

Docket Item # 21
BAR CASE # 2007-0166

BAR Meeting
September 5, 2007

ISSUE: Alterations
APPLICANT: Magdalene Schremp
LOCATION: 226 S. Fairfax Street
ZONE: RM/residential

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Staff recommends approval of the replacement door and new railings at the side porch but recommends denial of the replacement door at the front. However, if the Board should approve the replacement door at the front, Staff recommends that the original door be stored in the house to be available for reinstallation in the future.

(Insert sketch here)

I. ISSUE:

The applicant is requesting a certificate of appropriateness to allow the inner front door and south side door to be replaced and to install a railing at the south side porch steps.

Front door

Like many houses of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the house at 226 South Fairfax Street has a vestibule. The exterior front door is a fully glazed wood door with a single beveled glass panel. It was removed during painting and can be seen on the side porch. It will be reinstalled in the exterior position. The inner door is set back approximately 3' from the outer door and will be fully visible through the fully glazed exterior door. The existing inner door is a half glazed wood door with three panels and trim work typical of the Victorian era. The applicant wishes to replace this inner door with a new solid wood six panel door. The applicant purchased the door before realizing that a certificate of appropriateness would be required but did not install it. The door is visible, resting against the south side wall at the porch.

Porch door

The applicant wishes to replace the existing multi-paned wood door at the porch on the south side of the house with a new solid wood six panel door. Again that door has already been purchased, but not installed, and can be seen on the side porch.

Railings

Lastly, the applicant wishes to install handrails at the side of the brick steps leading from the driveway to the porch. There are two steps inset into the porch. The handrails are to be simple black iron railings with straight pickets. To illustrate the railing type requested, the applicant provided photographs showing the railings at the front door of 217 South Fairfax Street.

The front and sides of the house are visible from Fairfax Street.

II. HISTORY:

The two story detached brick house at 226 South Fairfax Street was constructed between 1902 and 1912, based on an examination of Sanborn mapping. Along with the houses at 222 South Fairfax Street and 230 South Fairfax Street, it was constructed on property that had been the DeWilton & Aitchenson Coal and Wood Yard. Like many urban rowhouses of this period, the architectural emphasis is placed on the front façade. The subdued but rich facade draws from a combination of popular styles, including Victorian and Colonial Revival. The Colonial Revival style side porch was added after 1921, and probably in 1927 when a building permit was issued for the property. The exterior retains a high level of integrity.

III. ANALYSIS:

The proposed door replacements and iron railing comply with the zoning ordinance requirements.

Staff believes that the two doors at the front date to the original construction circa 1907 and that the one on the south side porch likely dates to the circa 1927 porch construction. The *Design Guidelines* call for the repair and retention of historic doors whenever possible (Page 2). The applicant wishes to replace the doors for security reasons. Staff would be willing to recommend

approval of the proposed solid wood six panel door at the side porch entrance as this location is not as prominent as the front. However, Staff is unable to recommend approval of the replacement of the decorative Victorian door at the inner vestibule. The door is original and is a fine example of its type. Fewer and fewer of these handsome doors remain. While Staff understands the applicant's desire to have a solid door, perhaps increased security could be achieved in some other manner, such as installing a security system or replacing the glass in the outer and/or inner door with security glass. Staff has no objection to the installation of the metal railings. They are simple and unobtrusive in design.

IV. STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends approval of the replacement door and new railings at the side porch but recommends denial of the replacement door at the front. However, if the Board should approve the replacement door at the front, Staff recommends that the original door be stored in the house to be available for reinstallation in the future.

CITY DEPARTMENT COMMENTS

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

Code Enforcement:

“No comments.”

Historic Alexandria:

No comments received.