

Docket Item # 11
BAR CASE # 2007-0073

BAR Meeting
May 2, 2007

ISSUE: Addition and alterations
APPLICANT: Larry Hirsch by Stephen Kulinski
LOCATION: 502 Duke Street
ZONE: RM/Residential

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

(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 alterations and additions to the residential rowhouse at 502 Duke Street. These consist include the following:

● **East wall of existing flounder and rear (south) wall of the main historic block**

A new flat roofed one story addition with a balcony will be constructed in this area. The addition will be approximately 7' in width and 11' in length with three ganged large multi-pane windows on the east elevation and a pair of similar windows on the south elevation both with pilasters and raised wood panels below. The addition will have a Chinese Chippendale railing around the balcony and access to the balcony will be from a new multi-light wood door on east elevation which will be converted from an existing window.

● **East wall of existing flounder**

On the first level a new pair of French doors with an elliptical multi-light fanlight above will be installed on the east elevation and replace an existing window. One other window on the first level to the east of the new doors will be made smaller to accommodate interior finishes.

● **Rear (south) wall of the existing flounder ell and rear porch**

The existing rear deck/porch will be replaced with a new addition. This addition will be two stories in height and approximately 13' in width and 6.5' in length with large multi-pane windows on both levels on the east elevation with wood pilaster and raised wood panels below. The south face of this addition will have similar windows on both levels with pilasters and raised wood panels below. The windows will be separated by a new double shouldered full height chimney. This new addition area will have a gable roof covered with standing seam metal.

● **Alterations to main historic block**

New shutters will be installed on the windows of the front façade. These are proposed to be operable wood shutters with one half louvered and one half paneled.

The existing windows on the first level of the main historic block will be replaced with new true divided light windows.

At the raised basement level the window openings currently infilled with brick will be opened and new windows placed in the historic openings will have new metal grillwork.

● **Other alterations**

The existing brick stairs will be replaced with new smooth finished concrete steps with decorative curved metal railings.

A new brick arch is proposed to be built over the existing iron gate and brick piers at the pedestrian alley on the east side of the house.

All of the windows for the additions and alterations are proposed to be Lincoln brand true divided light wood windows.

II. HISTORY:

The house at 502 Duke Street is a three story rowhouse with a painted brick façade. According to Ethelyn Cox in *Alexandria Street by Street* it dates from the early 19th century. However, by the mid-19th century it had been modernized in the Greek Revival manner similar to a number of other rowhouses on the south side of Duke Street in the 400 and 500 blocks. The exterior of the house is remarkably unaltered.

The Board approved new brick front steps and metal hand rails for this house in 1987 (BAR Case #87-0020, 3/4/87).

III. ANALYSIS:

The proposed alterations and additions comply with the zoning ordinance requirements.

As stated in the discussion section for docket item #11, this is an early 19th residential structure that is significant for its architectural contributions to the patrimony of the historic district. Staff believes that the new additions and alterations introduce design elements that are not in harmony with this historic house and use design elements of earlier American architectural styles in an effort to create a new aesthetic. The *Design Guidelines* discourage such attempts to make a building appear older than it actually is.

The rear addition will permanently obliterate the rear flounder of this residential property. Residential flounder style additions are generally regarded as iconic in the historic district and staff believes that an addition such as proposed in this application will erode this important historic district resource.

Staff is also of the opinion that shutters are inappropriate on Greek Revival style residences. Shutters substantially detract from the visual composition of the façade of this style of building where the windows decrease in size on each level in order to emphasize the vertical proportion. While the applicant points out that there is evidence of previous shutter dogs on the façade, staff does not believe that such remnants of early alterations should dictate continuation of inappropriate façade alterations.

Staff has no objection to opening the basement level windows and placing iron bars over these new windows or to the new brick arch at the walkway entrance.

Thus, staff believes that alternative designs are needed when considering appropriate treatments for this residential building.

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:

- 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 Roof drainage systems must be installed so as neither to impact upon, nor cause erosion/damage to adjacent property.
- C-4 A soils report must be submitted with the building permit application.
- C-5 New construction must comply with the current edition of the Uniform Statewide Building Code (USBC).
- C-6 Alterations to the existing structure must comply with the current edition of the Uniform Statewide Building Code (USBC).
- C-7 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-8 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 According to Ethelyn Cox's *Historic Alexandria, Street by Street, A Survey of Existing Early Buildings*, the house on this lot was constructed in the early 19th century. The property therefore has the potential to yield archaeological resources that could provide insight into residential activities in the early 19th-century town.

- 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 above statement 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.