

Docket Item #11
BAR CASE # 2007-0048

BAR Meeting
April 18, 2007

ISSUE: After-the-fact replacement windows and new rear door
APPLICANT: Hart Washington Street Partnership
LOCATION: 305 North Washington Street
ZONE: CD/Commercial

STAFF RECOMMENDATION, APRIL 18, 2007: Staff recommends deferral of the application for restudy of more appropriate replacement materials.

BOARD ACTION, APRIL 4, 2007: On a motion by Dr. Fitzgerald, seconded by Mr. Smeallie, the Board voted to defer the application. The vote was 4-0.

REASON: The Board wanted additional information regarding whether the front windows that were replaced were original or replacement windows, and information regarding what kind of windows were approved for replacement on the Cotton Factory building on North Washington Street.

SPEAKERS: Bud Hart, applicant, spoke in support
Mary Catherine Gibbs, applicant, spoke in support
John Rust, architect, spoke in support
Joe Hart, project manager, spoke in support

STAFF RECOMMENDATION, APRIL 4, 2007: Staff recommends deferral of the application for restudy of more appropriate replacement materials.

(Insert sketch here)

Update: The Board deferred the project at the April 4, 2007 meeting and requested staff to provide information about the windows that were removed and replaced with the current windows. Staff determined that the existing windows were not original or historic and could be approved for replacement administratively with appropriate windows per the Design Guidelines.

The Board also requested staff to provide information on the windows that were approved for replacement on the Cotton Factory building located at 515 North Washington Street. In researching window replacement for the Cotton Factory, staff located an application in 1998 for restoration and replacement of the windows located in the cupola. However, that application was withdrawn (June 23, 1998). The file folder for that application is presently at the City's Archives and staff is requesting its return to see if any discussion occurred about other window replacement. The only other application related to window replacement for the Cotton Factory discovered by staff was an application on October 3, 1979 for window replacement, which was denied by the Board, in that the proposed windows were inappropriate to the building.

The Board also requested the applicant to explore the option of replacing the interior track system of the replacement windows with a material that appeared more like wood rather than the existing appearance. Staff did not receive any additional information regarding this from the applicant.

Staff repeats the recommendation from the April 4, 2007 staff report.

I. ISSUE:

The applicant is requesting a Certificate of Appropriateness for an after-the-fact installation of replacement windows and a new rear door at the three story rowhouse at 305 North Washington Street.

Replacement Windows

Double hung simulated divided light wood windows have been installed in the rowhouse replacing the previous single pane wood windows.

New Door

The applicant proposes to replace the existing rear door with a new metal door. The rear of the house is visible from Brockett's Alley directly to the south of the rowhouse.

II. HISTORY:

305 North Washington Street is a three story frame rowhouse that is part of Brockett's Row and was originally constructed in 1808 by Robert Brockett and restyled in a vernacular Greek Revival style.

III. ANALYSIS:

Replacement Windows

At the outset for a discussion of this docket item, staff notes that this residential property fronts directly on North Washington Street which is part of the George Washington Memorial Parkway as it passes through Alexandria. The Board has been mindful of efforts to maintain the memorial character of the Parkway.

Windows are one of the dominant visual elements of a historic building. The *Design Guidelines*, recognize this fact and state: "...Replacement windows should be appropriate to the historic period of the architectural style of the building."

Accordingly, staff cannot recommend approval of the installation of simulated divided light windows which are a late 20th century building product. In the opinion of staff such windows alter the appearance of early 19th century residential building in fundamental ways. In a situation such as this staff would recommend the installation of single glazed true divided light wood windows with an interior energy panel.

New Door

In the opinion of staff the installation of a metal door is inappropriate. The *Design Guidelines*, state: "...metal doors are generally not appropriate on residential structures." Although the *Design Guidelines* recognize that metal doors may be used in rear yards in certain instance, in this case, given the fact that this is an early 19th century residential structure, staff cannot support the installation of a metal door.

IV. STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends deferral of the application for restudy of more appropriate replacement materials.

CITY DEPARTMENT COMMENTS

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

Code Enforcement:

No comments.

Historic Alexandria:

Installed windows are not consistent with BAR guidelines and approval for this application which required true divided light windows. They should be replaced with true divided light windows especially as they are located on the façade of the building. Regarding proposal for door replacement, a metal door might be suitable to avoid warping issues, but a solid door without windows would be more appropriate.