Regional Parks Authority.

Dalton served as one of the original Trustees of Alexandria. He was active as a supply agent during the Revolution and was a friend of George Mason, of Gunston Hall and father of the Bill of Rights. Dalton was also known to George Washington, a fellow Trustee of the town. His great-granddaughter, Ann Pamela Cunningham, created the Mount Vernon Ladies Association in 1852 and is credited with establishing the historic preservation movement in the United States.

The front of the house had a brick veneer façade added in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and the north half of the building was raised approximately a half story at the same time. The south half of the house retains its original wood siding.

Apparently a one frame section was added to the rear of the property at some point in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. According to information on historic maps it appears that this one story frame section was constructed at ground level and was originally built between 1877 and 1891 and was removed sometime between 1921 and 1941.

### **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 all of the criteria set forth in the zoning ordinance regarding demolition are met in this case except for #4 relating to the Parkway. Staff believes that the preservation of houses such as 207 North Fairfax Street was precisely the reason that the historic district was created more than 60 years ago. Proposing to demolish and capsulate a significant portion of an extant 1760s house does not respect the significant historic and architectural resources of

Alexandria and the historic district. Staff cannot recommend approval of a Permit to Demolish and Capsulate for any section of this structure. Therefore, staff recommends denial.

**IV. STAFF RECOMMENDATION:**

Staff recommends denial of the application for the Permit to Demolish and Capsulate.

CITY DEPARTMENT COMMENTS

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

Code Enforcement:

- F-1 A Brace wall design shall be submitted.
- 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 A soils report must be submitted with the building permit application.
- C-4 New construction must comply with the current edition of the Uniform Statewide Building Code (USBC).
- C-5 Alterations to the existing structure must comply with the current edition of the Uniform Statewide Building Code (USBC).
- C-6 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-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.
- C-8 A wall location plat prepared by a land surveyor is required to be submitted to this office prior to requesting any framing inspection.

Alexandria Archaeology:

- F-1 The house on this property, built by John Dalton, dates to the mid-eighteenth century and may be the earliest standing structure in Alexandria. The property has been registered as an archaeological site (44AX46) with the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, because of its potential to provide insight into activities in the early town during the eighteenth century.

- F-2 In 1981, Alexandria Archaeology conducted test excavations on the site. The yard area contained fill soils dating to the late nineteenth century, brought in to level the ground surface. These fill soils deepen toward the eastern portion of the yard.
- R-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 monitor all ground disturbance. If significant resources are observed during the monitoring, city archaeologists will conduct the appropriate investigation to insure that important information about the City's past is not lost as a result of this development.
- R-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.
- R-3 The applicant must not allow metal detection to be conducted on the property, unless authorized by Alexandria Archaeology.
- R-4 The requirements stated in R-1, R-2 and R-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. Additional statements may be required to be included on the Final Site Plans by Alexandria Archaeology.

Historic Alexandria:

This is a significant building, having belonged to John Dalton, partner of John Carlyle, who became a town trustee in 1750 (p. 36, Cox).

The proposed renovation seems to alter the character of the building too drastically, in particular the spiral metal staircase and expanse of windows. The exterior metal staircase is specifically discouraged for a building of this date in the BAR guidelines. A more compatible and less transforming design should be considered.

Transportation and Environmental Services:

- R-1 The applicant shall provide the information described below on a copy of the house location plat:

In order to determine the area of disturbance in the absence of a grading plan, the disturbed area will be determined by adding 10' to the perimeter of the building (or addition) footprint and calculating the area within the increased perimeter. In addition a 10' wide access path from the edge of the disturbed area to the street or driveway must be included in the disturbed area calculation. Dumpsters, soil stockpiles and material storage areas must all be within the limits of disturbance as well.

The 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 disturbed area must be shown.

The applicant shall be required to provide the information below to the Department of Transportation and Environmental Services, Construction and Inspection Division and/or Engineering Division at the time of application for building permit(s). (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.]. (T&ES)
- R-3 Applicant shall be responsible for repairs to the adjacent city right-of-way if damaged during construction activity. (T&ES)
- R-4 All improvements to the city right-of-way such as curbing, sidewalk, driveway aprons, etc. must be city standard design. (T&ES)
- R-5 Prior to any activity disturbing 2500 square feet or more, an erosion and sediment control plan must be approved by T&ES and the applicant is required to comply with the provisions of Article XIII of the City's zoning ordinance for stormwater quality control. (T&ES)
- R-6 No permanent structure may be constructed over any existing private and/or public utility easements. It is the responsibility of the applicant to identify any and all existing easements on the plan. (T&ES)