

Docket Item #12
BAR CASE # 2007-0002

BAR Meeting
March 21, 2007

ISSUE: Addition and alterations
APPLICANT: Amy & Brien Biondi
LOCATION: 833 South Lee Street
ZONE: RM/Residential

STAFF RECOMMENDATION, MARCH 21, 2007: Staff recommends approval of the application with the following archaeological conditions:

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.
2. The applicant must not allow metal detection to be conducted on the property, unless authorized by Alexandria Archaeology.
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.

BOARD ACTION, FEBRUARY 7, 2007: Deferred at the request of the applicant.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION, FEBRUARY 7, 2007: 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 #11 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 side addition for the end unit residential rowhouse at 833 South Lee Street.

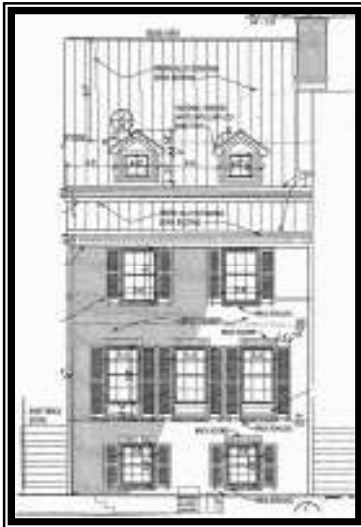


Figure 1 - Proposed east elevation

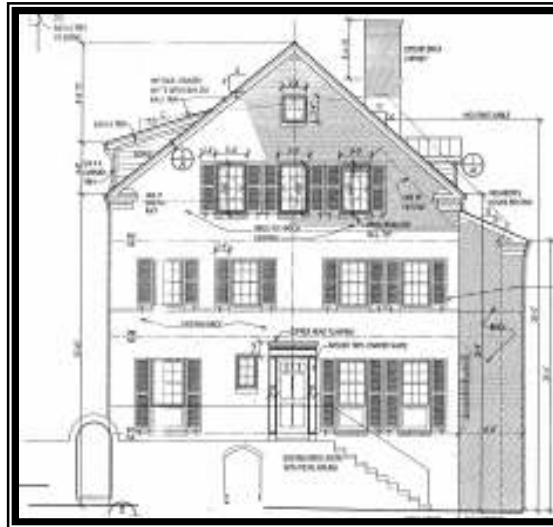


Figure 2 - Proposed south elevation

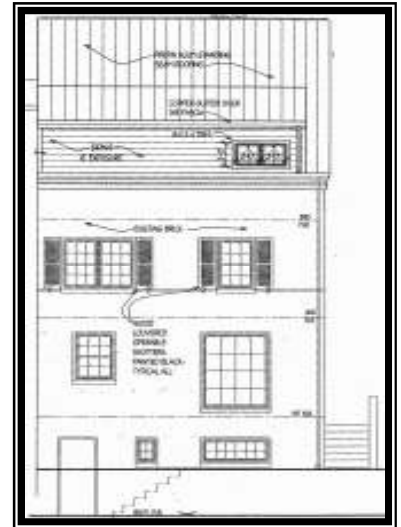


Figure 3 - Proposed west elevation

Additions:

A new third story will be added to the existing house and the South Lee elevation of the house will be extended eastward 6' to project 2' from the plane of the rowhouse immediately to the north.

Green Street Elevation:

The roof peak will be raised approximately 14' on the west side with a new front roof pitch of 9/12 on the Green Street elevation. The new raised gable roof will have a ridgeline, approximately centered on the front door. On the west slope of the new roof, a shed roof dormer with a pitch slope of 3.5/12 will be installed. The west elevation will have minimal fenestration with two awnings style windows. This new section of the addition will be sheathed in HardiPlank. The gable end (south face/Green Street) of the new third story will be sheathed in brick to match the existing. Three ganged windows will be installed on the new third floor, with a single awning window in the gable. It is unclear if the new windows are casement type windows (applicant should clarify this at the meeting). 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 existing chimney will be extended 5'2/12".

East Elevation:

An addition is proposed to be constructed onto the east elevation of the house, facing South Lee Street. The addition is proposed to be constructed of brick to match the existing house. As proposed, new addition will extend 6' from the face of the existing rowhouse and will project approximately 2' from 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", with a slight indentation of 4" from the Green Street elevation of the house.

While shown on the submitted plat and elevations, a small recessed areaway with a brick surround at the ground level to house a new exterior a/c unit will not be constructed, in order to meet open space requirement. The detailing on the east elevation of the addition has been revised substantially since the prior submittal to be more simplistic and in keeping with the detailing of Yates Garden. On the ground/first level there will be two six-over-six windows; on the second level three ganged double-hung six-over-six windows. Brick soldier courses and brick rowlock will be located above and below the windows on these levels. On the third level there will be two, six-over-six, double-hung windows. All the windows will have wood, operable shutters, sized to fit the openings.

A pair of gabled dormers with four-over-four windows are proposed for the upper slope of the roof of the new east elevation. The roof line will be interrupted by a dentil moulding and cornice, to break up the massing of the additions.

Alterations:

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

Materials:

Roof-prefinished aluminum standing seam metal in a dark gray.

Brick-to match existing

Siding on dormers-Fiber cement siding, smooth finish, painted, with nails concealed per Guidelines

Trim- Hardiplank, painted white to match existing trim

Shutters- Wood, operable, painted black

Windows- Pella wood with white finish, 7/8" muntins, simulated divided lights.

Gutters/downspouts-copper

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. As a corner end unit, the Green Street elevation houses the front entrance to the unit. The east elevation is distinguished from its neighbors primarily by its slightly projecting bay window at the first level. The house has an unusual roof line, with a side gable pitched roof facing South Lee Street, transitioning to a flat roof on the majority of the Green Street elevation. 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 on the subject property meet open space and zoning ordinance requirements.

In the prior staff report, staff voiced concerns about the proposed additions and alterations. The applicant deferred the applicant to attempt to make revisions to the proposal in order to gain a more favorable recommendation from staff. The applicant's architect incorporated suggestions of both the City Architect and staff to revise the proposal and look at a difference scheme. The applicant also revised the detailing greatly to be more simplistic and in keeping with the detailing found in Yates Garden.

As stated in the prior staff report, staff is concerned about how Yates Gardens is perceived preservation wise and what is appropriate in terms of alterations and additions. As a development that began in the 1930s and continued through the early 1960s, resources in the area have reached the fifty years mark generally accepted in preservation philosophy as the age in which a resource may be viewed as historic. This particular building was constructed in 1954. Staff expressed in the report that the previous proposal was 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 would have been interrupted, and the character-defining feature of this intended rhythm and appearance will be lost. In the current scheme, the South Lee Street elevation will project 2' from the face of the adjacent rowhouse, yet while altered, a rhythm remains intact. Staff also notes 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).

Another challenge with this particular end unit rowhouse is the unusual combination of a flat roof and a gabled roof, intersecting on what functions as the main façade. The proposed scheme of adding a third floor under a front facing gable roof may be viewed as imposing a cleaner and finished design to this elevation and producing a true front façade. By staggering the roof line on the east elevation, the projecting 6' addition clearly reads a new addition. However, staff would prefer that a deeper recess or indentation at the addition, to provide an even more visible break between the main house and the new east addition.

While staff still maintains some reservations about this proposal, staff believes the applicant has made considerable changes and revisions to the scheme that merit support. Therefore, staff recommends approval, with clarification of the proposed windows on the third floor facing Green Street.

IV. STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends approval of the application with the following archaeological conditions:

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.
2. The applicant must not allow metal detection to be conducted on the property, unless authorized by Alexandria Archaeology.
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.

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.