

Docket Item # 8
BAR CASE #2007-0170

BAR Meeting
September 19, 2007

ISSUE: Re-approval of a Permit to Demolish/Encapsulate

APPLICANT: Mary O'Donnell by Stephanie Dimond

LOCATION: 121 Prince 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 re-approval of a Permit to Demolish/Encapsulate to allow for alterations to the rear of 121 Prince Street. The recessed basement level entryway on the north (rear) elevation will be encapsulated allowing new french doors to be flush with the exterior wall.

The area of demolition/encapsulation is visible from the rear public alley which runs east/west between South Union and South Lee Streets.

II. HISTORY:

According to Ethelyn Cox in *Historic Alexandria Street by Street*, in June 1849 heirs of Dr. Frederick May, conveyed this then "vacant lot" to Margaret Calender for \$175. The house was built by Margaret Calender or her heirs after 1849 (Cox page 116).

The Board approved a rear addition to 121 Prince Street on June 29, 1968 which included removing an existing one story porch and extending the flounder to the north by approximately 10' 4". The Board approved alterations including encapsulating the rear basement level to make the French doors flush with the exterior wall in 2005 (BAR Case #2005-0152/153, 7/6/06). The approved demolition and alteration work was not begun within one year of Board approval so the approval expired.

III. ANALYSIS:

In considering a Permit to Demolish, 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, none of the above criteria are met. The demolition/encapsulation is located on the rear 20th century addition.

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 A building permit is required for the proposed project (doors, fence, windows and brick wall).
- C-2 Alterations to the existing structure must comply with the current edition of the Uniform Statewide Building Code (USBC).
- C-3 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 comment.”

Alexandria Archaeology:

- F-1 According to *Historic Alexandria, Virginia, Street by Street* by Ethelyn Cox, the right to collect annual ground rent on this lot was conveyed to George Slacom in 1797. Tax records from 1810 indicate that Slacom owned a house and lot valued at \$1500 on this street face. The property therefore has the potential to yield archaeological resources into residential life in Alexandria during the late 18th and 19th centuries.
- R-1 Call Alexandria Archaeology (703/838-4399) two weeks before the starting date of any ground disturbance so that an inspection schedule for city archaeologists can be arranged.
- R-2 Call Alexandria Archaeology (703/838-4399) immediately if any buried historic structural remains (wall foundations, cisterns, wells, privies, 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 to record the finds.
- R-3 The applicant must not allow metal detection to be conducted on the property, unless authorized by Alexandria Archaeology.
- R-4 The above statements in R-1, R-2, and 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 erosion control, sheeting and shoring, and grading) so that on-site contractors are aware of the requirement.