

Docket Item # 3
BAR CASE # 2007-0035

BAR Meeting
March 21, 2007

ISSUE: Shutters
APPLICANT: David Penna
LOCATION: 609 Pitt Street
ZONE: RM/Residential

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

(Insert sketch here)

I. ISSUE:

The applicant is requesting approval of a certificate of appropriateness to install two sets of wood louvered shutters on the two upper windows of the two story brick rowhouse at 609 South Pitt Street. (Please note that although submitted materials state vinyl, the applicant affirms in a letter dated 2/20/2007 that the shutters will be wood.) The shutters will be 12” wide and 51” long. The shutters will fit the length, but will not fit the width of the windows. The windows are 40” wide. However, they are set so close to each other that there is only a 25” space between them. The shutters will be painted black. According to the applicant, the shutters will not be operable, but they will install “decorative” hinges and S-hooks to give the appearance of being operable.

II. HISTORY:

The row of five, two story brick rowhouses at 605 through 613 South Pitt Street was constructed circa 1959 according to building permit records (Permit #7152, 11/4/1959). The houses are simple, vernacular residences with minimal Colonial Revival design influences, reflected in the use of red brick, multi-light double hung windows and classically detailed wood door surrounds. The front façade of the house at 609 South Pitt Street has two paired double-hung windows with eight-over-eight lights on the first story while the second story has two separate but closely spaced six-over-six windows. The front door has a simple door surround with a gabled pediment.

The Board recently approved an addition, garage and alterations at the neighboring property at 607 South Pitt Street (BAR Case #2005-0234, 11/2/2005). As part of that project, the Board approved the installation of wood louvered shutters on the two upper story windows. As these windows are set farther apart, the shutters are sized to fit the openings. The houses at 605 and 611 South Pitt Street also have shutters on the upper windows. However, Staff was unable to locate approvals for these shutters.

III. ANALYSIS:

The proposed shutter additions comply with the zoning ordinance requirements.

Staff is of two minds concerning the proposed shutters. The *Design Guidelines* state the following:

- Window and door shutters should be hinged and operable.
- Decorative window and door shutters that are not operable are strongly discouraged.
- It is not necessary to have shutters on every opening; however, where provided, window and door shutters should be the appropriate size and shape for the opening. For example, shutters should be capable of covering the entire door or window opening when closed. (Shutters, Pages 1 & 2).

The proposed shutters are not operable, they are purely decorative and they do not fit the window opening. There is no evidence that 609 South Pitt Street or any of the other houses in the row originally had shutters.

On the other hand, the proposed shutters will be of wood. They are located in a row where the Board has recently approved shutters. Moreover, shutters as a purely decorative and non-

functional architectural element are completely in keeping with the period of construction (late 1950s) and with the style (vernacular/minimalist Colonial Revival). The shutters serve to strengthen the affiliation with the Colonial Revival style. Lastly, Staff notes that the shutters are a readily reversible alteration.

Therefore, in this particular case, Staff believes the proposed shutters, though purely decorative, are acceptable.

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 Alterations to the existing building structure must comply with the current edition of the Uniform Statewide Building Code (USBC).

C-2 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).

Historic Alexandria:

The request seems appropriate if wood shutters are used.