

Docket Item # 12
BAR CASE # 2007-0121

BAR Meeting
July 18, 2007

ISSUE: Demolition/capsulation

APPLICANT: Vanessa Veazie

LOCATION: 535 S. Fairfax Street

ZONE: RM/Residential

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Staff recommends approval of the application as submitted.

(Insert sketch here)

Note: This docket item requires a roll call vote.

I. ISSUE:

The applicant is requesting a Permit to Demolish for the enclosure of a porch at the southwest corner of the rear of the house. The narrow two story inset porch is located on the south side of the three story house. Only the first story of the porch will be enclosed. The wooden porch has Victorian style turned posts and a simple wood picket railing. Similarly, the wooden steps from the yard to the porch are wood with a simple wood railing and posts with turned ball finials. There is a window at the east end of the porch and a door from the kitchen onto the porch in the south wall. A new south and west wall will be constructed to enclose the porch, eliminating the existing open porch area on the first story and removing the walls beyond from view.

The rear of the house is minimally visible from the public right-of-way on Royal and Gibbon Streets.

II. HISTORY:

535 South Fairfax Street is one of a row of four (529-535) attached frame Victorian style residential buildings constructed ca. 1900. The buildings were all originally two stories in height. However, three of the four (529, 531 and 535) have been raised in height to three stories. The additions and alterations to the buildings at 529 and 531 were approved by the Board in 1979. The third story addition and two story porch at the rear of the subject property were approved by the Board in 1996 (BAR Case #96-0073 & #96-0074, 5/1/1996).

III. ANALYSIS:

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, the proposed demolition and capsulation at the southwest corner of the rear of the house will not meet any of the above criteria. The porch dates to 1996. While the

walls beyond are part of the original circa 1900 house, they have already been altered with the insertion of new door and window openings in 1996. The area to be affected is relatively small and is not readily visible from the public right of way.

IV. STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends approval of the application as submitted.

CITY DEPARTMENT COMMENTS

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

Code Enforcement:

- C-1 Alterations to the existing structure must comply with the current edition of the Uniform Statewide Building Code (USBC).
- C-2 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-3 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-4 New construction must comply with the current edition of the Uniform Statewide Building Code (USBC).
- C-5 Alterations to the existing structure must comply with the current edition of the Uniform Statewide Building Code (USBC).
- C-6 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-7 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 were received.