

Docket Item # 9
BAR CASE # 2007-0269

BAR Meeting
February 6, 2008

ISSUE: Alterations
APPLICANT: McGuire Woods
LOCATION: 1707 Duke Street
ZONE: OCH/Commercial

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Staff recommends the following:

- Regarding the proposed alterations to the 100-year old historic building, staff recommends deferral for restudy of the stairs, planters and porch.
- Regarding the concept design of the plaza, staff recommends approval of the open space courtyard as generally depicted on the plan dated January 23, 3008 prepared by Landscape Architecture Bureau subject to the following conditions:
 1. The stairs-seating steps for the open space on Duke Street shall be refined to be integrated with the final design of the memorial to the satisfaction of the Director of Planning & Zoning.
 2. The proposed freestanding-wall sign for 1701 Duke Street shall be eliminated as it is not permitted by the development special use permit conditions.
 3. The final design of the memorial shall be refined subject to the satisfaction of the Directors of Planning and Zoning, Recreation, Parks, and Cultural Activities, and Office of Historic Alexandria in consultation with the community.
 4. The details of the courtyard including but not limited to lighting locations and fixtures, paving materials, walls, railings, seating, trash receptacles, and planters are subject to subsequent review and approval by the Board of Architectural Review.
 5. Replace the landscape strip on the west side of the triangular lawn area to incorporate a seating element that permits pedestrian access to the lawn from the sidewalk on Reinekers Lane at two or more locations.
 6. All Archaeology Conditions previously approved with DSUP2006-00023 shall be met.

(Insert sketch here)

I. ISSUE:

The applicant is requesting approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness for alterations and landscape features for a designated 100-Year Old Building, 1707 Duke Street owned by Hooff Real Estate, and a plaza area leading to a new commercial building. The new commercial development is called Edmondson Plaza. The site is not located within the boundaries of the Old and Historic Alexandria District. However, designated 100-Year Old Buildings, such as 1707 Duke Street, are under the purview of the Old and Historic Alexandria Board of Architectural Review for any alterations to the exterior visible from a public right-of-way and demolition or encapsulation.

The proposed development containing the new building was approved under a Development Special Use Permit, #2006-0023. During the DSUP process and the approval per Conditions #6 and #7, the City Attorney's office made the determination that the Old and Historic Alexandria Board of Review would have purview over any alterations or additions to 1707 Duke Street (designated 100-Year Old Building) and aspects of the setting, including the final design of the plaza area up to the face of the new building. The Board would not have purview over the demolition of the existing building adjacent to the 1707 Duke Street on its eastern side nor would the Board have purview over the design of the new building, with the exception of any lighting placed on the building within the Courtyard/Plaza Area.

A. Alterations to 1707 Duke Street – Historic House

Stairs and Planters on 1707 Duke Street:

The applicant proposes to remove the brick planters and stairs on the front façade of 1707 Duke Street and replace them with new raised corner planters and a new stair and stoop. Two new planters will be constructed of 4" brick on 4" cmus, with shaped brick copings, each approximately 6' x 6'. The face of the proposed planters will be pulled back from the existing face of the planters along Duke Street as shown in the drawings.

The new entrance stairs and landing will closely mirror the existing stair and landing design. Each of the landings will be 5' x 6', with brick. The new stairs will consist of brick risers, with 5 cast stone treads with bull nose finishes. The borders of the stairs will also be cast stone. A new wrought-iron rail and guard, with lamb's tongue ends will be installed. A recessed brick panel with a 1" reveal and a brick arch will be inset in the land stair facing Duke Street.

However, the proposed new planters and landings encroach on the public-right-of-way, therefore, do not meet the zoning ordinances and can not be considered by the Board. The stairs may be considered.

Freestanding Sign:

A new business identification sign for Hooff Realty is proposed to be installed within the new planter at the corner of Duke Street and Reinekers Lane. The sign as proposed is a two-sided freestanding pole sign. The 6" concrete pole stands approximately 11'4" from grade of the new planter in which it will be located. The sign will contain the text "CHAS. R. HOOFF REALTORS", with a coat of arms or crest. The drawings show scroll embellishments on the

circular sign. No information was provided on the materials for the sign itself. However, as shown on the drawings and the site plan, the planter and sign are encroaching into the public right-of-way, by approximately 4'. Thus, this proposed sign does not meet the zoning ordinance and can not be considered by the Board.

Porch:

Once the existing building (McNair Travel) next to 1707 Duke Street is demolished, a new open porch with a pergola-style beam element is proposed for the east elevation. As proposed, the porch will project 6' from the eastern wall of the building, and will run 21 feet along the building's elevation. The porch will be constructed on a raised foundation of concrete, concrete blocks, and faced with brick. The foundation will transition with the grade of the site.

The floor of the porch will be brick pavers, in a basket weave pattern. The proposed new porch will have 3'6" tall wood picket railings, four 8" square wood columns and pergola-style beams, with rafter tails. An existing door opening will provide access from the building to the porch. Currently, this opening is not visible due to the existing building covering this elevation. While Staff requested access to see the opening from the inside, access was not granted. However, photographs of the opening were provided to Staff for review which shows the opening and a door with transom. The pergola beam rafters will be attached to the 100-Year Old Building, with the bottom of the beam level with the top of the existing door opening. The applicant has provided drawings and details of the porch and the pergola beam elements.

B. Open Space Plaza

Once the existing buildings facing Duke Street are demolished, a public open space plaza is proposed to serve as a pedestrian entrance to the new commercial building from both Duke Street and Reinekers Lane. As proposed in concept, the open space plaza will contain a series of steps and seating walls along Duke Street, rising to a flat plaza with hardscape and softscape elements, including retaining and seating walls, vegetation and plantings, and memorial components recognizing the history associated with the site.

A new property identification sign for the development is also proposed, contained within a brick retaining wall fronting Duke Street, with stainless steel letters on a recessed brick or cast stone panel. The text will read "1701 Duke Street at Edmondson Plaza".

As the applicant developed the design for the open space plaza area that will lead from Duke Street to the new building, adjacent on the east of 1707 Duke Street, Planning and Zoning Staff developed a set of design principles for the open space plaza/courtyard design. Those principles are as follows:

1. Courtyard should reflect the angular geometry of the new office building which was originally designed to follow the angle of King Street Station across Reinekers Lane.
2. Create a good pedestrian flow though site to:
 - a. Direct access to office from both Duke Street and Reinekers Lane.
 - b. Provide ample hardscape along the front of the office building that is anticipated to serve retail and/or restaurant uses with outdoor seating.

- c. Provide access and maximize unobstructed views to memorial element in the plaza.
3. Treat historic house as a sculpture and surround house primarily with green space that may have been historically accurate and to provide a simple calm green buffer in the form of a lawn between the office/retail use and the historic house for use as an informal lunch/meeting area for office workers, memorial visitors, tourists, and Whole Foods customers.
4. Create and define a memorable space for the memorial that has designed space for interpretive elements and ample seating for visitors.
5. The east wall that separates the courtyard space from existing Table Talk site should provide a quiet green backdrop to the rest of the courtyard.

The applicant and Staff have met several times with members of the community, including representatives from the Black History Museum, on the message and design of the memorial. Overall, the community seemed to feel strongly that the design of the memorial should be representational, should be easily visible from Duke Street, and should provide seating for people who wish to reflect on the memorial and the historic house. In respect to the memorial, the applicant is proposing, in concept, a figurative sculpture of the Edmonson sisters with important pieces of the family's struggle and the site's history represented on additional memorial elements. Since the historian and artist have not yet begun work on the memorial, certain elements of the courtyard next to the Duke Street entrance will need to be restudied pending final design of the memorial.

II. HISTORY:

1707 Duke Street is a designated 100-Year Old Building. It received the designation from City Council in 1978. According to the survey sheet completed at the time of designation, 1707 Duke Street is a freestanding early 19th-century, 2 ½-story, 5 bay house with gable roof, pedimented dormers, and a front entry with pilaster and a pediment ensemble. The property is also listed on the National Register of Historic Places as a component of an Underground Railroad Thematic designation.

This property was the site of the Bruin Slave Jail in the early 19th-century. Joseph Bruin, a slave dealer, purchased the house in 1884; Bruin and his partner, Henry Hill, conducted their business from the property at 1707 Duke Street. Upon its listing on the National Register of Historic Places, the site was formally recognized for its role in raising awareness about horrific conditions of slavery, about the courage and resistance of enslaved people, and about their continual struggle for freedom. In *The Key to Uncle Tom's Cabin*, published in 1854, Harriet Beecher Stowe explained how she used information about Bruin's slave jail as the background for her 1852 novel, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. Stowe described the escape of a number of slaves from Washington, D.C. on the ship Pearl in 1848 and their recapture for eventual sale in New Orleans. Bruin and Hill purchased the Edmondsons, a slave family, and brought them to the slave jail. Mary and Emily Edmondson were eventually freed when their father Paul raised enough money to purchase his daughters with the help of Reverend Lyman Beecher, Stowe's father.

III. ANALYSIS:

A. Alterations to 1707 Duke Street – Historic House

Side Porch:

While the proposed pergola/porch complies with zoning regulations the porch as proposed is incompatible with the architecture of the 100-year old historic building and staff recommends deletion or restudy of the design. While Staff understands the desire of the applicant for the porch, staff is concerned about the appropriateness of situating a private porch within a public open space and the design details of the porch. According to the Design Guidelines: “Porches should be appropriate to the historical style of the structure. For example, enclosed screen porches are not appropriate on 18th-century structures. Side porches are found on many 19th-century residential structures in the historic districts...Porches should not hide, obscure or cause the removal of important historic architectural details...Porches should be made of materials which are sympathetic to the building materials generally found in the historic districts.” In Staff’s opinion, the pergola element of the new porch is not compatible to this early 19th-century building. Pergolas are usually associated with freestanding landscape features, not as architectural elements on a high-style building of the era of 1707 Duke Street. In addition, the location of the porch on the side is highly visible, so the pergola elements will be directly viewed from the public right-of-way. Staff is recommending the applicant eliminate the proposed porch from the plaza, restudy an alternative proposal to address the existing doorway or restudy the porch design to be appropriate to the period and style of the 100-year old building..

Front Stairs/Planters:

As stated in the issues section, the proposed new corner planters and landings encroach on the public right-of-way and cannot be considered by the Board. In addition, the new planters and landings are problematic from a functional pedestrian viewpoint. To mitigate conflicts with the new crosswalk, ADA ramps, and pedestrian circulation at the corner of Duke Street and Reinekers Lane, the proposed new corner planters and the landings on either side of the front of 1707 Duke Street (100-Year Old Building) shall need to be eliminated. Staff recommends restudy of the stairs with the elimination of the raised planters and landings. The proposed Chas. R. Hooff freestanding sign proposed within the public right-of-way is not permitted and shall need to be removed from the application.

B. Open Space Plaza

Staff is recommending approval of the concept plan for the open space courtyard, as generally depicted on the plan dated January 23, 2008, that establishes the circulation patterns and the landscape/hardscape boundaries for the design of the plaza. The applicant has worked with Staff to address the underlying principles recommended by Staff to accommodate multiple uses within the courtyard. The design provides a balanced hardscape and softscape that reinforces the geometry of the new office building and historic house. However, the steps / seating steps for the open space on Duke Street detract from the memorial and historic house and require further restudy

The most recent proposal for the memorial has not yet been commented on by members of the community or descendants of the Edmonson family, and staff has concerns regarding the

appropriateness of the proposed memorial. Given the sensitivity of the topic of this memorial and the historical significance of the archaeological findings on this site, Staff would like the design and story of the memorial to be resolved to Staff's satisfaction in consultation with the community, prior to final BAR approval of the courtyard details to ensure a coordinated design of the plaza.

The new property identification sign for the development as currently proposed is in violation of a condition of approval from the DSUP and is conditioned to be eliminated from the proposal.

In order to allow the developer to proceed with the processing of the final site plan and building permit, Staff is recommending approval of the submitted framework/concept plan for the open space plaza, with conditions, relating to the details, the open space steps along Duke Street, and the memorial area of the plaza.

IV. STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Staff recommends the following:

- Regarding the proposed alterations to the 100-year old historic building, staff recommends deferral for restudy of the stairs, planters and porch.
- Regarding the concept design of the plaza, staff recommends approval of the open space courtyard as generally depicted on the plan dated January 23, 3008 prepared by Landscape Architecture Bureau subject to the following conditions:
 1. The stairs-seating steps for the open space on Duke Street shall be refined to be integrated with the final design of the memorial to the satisfaction of the Director of Planning & Zoning.
 2. The proposed freestanding wall sign for 1701 Duke Street shall be eliminated as it is not permitted by the development special use permit conditions.
 3. The final design of the memorial shall be refined subject to the satisfaction of the Directors of Planning and Zoning, Recreation, Parks, and Cultural Activities, and Office of Historic Alexandria in consultation with the community.
 4. The details of the courtyard including but not limited to lighting locations and fixtures, paving materials, walls, railings, seating, trash receptacles, and planters are subject to subsequent review and approval by the Board of Architectural Review.
 5. Redesign the landscape strip on the west side of the triangular lawn area to incorporate a seating element that permits pedestrian access to the lawn from the sidewalk on Reinekers Lane at two or more locations.
 6. All Archaeology Conditions previously approved with DSUP2006-00023 shall be met.

CITY DEPARTMENT COMMENTS

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

Code Enforcement:

- C-1 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 be taken to prevent the spread of rodents from the construction site to the surrounding community and sewers.
- C-2 Before a building permit can be issued on any proposed future alterations, a certification is required from the owner or owner's agent that the building has been inspected by a licensed asbestos inspector for the presence of asbestos (USBC 110.3).
- C-3 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-4 New construction must comply with the current edition of the Uniform Statewide Building Code (USBC).
- C-5 Alterations to the existing structure must comply with the current edition of the Uniform Statewide Building Code (USBC).
- C-6 Alterations to the existing structure and/or installation and/or altering of equipment therein requires a building permit. Five sets of plans, bearing the signature and seal of a design professional registered in the Commonwealth of Virginia, must accompany the written application. The plans must include all dimensions, construction alterations details, kitchen equipment, electrical, plumbing, and mechanical layouts and schematics.
- C-7 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 than 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 than 1-1/2".
- C-8 Guardrail height and openings must comply with USBC 1012.2 and 1012.3.
- C-9 Sheeting and shoring shall not extend beyond the property line; except when the developer has obtained a written release from adjacent property owners which has been recorded in the land records; or through an approved encroachment process.
- C-10 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-11 Roof drainage systems must be installed so as neither to impact upon, nor cause erosion/damage to adjacent property.
 - C-12 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-13 A soils report must be submitted with the building permit application.
 - C-14 A wall location plat prepared by a land surveyor is required to be submitted to this office prior to requesting any framing inspection.

Previously Approved Archaeology Conditions from DSUP2006-0036:

- F-1 This property was the site of the Bruin Slave Jail in the early 19th century and has high potential to yield highly significant archaeological resources. Joseph Bruin, a slave dealer, purchased the house in 1844; Bruin and his partner, Henry Hill, conducted their business from the property at 1707 Duke Street. The property has been listed in the National Register of Historic Places as a site that contributes to the Underground Railroad thematic study. It is recognized for its role in raising awareness about the horrific conditions of slavery, about the courage and resistance of enslaved people, and about their continual struggle for freedom. In *The Key to Uncle Tom's Cabin*, published in 1854, Harriet Beecher Stowe explained how she used information about Bruin's slave jail as the background for her 1852 novel, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. Stowe described the escape of a number of slaves from Washington, D.C. on the ship *Pearl* in 1848 and their recapture for eventual sale to New Orleans. Bruin and Hill purchased the Edmondsons, a slave family, and brought them to the slave jail. Mary and Emily Edmondson were eventually freed when their father Paul raised enough money to purchase his daughters with the help of Reverend Lyman Beecher, Stowe's father.
- F-2 The applicant has hired Louis Berger and Associates to conduct the archaeological work on this project. A preliminary documentary study and archaeological testing have been completed, but additional fieldwork and documentary research are required.
- C-1 All required archaeological preservation measures shall be completed in compliance with Section 11-411 of the Zoning Ordinance.

1. The developer shall consider the historic character of the property in the design of open space for this project and shall provide interpretive signage. (See Archaeological Condition 7). **(NOTE: The current plan is not detailed enough to allow for an assessment of the integration of the historic and interpretive elements into the overall design. The wording and design of the interpretive signage, as well as the placement of interpretive elements, shall be presented as part of the plan for review.)**
2. To insure that significant information is not lost as a result of the current development project, the applicant shall complete a full Documentary Study and Archaeological Investigation. Archaeological fieldwork for this project shall include archaeological monitoring during demolition activities and asphalt removal on the site and an archaeological investigation after demolition and asphalt removal have been completed. If significant resources are discovered, the consultant shall complete a final 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.
3. 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 significant resources in concert with ground disturbing activities. To confirm, call Alexandria Archaeology at (703) 838-4399.
4. 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. **NOTE: The applicant has hired Louis Berger to conduct the fieldwork during and after demolition. The site plan can be released when the archaeological consultant completes the Archaeological Certification process.**
5. 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.
6. Certificates of Occupancy will not be issued for this property until the final archaeological report has been received and approved by the City Archaeologist.
7. The developer shall design, write and erect historic markers (interpretive signage) on the property according to specifications provided by Alexandria Archaeology. The applicant will continue to involve City staff and the public in the development of the design for open space. The markers and design for open space will highlight the historical and archaeological significance of the property and will be subject to approval by Alexandria Archaeology and the Black History Museum.

8. The applicant/developer shall not allow any metal detection to be conducted on the property, unless authorized by Alexandria Archaeology.
9. 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.
10. The statements in Conditions 3, 5, and 8 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, and Sheeting and Shoring) so that on-site contractors are aware of the requirements. **NOTE: Statements are not on Utility Plan.**