

Docket Item # 7
BAR CASE # 2007-0079

BAR Meeting
June 6, 2007

ISSUE: Demolition/encapsulation

APPLICANT: Caroline Murfitt-Eller

LOCATION: 415 Wilkes Street

ZONE: RM/Residential

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Staff recommends approval of the permit to demolish with the following conditions:

The following statements 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:

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.

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

(Insert sketch here)

NOTE: This docket item requires a roll call vote.

I. ISSUE:

The applicant is requesting approval of a permit to demolish for demolition and encapsulation associated with a minor expansion project at the rear of the house on the west side of the first floor and with the overall rehabilitation of the house. The following is proposed:

West side –

- Two new window openings will be created, one in the first floor and one in the second. These will be located approximately midway back on the main block.
- A new shed will be built at the intersection of the main block and the rear ell on the first story. The shed will measure approximately 3’9” by 3’11” and will capulate small sections of the west wall of the ell and the rear (north) wall of the main block.
- The west wall of the back end of the rear ell will be demolished on the first story to extend the kitchen to the west.
- The existing deck on the west side will be demolished.

North side -

- The existing shed at the rear of the house will be demolished.
- Two existing windows on the first story will be removed.
- A new window opening will be inserted in the first story in a slightly different location than the existing openings requiring demolition of existing wall area.

While the front façade and the west side are visible from Wilkes Street, the rear façade is not visible from any public right-of-way.

II. HISTORY:

Based on Sanborn mapping, the frame house at 415 Wilkes Street was constructed between 1891 and 1896. As built, it consisted of a two story main block with a one story rear ell. Historic mapping indicates that the building envelope remained essentially unchanged through the mid-20th century. According to real estate records, a permit was issued for a one story rear addition in September 1960 (Building Permit #16465). This addition was approved by the BAR on September 14, 1960. The next Board action was to approve extensive alterations and a third story addition on June 15, 1977. The present appearance of the house results almost entirely from this building campaign, begun in 1978 (Building Permit #10226, 8/1978). At this time, the siding and windows were replaced and the front door surround with hood was added. At the front façade on the first story, a c. 1960 picture window was removed and the two separate windows were restored. The mansard roof with arched dormers containing the third story was added. The one story rear ell was raised to two stories and surrounded by a deck at the second story level.

More recently, the Board approved the demolition of the rear “conservatory” section of the second story which was then rebuilt on the existing footprint (BAR Case #95-57, 5/4/1995 and Building Permit #95-00827, 5/12/1995). The Board did not hear the application for certificate of appropriateness for the reconstruction of the conservatory because the rear elevation is not visible from the public right of way.

III. ANALYSIS:

The subject property is zoned RM, residential, and is a lot of record as of February 10, 1953. The proposed alterations and additions meet zoning ordinance requirements.

In considering a Permit to Demolish/Capsulate, the Board must consider the following criteria set forth in the Zoning Ordinance, §10-105(B):

- (1) Is the building or structure of such architectural or historical interest that its moving, removing, capsulating or razing would be to the detriment of the public interest?
- (2) Is the building or structure of such interest that it could be made into a historic house?
- (3) Is the building or structure of such old and unusual or uncommon design, texture and material that it could not be reproduced or be reproduced only with great difficulty?
- (4) Would retention of the building or structure help preserve the memorial character of the George Washington Memorial Parkway?
- (5) Would retention of the building or structure help preserve and protect an historic place or area of historic interest in the city?
- (6) Would retention of the building or structure promote the general welfare by maintaining and increasing real estate values, generating business, creating new positions, attracting tourists, students, writers, historians, artists and artisans, attracting new residents, encouraging study and interest in American history, stimulating interest and study in architecture and design, educating citizens in American culture and heritage, and making the city a more attractive and desirable place in which to live?

In the opinion of Staff, because the demolition and capsulation is extremely limited in scope, largely confined to areas of more recent construction on secondary facades and in areas that will not be visible from the public right of way, the proposed work will not meet any of the above criteria and is acceptable. The shed at the back (north) wall to be removed is non historic. The new construction along the west side will require the demolition of the west wall of the circa 1960 rear addition. Only the small pantry and storage shed additions and the two new windows on the west wall will impact the original circa 1894 construction. The only two new windows will affect areas that are readily visible from the public right of way. Therefore, Staff has no objection to the proposed demolition/capsulation.

However, Staff does note the comments of Alexandria Archaeology and recommends that they be included as a condition of the approval.

IV. STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends approval of the permit to demolish with the following condition:

The following statements 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:

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.

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

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.
- C-9 A wall location plat prepared by a land surveyor is required to be submitted to this office prior to requesting any framing inspection.

Historic Alexandria:

No comments.

Alexandria Archaeology:

- F-1 According to Ethelyn Cox's *Historic Alexandria, Street by Street, A Survey of Existing Early Buildings*, a house owned by William Hunter and occupied by Ludwell Lee may

have been present on this street face by 1789, probably located at 413 Wilkes, adjacent to the current development lot. By 1810, tax records show two houses on the block.

Although these early known structures may not be within the development area, it is possible that archaeological resources that could provide insight into late 18th and 19th - century residential activities in early Alexandria may remain buried on this property.

- 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 and Environmental Services:

“No comments.”