

Docket Item #11  
BAR CASE # 2007-0073

BAR Meeting  
May 16, 2007

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

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**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:** Staff recommends:

1. Denial of the shutters on the windows of the front façade; and
2. Approval of the remainder of the application with the following conditions:
  - a. 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; and
  - b. 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.

(Insert sketch here)

**Note:** Docket item #10 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 style 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 two existing windows at the southern end will be elongated to accommodate interior configurations. Each of the windows on this elevation are proposed to have shutters with both louvers and panels.

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

The existing rear deck/porch will be replaced with a new brick addition. The addition will have the same form, mass and height as the existing flounder. There will be a substantial reveal between the existing flounder and the new addition to differentiate between the historic section and the new construction. The reveal will be approximately 4" in depth and 8" in width.

A masonry chimney will be constructed through the roof of the new addition.

The east elevation will have a pair of multi-light French doors on the first level and a single six-over-six simulated divided light wood window on the second level. The south face of the addition will have two pair of similar windows on both levels. These windows are also proposed to have shutters with both louvers and panels. The addition roof will be standing seam metal.

The brick of the addition will be painted to match that existing.

- **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 also 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 19<sup>th</sup> century. However, by the mid-19<sup>th</sup> 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.

## **III. ANALYSIS:**

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

This is an early 19<sup>th</sup> residential structure that is significant for its architectural contributions to the patrimony of the historic district.

In general, staff believes that the additions and alterations are sympathetic to the overall scale and massing of the historic house. The one story addition on the east side will project no further than the plane of the historic main block. The elements of this addition are clearly of a different material and contemporary and will not be confused with the historic brick massing of the house.

Staff does have concerns about adding onto any existing historic flounder section. Historic residential flounder style additions are generally regarded as iconic in the historic district and need careful design attention so that their form and visual distinctiveness are not eroded. In this instance, staff believes that the design architect has succeeded in successfully preserving the iconic flounder by mimicking its scale, mass, form and materiality yet distinguishing the new addition with a visually obvious reveal to serve as a demarcation between the existing and the new construction. While the addition will be painted similar to the existing historic house, the brick for the addition will be modern hard fired brick that will also provide a visual clue between the addition and the existing flounder. The shutters proposed for the new addition are an easily removable feature to which staff has no objection.

Staff believes that the alterations to the windows on the east elevation of the existing flounder are relatively minor and will be largely visually obscured from the public right-of-way. In the same vein, Staff also has no objection to the installation of shutters on the windows of the east elevation of the rear wing.

Staff is also of the opinion that shutters are inappropriate on façades of 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.

**IV. STAFF RECOMMENDATION:**

Staff recommends:

1. Denial of the shutters on the windows of the front façade; and
2. Approval of the remainder of the application with the following conditions:
  - a. 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; and,
  - b. 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.

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 19<sup>th</sup> century. The property therefore has the potential to yield archaeological resources that could provide insight into residential activities in the early 19<sup>th</sup>-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.

Transportation & Environmental Services:

No comments.