

Docket Item #
BAR CASE # 2007-0265

BAR Meeting
March 5, 2008

ISSUE: Alterations & Addition

APPLICANT: Bill Cromley

LOCATION: 214 A North Pitt Street

ZONE: RM/Residential

BOARD ACTION, JANUARY 16, 2008: The Board combined the discussion of docket item #'s 11 & 12. Mr. Smith noted that the design as presented in the application did not meet the requirements for open space in the RM zone and that if the Board approved the design that it would be re-worked so that the project met the zoning ordinance requirements for open space. On a motion by Dr. Fitzgerald, seconded by Mr. Neale the Board approved the applications with the conditions that:

1. The proposed addition comply with the open space requirements of the zoning ordinance;
2. The dormers on the addition are eliminated;
3. Staff is to be provided the chain of title for the building;
4. If it can be shown that Moses Hepburn owned the property, the proposal is to return to the Board for further consideration;
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. The applicant/developer shall not allow any metal detection to be conducted on the property, unless authorized by Alexandria Archaeology; and,
7. The statements in 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 Sheeting and Shoring) so that on-site contractors are aware of the requirements.

The roll call vote on the motion was 5-1 (Mr. Spencer was opposed).

REASON: The Board agreed with the staff analysis regarding the size of the addition and believed that an addition was necessary as a means of preserving the building. The Board did not believe that Moses Hepburn was associated with the carriage house. However, in the event that it is shown that Hepburn did, in fact, own the building, the Board believed that the proposal should be re-considered by the Board.

SPEAKERS: Bill Cromley, applicant, spoke in support

Townsend Van Fleet, President, Old Town Civic Association, spoke in opposition
John Johansen, Chair, Historic Preservation Committee, Town Civic Association, spoke in opposition
John Hynan, representing the Historic Alexandria Foundation, spoke in opposition
Randy Stevens, representing the Society for the Preservation of Black Heritage, spoke in opposition
Lillie Finklea, 1210 Franklin Street, Director, Friends of Freedmen Cemetery, spoke in opposition
Linda Wolf, Realtor, spoke in support
Trudy Pierson, member, Old Town Civic Association and member, Historic Preservation Trust Task Force, spoke in opposition
Julie Crenshaw Van Fleet, Wolfe Street, spoke in opposition

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Staff recommends approval of the application with the following 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 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 Sheeting and Shoring) so that on-site contractors are aware of the requirements.

BOARD ACTION, DECEMBER 19, 2007: On a motion by Mr. Smeallie, seconded by Ms. Neihardt, the Board deferred the application for restudy by a vote of 5-0.

REASON: The Board deferred the application for restudy to give the applicant the opportunity to return to the Board with colored drawings and a scale model of the proposed construction. The Board felt that these visual aides are necessary to determine the appropriateness of the proposal.

SPEAKERS: Bill Cromley, applicant, spoke in support;
John Hynan, representing the Historic Alexandria Foundation spoke in opposition;
John Johansen, OTCA Board of Directors and OTCA Historic Preservation committee chair, spoke in opposition;
Ken Hutchinson, 509 Cameron, expressed concern regarding continued alley access to his rear parking

(Insert sketch here)

UPDATE: This application is back before the Board at the request of the applicant to provide information in accordance with conditions 3 and 4 of the January 16, 2008 approval that: “3. Staff is to be provided the chain of title for the building; and 4. If it can be shown that Moses Hepburn owned the property, the proposal is to return to the Board for further consideration.” This information is provided with the applicant’s request to have the Board make a determination that the building proposed to be developed has no historical associations with Moses Hepburn that would alter the decision of the design proposed.

In its motion at the January 16, 2008 public hearing a condition of the Board approval was: “If it can be shown that Moses Hepburn owned the property, the proposal is to return to the Board for further consideration.” It is clear that Moses Hepburn did own the land upon which the stable is built.

Since the January 16, 2008, public hearing considerable controversy has surrounded the association of Moses Hepburn with the land on which the stable stands, the building itself, as well as the provenance of the four rowhouses in front of the stable which are situated on North Pitt Street. Staff has been provided research undertaken by Alexandria Archaeology that, at first blush, appears to indicate that a) Moses Hepburn did own the land on which the stable was built and b) that the stable building as well as the rowhouses on North Pitt Street post-date ownership by Hepburn. However, there has been no investigation of the physical fabric by a qualified architectural historian of either the stable or the rowhouses to determine if the material fabric would provide any evidence of a construction date, construction techniques or construction sequencing. Such information is, in the opinion of staff, critical to forming an informed opinion regarding a probable construction date of the stable and rowhouses. Based upon this, staff concludes that insufficient physical research and investigation has been undertaken to either confirm or refute a likely date of construction.

In the opinion of staff, the question of the association of the stable and/or rowhouses with Moses Hepburn is not germane as to whether they are important architectural resources within the Old and Historic Alexandria District. It is clear from documentary evidence as well as a most cursory glance at these buildings that they appear to date from the 19th century so this structure is clearly an important part of the historic fabric of the City.

Staff is providing this update to comply with the condition of the Board’s approval and the applicant’s request. At the same time, staff makes no recommendation for further action since the Board has not provided additional guidance to staff or to the applicant regarding actions that may take place as a result of being provided the additional information requested. Any information from the Board’s updated action will be included in the material provided to City Council for their consideration of the appeal of the demolition application scheduled to be heard on March 15, 2008.

There have been no other changes to the staff report and staff here repeats the report from January 16, 2008.

I. ISSUE:

The applicant is requesting a Certificate of Appropriateness for alterations and an addition for the existing 2-story brick structure located at 214 A North Pitt Street. The building was originally constructed for carriage and automobile uses and is being converted to a single-family residence. The current building is 20.40' by 34.00' (693.6 square feet) and is now used for garage parking for two vehicles and storage. The northern portion of the lot is vacant and used for surface parking.

Alterations:

The alterations will consist of removing the existing east wall of the shed roof addition with three bays and replacing with a new wood garage door, and a series of three bays of French-style wood doors and side lights. The existing two openings on the second floor of the east elevation will have new wood casement windows installed and a new window is proposed between the two existing openings. Flush cedar siding will be used on the ground floor. A new standing seam metal roof will be installed on the existing structure. An existing door opening on the second floor of the south elevation will be retained and will have a four-panel wood door.

Addition:

The two-story addition will encapsulate the north elevation of the existing structure. It will have a footprint of 19.5' x 20.4', totaling approximately 397.8 square feet, projecting just slightly more to the east of the existing one-story frame shed addition on the existing building. Stone is proposed for the base, up to a water table just below the sills of the first floor windows, then the materials will transition to a dark brick for the remainder of the first story of the addition. Cedar shingles will side the exterior of the second floor. On the east elevation, a paired wood casement window will be centered on the elevation, with a single wood casement window on the either side. A projecting bay window will be centered on the second floor on this elevation, with the bay containing primarily window groupings, with simulated divided lites. The bay element will project and intersect into the complex hipped roof. Wood beams will be located below the bay element. On the north elevation of the addition, the bay element is repeated with an identical window grouping. On the ground level, paired French doors will be centered below the bay element, with single casement windows on either side. The addition will have a complex hipped roof with standing seam metal. Rounded windows, mimicking eyebrow dormers, will be located on all four sides of the roof. The west elevation addition will not contain any windows or doors on the first and second floor, but will contain the eyebrow dormer in the roof just below the roof peak, and repeats the stone and wood material of the other elevations.

All new windows and French doors on the project will be manufactured by Weathershield, and will be wood, double-glazed, true-divided lights, either double-hung or casements.

II. HISTORY:

214 A North Pitt Street is a two-story brick building that appears to have been constructed to serve as a secondary/stable/garage structure for adjacent buildings in the area. Historically, the building and lot were associated with 509 Cameron Street and probably served as a stable for that residence. The 1877 Hopkins maps shows a structure with a small addition on the lot. A two story structure with what appears as a one-story addition is shown on the 1891 Sanborn Fire Insurance map. The 1907 map shows just a two-story structure. The 1921 Sanborn map shows a

two-story structure with two, one-story additions, with the northern most addition projecting slightly further to the west. The map also indicates the structure was used for “autos”. The 1941 and 1958 Sanborn maps show just a two-story structure that appears to be the footprint of the current building.

Staff did not locate any prior Board approval for this property.

The applicant recently received approval of a special exception from the Board of Zoning Appeals to construct a two-story addition on the rear property line (BZA Case #2007-00029).

III. ANALYSIS:

Proposed addition, alterations, and demolition comply with zoning ordinance requirements.

Staff would like to commend the applicant for recognizing the importance of retaining this historic stable structure and for the proposed adapted reuse as a single family residence. Staff understands the desire for the addition and supports an addition to the historic structure. Initially, Staff had concerns that the architectural treatment on the addition as proposed introduced a higher style design vocabulary that is not compatible with the very simplistic nature of the existing historic structure. However, since the revisions made by the applicant, including limiting the stone base to below the water table and using brick on the remainder of the first level, Staff believes the high-style elements have been toned down so as to not compete with the simplistic, utilitarian nature of the historic existing structure. In addition, the color scheme on the new addition should also mitigate the transition from the addition to the original.

Therefore, Staff recommend approval of the application.

IV. STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends approval of the application with the following condition:

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 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 Sheeting and Shoring) so that on-site contractors are aware of the requirements.

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.

Historic Alexandria:
Comments Pending

Alexandria Archaeology:

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