

Docket Item # 19
BAR CASE # 2007-0229

BAR Meeting
November 14, 2007

ISSUE: Demolition/Encapsulation

APPLICANT: Andrew Saltonstall

LOCATION: 113 South Lee Street

ZONE: RM/Residential

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Staff recommends:

1. Denial of the portion of the demolition and capsulation involving the rear wall of the historic main block; and,
2. Approval of the other areas proposed for demolition and capsulation.

(Insert sketch here)

NOTE: This docket item requires a roll call vote.

I. ISSUE:

The applicant is requesting approval of a Permit to Demolish and Encapsulate portions of the freestanding residential townhouse at 113 South Lee Street in order to construct additions and alterations. The areas to be demolished and capsulated include:

Main Historic Block

The first two levels on the west (rear) elevation will be encapsulated to allow the construction of an addition that will extend within 3'2" of the north side of the house.

An existing window on the third floor on the north side will be enlarged.

Connector/Hyphen

The north side of the connector will be encapsulated to allow construction of a new two story addition.

New openings will be inserted into the south elevation of the connector on both levels; the first floor to accommodate French doors and on the second floor for a new oval window.

Rear Addition

South elevation

An area at the west end of the rear addition on the south side that is approximately 18' in length and one story in height will be demolished in order to allow construction of a proposed one story addition.

Also, an existing doorway on the first floor of this elevation will be enlarged to accommodate French doors.

North elevation

The curved east wall will be encapsulated on both levels in a new addition.

The second level of this elevation will be encapsulated as part of a plan to reconstruct an earlier second story porch.

On the first level a new window will be installed in a new opening at the west end.

An existing window on the third floor will be modified and a new opening created on the third floor on north side of the rear addition for doors for access to a proposed roof deck above the restored second floor porch

West elevation

A first floor window on the rear (west) end of the addition will be enlarged for a door.

Rear Utility shed

The one story wood utility shed attached at the rear of the addition will be demolished.

II. HISTORY:

113 South Lee Street is a two story, three bay brick residential townhouse originally constructed ca. 1803 with later brick rear additions.

The rear section was apparently originally constructed as a two and a half story addition with a one story connector to the main historic block sometime in the mid-19th century, probably post Civil War, based upon the brick coursing at the rear addition. The addition was raised to a full three stories and the connector to two stories sometime between 1891 and 1907. Thus, the house assumed its present height approximately 100 years ago.

A recent house history credits the original design, and presumably the construction, of the rear ell to William McVeigh (1803 -1889) on a stylistic basis, but provides no information on the date of construction. However, the rear ell predates 1877 because it appears on the Hopkins Map of that date. No information is available regarding the designer or contractor of the revised design of the ell in the ca. early 20th century.

There was previously a one story addition on the south side of the house in the approximate area for the addition proposed in this application in the period from before 1885 until ca. 1907.

There were additions on the front of the adjoining lot at 115 South Lee Street which were attached to 113 from the mid-19th century until well into the mid years of the 20th century.

There are no BAR records that indicate previous Board review of this property.

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?

The main historic block is only partially affected by this proposal. The rear elevation will largely be encapsulated. Staff notes that the existing first level door and the smaller window on the second level are recent alterations.

Two primary areas are affected under the proposal. The bulk of the demolition and encapsulation will be on the south wall toward the west end of the rear addition. This area was previously the site of an addition. The other area is the second level of the north wall of the rear addition which will be encapsulated for the reconstruction of a porch.

Basically, the volume and configuration of the historical mass of the house will remain following construction of the proposed addition.

Staff is, in general, not opposed to the alterations to this house. However, staff does have some concerns regarding the extent of the demolition and encapsulation proposed and these concerns center about the historic main block. As staff has noted on numerous previous occasions, the Board's *Guidelines* state: "The Boards actively seek to retain the existing fabric of the historic districts and strongly discourage the demolition of an 18th or early 19th century structure." It is the opinion of staff that the proposed encapsulation of the rear sections of the historic main block meet criteria #'s 1, 3, 5 & 6 and should not be granted.

While staff also has concerns about the encapsulation of the curved portion of the east wall of the rear addition, staff notes that the Board has previously approved the alteration of curvilinear additions at the rear of the houses at 408 Duke Street and 617 South Lee Street. Based upon the previous Board approvals for such work and the likelihood that this addition dates from and late 19th and early 20th centuries staff has no objection to this area of proposed encapsulation.

Staff also has no objection to the proposed demolition of the first level section of the south wall of the rear addition. There was previously an addition in this area and this section of the wall is heavily altered. Thus, staff does not believe that the criteria are met for this section of proposed demolition.

Staff likewise has no objection to the encapsulation of the second level of the north wall of the rear addition for the construction of a new porch. There was previously a porch in this area. Because the addition likely dates from the late 19th century and the proposal calls for the reconstruction of a previously existing porch, staff does not believe that the criteria are met for this section of encapsulation.

The other areas proposed for demolition on the historic main block and the rear addition are largely for window and door modifications and staff believes that they do not meet the criteria.

Staff has no objection to the removal of the wood shed at the rear of the property. It is a 20th century structure and does not meet the criteria.

IV. STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends:

1. Denial of the portion of the demolition and capsulation involving the rear wall of the historic main block; and,
2. Approval of the other areas proposed for demolition and capsulation.

CITY DEPARTMENT COMMENTS

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

Code Enforcement:

- C-1 New construction must comply with the current edition of the Uniform Statewide Building Code (USBC).
- C-2 A Construction permit will be required for the proposed project.
- C-3 Alterations to the existing structure must comply with the current edition of the Uniform Statewide Building Code (USBC).
- C-4 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-5 Construction permits are required for this project. Plans shall accompany the permit application that fully details the construction as well as layouts and schematics of the mechanical, electrical, and plumbing systems.
- C-6 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-7 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-8 Roof drainage systems must be installed so as neither to impact upon, nor cause erosion/damage to adjacent property.
- C-9 Provisions shall be made to prevent the accumulation of water or damage to any foundation on the premises or adjoining property (USBC 3303.5).
- C-10 A soils report must be submitted with the building permit application.
- C-11 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-12 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:

Approve

Alexandria Archaeology:

Archaeology

According to *Historic Alexandria, Virginia, Street by Street* by Ethelyn Cox, the house on this lot was completed by 1803. There is the potential for archaeological resources to be present that could provide insight into domestic activities in early Alexandria.

Conditions

1. The applicant/developer shall 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.
2. The applicant/developer shall not allow any metal detection to be conducted on the property, unless authorized by Alexandria Archaeology.
3. The statements in Conditions 1 and 2 above shall appear in the General Notes of all site plans and on all site plan sheets that involve demolition or ground disturbance (including Erosion and Sediment Control, Grading, and Sheet piling and Shoring) so that on-site contractors are aware of the requirements. Additional statements to be included on the Final Site Plan will be determined in consultation with Alexandria Archaeology.
4. If this project is a federal undertaking or involves the use of any federal funding, the applicant shall comply with federal preservation laws, in particular Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966. The applicant will coordinate with the Virginia Department of Historic Resources and the federal agency involved in the project, as well as with Alexandria Archaeology.