

Docket Item #9  
BAR CASE # 2007-0052

BAR Meeting  
April 4, 2007

**ISSUE:** After-the-fact exterior stairway and alterations

**APPLICANT:** Craig Lemeszewsky

**LOCATION:** 1212 King Street

**ZONE:** KR/King Street Urban Retail

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**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:** Staff recommends deferral of the application for restudy.

(Insert sketch here)

**I. ISSUE:**

The applicant is requesting a Certificate of Appropriateness for an after-the-fact installation of two story wood stairway and additional new alterations to the commercial building at 1212 King Street. The stairway provides fire egress from the interior of the building.

After-the-fact stairway

A two story wood stairway has been installed at the rear of the property. The stairway is in two sections. The first level leads up from the rear of the property adjacent to Commerce Street; access to the second level is across a new wood deck on top of a flat roofed one story addition to the main structure. Both sections of stairway are constructed of pressure treated wood with wood handrails and pickets.

Proposed alterations

In order to protect the stairway from the weather, the applicant proposes to cover both sections of the stairway with a new standing seam metal roof supported by box steel posts.

**II. HISTORY:**

1212 King Street is a three-story brick structure that was constructed mid-19th century, according to Ethelyn Cox's Historic Alexandria, Virginia: Street by Street. From Sanborn maps, it appears that a rear addition was constructed around 1921.

According to building permit records, a second floor rear porch was enclosed in 1947 (Permit # 4059), a rear addition was constructed in 1935 (Permit # unclear), and in 1967 windows at the storefront were replaced (Permit # 24094).

Last year the Board approved replacement windows and door with the proviso that the window openings which had been altered without Board approval be returned to their original size and a new HVAC unit and screening (BAR Case #2006-0051, 4/5/06).

The current stairway was installed without Board approval or a building permit.

**III. ANALYSIS:**

The proposed covered stairway complies with the zoning ordinance if it meets the FAR requirements.

The applicant maintains that the stairway is a modern replacement of a formerly existing wood stair in approximately the same location and has supplied photographs of the former stairway. Staff review of the photographs indicates that the old and new stairways are not the same.

Staff is concerned about the visual impact of the stairway and its proposed covering. Covered egress stairs such as proposed in this installation are generally found at the rear of a structure. However in this instance, this building has two fronts – one facing on King Street and one facing on Commerce Street. The façade on Commerce Street is directly across the street from residential buildings. For this reason staff believes that a design for an egress stair that respects the residential character of this section of the historic district is needed. Additionally, elevation

drawings are lacking and it is difficult to make a fully informed evaluation of the effect of the stairway without such drawings.

Finally, staff notes that this is the second application by this owner for after-the-fact work on this building requiring Board review and approval as well as approval of a building permit and that the Board may wish to consider sanctions in this case.

**IV. STAFF RECOMMENDATION:**

Staff recommends deferral of the application for restudy.

CITY DEPARTMENT COMMENTS

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

Code Enforcement:

- F-1 The three windows on the second floor landing shall have a minimum of 3/4 of an hour assembly rating.
- C-1 The proposed use is a change in use group classification; a new Certificate of Occupancy is required (USBC 116.1).
- C-2 Prior to the application for new Certificate of Occupancy, the applicant shall submit a building permit for a change of use. Drawings prepared by a licensed architect or professional engineer shall accompany the permit application. These plans shall show existing conditions, construction type data, and a plot plan. In addition, these plans shall show proposed conditions and provide data by the design professional which details how the proposed use will comply with the current edition of the Virginia Uniform Statewide Building Code for the new use in the area of structural strength, means of egress, passive and active fire protection, heating and ventilating systems, handicapped accessibility and plumbing facilities.
- 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).

Historic Alexandria:

No comment.