

BAR Meeting  
September 19, 2007

**ISSUE:** Alterations  
**APPLICANT:** Mary O'Donnell by Stephanie Dimond  
**LOCATION:** 121 Prince Street  
**ZONE:** RM/Residential

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**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:** Staff recommends approval of the application with the following conditions:

1. The wood fencing and gates must be painted or stained;
2. 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;
3. 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;
4. The applicant must not allow metal detection to be conducted on the property, unless authorized by Alexandria Archaeology; and,
5. The above statements 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.

(Insert sketch here)

**I. ISSUE:**

The applicant is requesting re-approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness 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 wood true divided light french doors to be flush with the exterior wall.

The applicant is also requesting approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness for construction of a new 9' by 18' parking area and an approximately 7' by 18' trash/recycling area. The new parking and storage areas are separated from the rest of the property by a 6' tall brick wall with two wooden gates. A new 6' tall brick wall will extend 30' along the east property line of 121 Prince Street from the southern end of the proposed storage area to the end of the building at 119 Prince Street. A new approximately 6' tall wood fence will run along the east property line from the edge of the storage area to the northern property line. A similarly designed wood fence on top of a brick retaining wall extends along the western property line.

The alterations will be visible from Wales Alley, a 12' wide public alley which runs from South Lee Street to South Union Street behind the subject property.

**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 alteration work to the basement level door was not begun within one year of the approval so the approval expired and the applicant is therefore seeking re-approval.

**III. ANALYSIS:**

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

The *Design Guidelines* state that wood fences must be painted or stained (Fences – Page 3).

In the opinion of Staff, the proposed alterations comply with the *Design Guidelines*. Staff believes that the proposed alterations are relatively minor and are appropriate. Staff notes the comments of Alexandria Archaeology and has included them as a condition of the approval.

**IV. STAFF RECOMMENDATION:**

Staff recommends approval of the application with the following conditions:

1. The wood fencing and gates must be painted or stained;
2. 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;
3. 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;

4. The applicant must not allow metal detection to be conducted on the property, unless authorized by Alexandria Archaeology; and,
5. The above statements 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.

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 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> 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.