

Docket Item # 13
BAR CASE # 2007-0233

BAR Meeting
December 6, 2007

ISSUE: Addition and alterations

APPLICANT: Katherine M. Eltzroth

LOCATION: 500 Jefferson Court

ZONE: RM/residential

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Staff recommends deferral for restudy of the proposed addition.

(Insert sketch here)

Note: Docket item #12 must be approved before this docket item may be considered.

I. ISSUE:

The applicant is requesting approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness for a third story plus attic addition to the existing two story house and for various alterations to the house. The alterations are discussed below:

Addition – the applicant proposes to remove the existing low hip roof and construct a third story plus attic addition on top of the existing two story structure. The proposed addition will have a single pitch roof, sloping down from east to west with a ridgeline parallel to Jefferson Court. Thus, the building will be a full four stories and 40’ high at the ridgeline on the east side and three stories and 27.5’ high at the eaves on the west. At its highest point it will be 15 feet higher than the highest point on the existing house. There will be three dormers in the roof, facing west. The roof will be clad in asphalt shingles and the walls in brick to match the existing brick walls in size and color. There will be a new double brick soldier course starting at the top of the existing brick façade and delineating the new construction.

The new third story on the front (west) elevation facing Jefferson Court will have four windows aligned with those below. The nine-light windows will be casement, but will appear as double hung, and will have a recessed wood panel with a metal grill underneath each window. This window, like all the new windows, will be wood with simulated divided lights with wood muntins and a spacer bar, manufactured by Loewen. The windows will have a brick rowlock sill to match the existing. The roof slopes down toward the west. There will be three evenly spaced dormers in the roof. The dormers will be gabled and will have fixed six-light windows. They will have wood trim, Hardiplank horizontal siding with a 4” reveal and smooth finish on the sides and asphalt shingle roofs.

The north elevation, facing Wilkes Street, will have two windows in the third story that will be aligned over top of those below. These casement windows will have nine lights. There will be no openings in the fourth story. As noted above, the fourth story will be lighted by dormers on the west slope of the roof.

The full height of the addition will be seen on the rear (east) elevation. As it is located on the property line, there will be no openings in this elevation, in accordance with the building code. The applicant proposes that there be five evenly spaced, recessed brick panels with rowlock brick “sills” in the third and fourth stories.

The south elevation will have a new exterior end chimney in the middle of the wall. In the new third story, there will be sliding doors to either side of the chimney that will provide access to metal cantilevered Juliet balconies. There are no notes for door type, but Staff is assuming these are wood. The metal balconies will have a decorative punched pattern. There will be panels of glazing above the doors, extending to the eaves.

Alterations to the existing house – All existing windows will be replaced. The existing windows are single glazed wood windows, with a six-over-six configuration. The replacement windows will be double hung, wood with simulated divided lights with wood muntins and a spacer bar,

manufactured by Loewen. On the front (west) façade, all the existing window openings will be elongated. The first story windows will be increased by 2' and the second story by 1'. The shutters will be removed. The front entryway will be reworked with a new custom six panel door, new wider sidelights, a new transom, and a new surround with fluted pilasters and a molded entablature. There are no notes on the drawings, but the architect has clarified that the door will be a custom wood door, the surround will be wood and the sidelights and transom wood with simulated divided lights. The existing light fixtures will be replaced with new carriage style lamps. On the north elevation, the first story windows will be reduced in length by approximately 6", while those on the second story will be increased by 1'. The fenestration on the south elevation will be completely altered. The existing fenestration consists of a window and French door on the first story and two windows on the second. These will become sliding doors on the first story with large glazed transoms in the second story. The existing rear, east side wall will remain unaltered. The existing low hip roof will be removed and replaced with a new third story and single slope roof above the third floor.

The existing stockade fencing and retaining brick wall at the rear will remain. The HVAC unit will be moved to behind the new chimney.



Figure 1: Proposed façade, west elevation

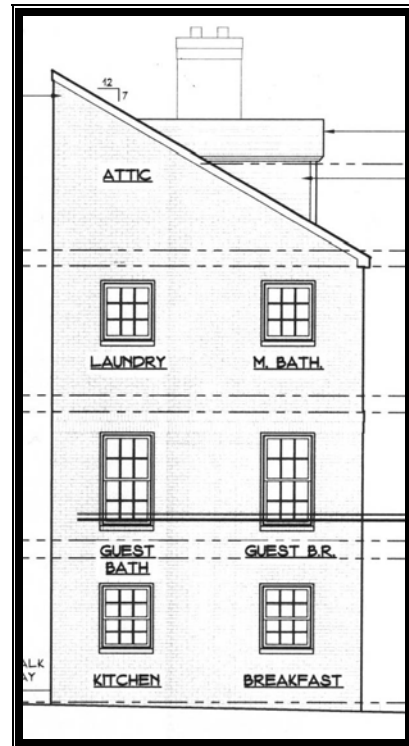


Figure 2: Proposed north elevation

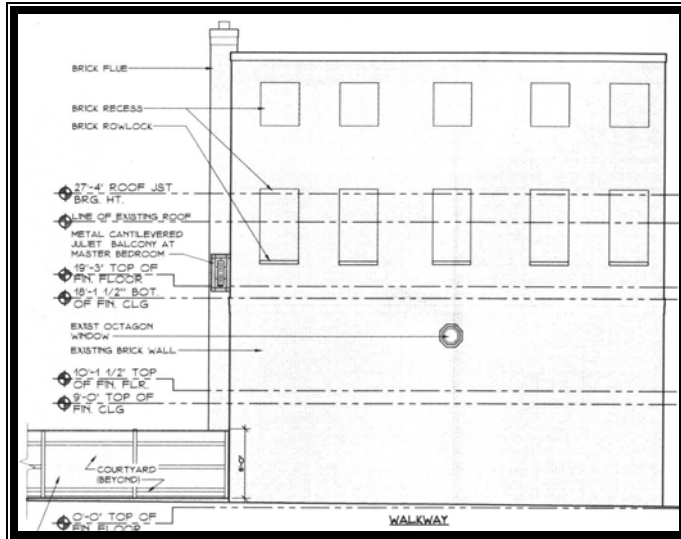


Figure 3: Proposed rear, east elevation

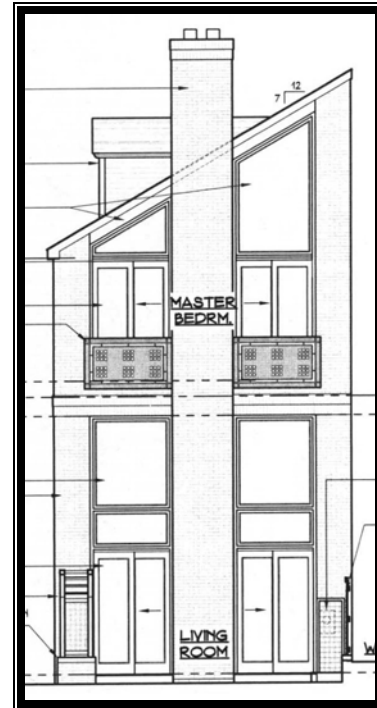


Figure 4: proposed south elevation

II. HISTORY:

As discussed in docket item # 12, the house at 500 Jefferson Court is one of 8 houses constructed on or adjacent to Jefferson Court circa 1966 as part of the Jefferson Square Townhouse, Section II development. None of the 8 houses have had additions. The five-bay wide, two story, hipped roof house at 500 Jefferson Court is very similar to the house at 508 Jefferson Court. The Board previously approved alterations to 500 Jefferson Court which included elongated window openings, new wood thermal windows with simulated divided lights, new window trim, new shutters, a new door and an altered door surround (BAR Case #2006-0247, 11/15/2006). These alterations were not carried out.

III. ANALYSIS:

The proposed addition complies with the Zoning Ordinance.

The existing structure was permitted to be redeveloped under BZA case #822. Although staff recognizes that the subject property was not constructed in accordance with the standards set forth in BZA case #822, the applicant is required to continue to meet those standards as closely as possible. The applicant has relocated the proposed HVAC unit behind the new chimney that is proposed to be added to the south elevation. Based on the revised open space exhibit submitted, the applicant indicates relocation of the existing open space behind the new chimney will create slightly more open space.

Staff has no objections to the proposed alterations to windows and entrance of the house as these are similar to those approved in 2006. The new windows will be wood simulated divided light windows with wood muntins and spacer bars. While the *Design Guidelines* state a preference for true divided light windows, they allow for simulated divided light windows in specific instances

(Windows- page 2). Staff believes that simulated divided light windows are acceptable in this instance as the house dates to the 1960s and is located on a court with other houses of the same date. Staff notes that the Board has previously approved thermal windows with simulated divided lights for houses on Jefferson Court on two other occasions, including one year ago for this very property. Another case on this docket involves replacement windows at 509 Jefferson Court (BAR Case #2007-0227).

Staff has significant concerns regarding adding a third story plus attic to the existing two story house. The massing and form of the expanded building are at odds with the existing building and surroundings. While there are three and four story houses in the immediate area, the character of Jefferson Court is small scale and intimate. The houses within the court that were constructed circa 1966 as part of Jefferson Square Townhouses Section II, are mostly two, and no more than two-and-a-half, stories in height. The houses are in scale with the narrow court and reflect a traditional development pattern of larger buildings on the exterior of blocks and smaller structures on the interior. By increasing the height of the house at 500 Jefferson Court, the scale and cohesiveness of this small enclave will be altered and adjacent buildings will be overwhelmed. Secondly, the house itself will be negatively impacted. The proposed addition does not respect its original massing or form. It currently exhibits a Georgian or Georgian Revival sense of massing and harmonious proportions-- five bays wide, two bays deep and two stories high, under a low hip roof. The additional story and a half will create an awkward vertical mass. The proposed single slope roof oriented to the street is an unusual form. The flounder type roof is typically oriented with the long roofline parallel to the side property line rather than to the front. The flounder form as used here results in a four story solid (except for the existing hexagonal window at the second story) wall on the east property line. While this acts as the rear of this property, it is technically a side elevation that will be readily visible from Wilkes Street. Staff does appreciate that the architect has attempted to provide some relief for the sheer wall by inserting recessed brick panels on the third and fourth stories. The three and a half story end wall facing Wilkes Street will overwhelm the two story houses to the west. Similarly, the south end wall with its dramatic vertical bands of glazing will overwhelm the neighboring Jefferson Court houses. In the opinion of Staff, the proposed addition does not comply with the *Design Guidelines* that state that:

- Residential additions should reflect the building massing prevailing along a blockface;
- Residential additions should not overwhelm the existing structure or neighboring buildings; and,
- The existing form of a residential building should generally be retained in the expression of the addition (Residential Additions – page 6).

Therefore, Staff recommends that the application be deferred for reconsideration of the massing, height and form of the proposed addition. The applicant should know that Staff has strong reservations about any substantial change in the form or height of the existing building.

IV. STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends deferral for restudy of the proposed addition.

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:

Not enough information was submitted. Request photographs of the existing conditions.