

Docket Item # 9
BAR CASE # 2007-0223

BAR Meeting
December 6, 2007

ISSUE: Accessibility alterations
APPLICANT: Christ Church
LOCATION: 118 North Washington Street
ZONE: CD/Commercial

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Staff recommends deferral of the application for restudy. However, if the Board determines to approve the application, staff recommends the following conditions:

1. To insure that burials are not disturbed without the appropriate legal authorization and to insure that significant information is not lost as a result of the current project, the applicant shall hire an archaeological consultant to complete an Archaeological Evaluation. The applicant shall contact Alexandria Archaeology to obtain a scope of work for this investigation. If significant resources are discovered, the consultant shall complete a Resource Management Plan, as outlined in the *City of Alexandria Archaeological Standards*. Preservation measures presented in the Resource Management Plan, as approved by the City Archaeologist, will be implemented.
2. All required archaeological preservation measures shall be completed prior to ground-disturbing activities (such as coring, grading, filling, vegetation removal, undergrounding utilities, pile driving, landscaping and other excavations as defined in Section 2-151 of the Zoning Ordinance), or a Resource Management Plan must be in place to recover or protect significant resources in concert with construction activities. To confirm, call Alexandria Archaeology at (703) 838-4399.
3. The final site plan shall not be released until the City archaeologist confirms that all archaeological field work has been completed or that an approved Resource Management Plan is in place.
4. The applicant/developer shall call Alexandria Archaeology immediately (703-838-4399) if any buried structural remains (wall foundations, wells, privies, cisterns, etc.), concentrations of artifacts, or evidence of coffins or human remains 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.
5. It is illegal to disturb human remains without obtaining appropriate legal authorization. If burials are found during the archaeological investigation and need to be moved prior to

development, the applicant shall be responsible for the archaeological removal and for obtaining the necessary legal documents, including a permit from the Virginia Department of Historic Resources for the archaeological removal of burials.

6. 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.

7. The statements in Conditions 2, 4, and 5 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, Landscaping, Utilities, and Sheeting 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.

(Insert sketch here)

I. ISSUE:

The applicant is requesting approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness for the construction of accessibility alterations for the Christ Church Parish Hall. The alterations include a new brick ramp sloping up north to south along the west edge of the building with a landing at the entrance to the building. The ramp will be approximately 4' in width and 21' in length with a landing approximately 6'9" in length and 12' in width in front of the existing entry door.

There will be 3' metal railings on both sides of the ramp as well as in front of the landing. A low stepped brick wall will also be installed on either side of the ramp rising from grade to approximately 1'9" at the landing. This brick wall will include raising the existing brick retaining wall for the planter bed next to the building to match the new brick wall on the west side of the ramp.

New brick steps are proposed to be installed to the south entry. These steps will have a metal railing on either side, but will be chained off from everyday use.

II. HISTORY:

This application involves alterations to the forecourt of the Parish Hall for Christ Church fronting on North Columbus Street.

In the past several years, the Board has approved numerous applications for alterations to the grounds, the perimeter fencing and the education building for Christ Church.

III. ANALYSIS:

The proposed accessibility alterations comply with zoning ordinance requirements.

In general, staff has no objection to the accessibility alterations that are needed for the Parish Hall, however, staff has concerns about the proposed design. First, the curvilinear landing introduces a design element that is not otherwise found on the Church grounds. Second, the size of the landing appears to be much larger than is required thereby reducing the overall walk area and contemplative area adjacent to the 18th century cemetery. Third, the amount of metal railings that are now part of this forecourt create a proliferation of metal posts and railings. Staff would prefer that the proposal be reconsidered and simplified as much as possible in order to reduce the overall size of the landing and the plethora of railings.

Therefore, staff recommends deferral of the application for restudy. However, if the Board determines to approve the application, staff notes the comments of Alexandria Archaeology and has included them as conditions.

IV. STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends deferral of the application for restudy.

However, if the Board determines to approve the application, staff recommends the following conditions:

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7. The statements in Conditions 2, 4, and 5 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, Landscaping, Utilities, and Sheeting 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.

CITY DEPARTMENT COMMENTS

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

Code Enforcement:

- C-1 The handicapped ramp must comply with the requirements of USBC 1010.1. The front approach to the exterior door (which is on the pull side) must comply with the landing requirements of USBC 1010.6. Handrails must comply with USBC 1010.8
- C-2 Alterations to the existing structure must comply with the current edition of the Uniform Statewide Building Code (USBC).
- C-3 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-4 The new handrails must comply with USBC for a minimum/maximum height of 30 to 34 inches. The ends must extend 12" beyond the top and bottom risers. The handgrip position must not be more that 2-1/4" in cross-sectional dimension, or the shape must provide an equivalent gripping surface. The handgrip portion must have a smooth surface with no sharp corners. The space between the wall and handrail must not be less that 1-1/2".
- C-5 The new stairs must comply with USBC for riser and tread dimensions.

Historic Alexandria:

Approve.

Alexandria Archaeology:

There is potential for this project to disturb burials in Christ Churchyard.

Conditions

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