

Docket Item # 10
BAR CASE #2008-0021

BAR Meeting
March 5, 2008

ISSUE: Addition and alterations

APPLICANT: Michael Gilmore, Ph.D.

LOCATION: 115 North Patrick

ZONE: CD/Commercial

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends approval of the application with the following conditions:

1. That the fiber cement siding have a smooth finish and be installed so that the nails are not visible;
2. That the new and replacement windows and doors have true-divided-lights;
3. That the canister light fixtures have a bronze finish; and,
4. That the exterior lights be placed on motion detectors;
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 archaeology conditions above marked with an asterisk (*) 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. Additional statements to be included on the Final Site Plan will be determined in consultation with Alexandria Archaeology.

BACKGROUND: The Permit to Demolish and the Certificate of Appropriateness for the adaptive reuse of the building at 115 North Patrick Street as multi-family residential building was originally approved by the Board in 2005 (BAR Case #2005-00273 and 274, 12/7/2005) and subsequently by City Council on appeal on 1/21/2006. However, construction was not commenced on the exterior part of the project with a 12 month period as required by the zoning ordinance. Therefore, the applicant is now before the Board for re-approval.

NOTE: Docket item #?? must be approved before this docket item may be considered..

I. ISSUE:

Currently vacant, the former clubhouse operated by the City’s Department of Mental Health, Mental Retardation & Substance Abuse is being converted to a multi-family residential building. To facilitate this adaptive re-use, the applicant is requesting re-approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness to make alterations to 115 N. Patrick Street. The major alteration is removal of a section of the roof structure for the sunken roof promenade. A connecting corridor will be constructed to link the main and secondary buildings on the second level. Other alterations involve minor changes to infill or create window and door openings.

The complex is visible from Patrick Street and from the public alley on the north side of the building. The rear is partially visible in a through-block view down the alley. Views of the first story of the main building at the rear and the south side from the public right of way are limited.

In summary, the alterations proposed for this application are as follows:

- Construct a roof promenade set within the roof and set back from the N. Patrick Street elevation, and obscured by the parapet and the distance from the public-rights-of-way. The applicant provided sight lines documentation.
- Construct an interior stairway to provide access to the roof top promenade, the enclosed stairway will be sided with Hardi-plank, and will mimic board-and-batten construction, only a minute portion of the top of the stairway will be visible from the public rights-of-way

Front (west) elevation of main building

This elevation will be repaired and painted as necessary but will remain largely unchanged. The only significant alteration is the removal of the circa 1980 handicapped ramp and the extension of the front doorway to meet grade. This alteration will allow universal access through the front door. The new wood doorframe and wood six panel door will be 1.5' longer than the existing. Also part of this alteration is a new four light transom, similar to the existing, and new pre-cast concrete plinth blocks at the base of the limestone entrance feature. Bronze finished exterior light fixtures will be installed on either side of the entrance. An existing ornamental metal gate will be repaired, painted and moved forward into the existing brick archway at the head of the alleyway along the south side of the



property.

Rear (east) elevation of main building

This elevation will be repaired and painted as necessary but will remain largely unchanged. This section of the building is minimally visible from the alley.



Front (west) elevation of secondary building

This elevation will also be repaired and painted but will also have a number of alterations. An existing window opening on the south side of the building will remain and wood replacement sash with 6-over-6 simulated divided lights will be installed. This section of the building is minimally visible from the alley.

Rear (east) elevation of secondary building

This elevation will be repaired and painted and will have a number of alterations. An existing window on the first story will be removed and the opening will be bricked in with brick to match the existing. A new window will be installed on the north side of the first story. The new window will be an 8-light wood casement window with simulated divided lights. The sill will be brick. The parapet at the rear will be raised by almost 2' with brick to match and copper coping. Two new canister lights with a white finish will be installed on the rear elevation to illuminate the alley at the back of the property. This elevation is readily visible from the alley.



North elevation of main building

This elevation will be repaired and painted and will have a number of alterations at the back or east end of the building. Two small existing windows will be removed and new 12-over-12 windows will be installed in enlarged openings. The windows will be wood with simulated divided lights. The sills will be brick. In addition, a new 9-over-9 window will be inserted in an enlarged opening where there is currently a small opening. This window will also be wood with simulated divided lights and a brick sill. A new exterior light fixture will replace the existing fixture. This elevation is readily visible from the street and alley.

North elevation of existing first level connecting link

This elevation will be repaired and painted and will have a number of alterations. The two existing mismatched windows on either side of the door will be removed with only the lintels to remain. Two equal size recessed brick infill panels with brick sills will be created in their place. The existing door will be removed and the opening reduced with brick infill. A new 9-over-9 wood window with simulated divided lights will be installed in the shortened opening. This elevation is readily visible from the alley.

North elevation of secondary building

This elevation will be repaired and painted and will have a number of alterations. The existing window sash, sill and lintel on the first story will be removed and the opening infilled with brick to match the existing. On the second story, the existing window opening on the west side will be enlarged and a six-over-six wood window with simulated divided lights will be installed. The existing window on the east side of the second story will be removed as will the wood panel below. A two panel wood door with 9-lights will be installed in the opening. The parapet will be brick to match and copper coping. This elevation is readily visible from the alley.

South elevation of main building

This elevation will be repaired and painted and will have a number of alterations. Two existing double hung windows in the first story near the front of the building will be removed and the openings infilled with brick to match. Two new doorways will be installed in the first story near the front of the building. The first will be located in a blank section of the wall while the second will utilize a portion of an infilled window opening. The doors will be metal doors with four panels. Two existing windows located between the first and second stories near the rear of the building will be removed and the openings infilled with brick to match. A series of four white finished canister lights will be installed at the top of the first story along the south elevation. Views of this section of the building are limited.



South elevation of existing first level connecting link

This elevation will have very minor alterations. An existing door will be replaced by a 4-panel metal door and a new canister light fixture will be installed above the door. This section will be have with fiber cement siding. Views of this section of the building are extremely limited, if not impossible.

South elevation of the secondary building

The existing door on the first story will be replaced with a 4-panel metal door. A new canister light fixture will be installed alongside the door. The existing parapet wall will be raised with brick to match and copper coping. Views to the lower portion of this section of the building will be blocked by a proposed 6' wood fence. The upper portion is readily visible.

Site

Four HVAC units will be located on the roof of the main building, approximately at the center. The HVAC units and roof hatch will be enclosed by a rectangular enclosure 14.5' long, 10.5' wide and 4' high. The enclosure will be constructed of painted fiber cement and will have the appearance of a board and batten wall. The rooftop HVAC enclosure is likely to be minimally visible from the public right-of-way. A new 6' wood fence will be constructed at the rear of the property in the southeast corner to enclose the trash storage area. The enclosure will have a gate on the north side. This wood fence will replace an existing chain link fence.

II. HISTORY:

As discussed in BAR #2008-0020 the two story, brick building at 115 North Patrick Street was constructed between 1896 and 1902 as an engine house for the Alexandria Fire Department. The building was designated as the new home of the Juvenile and Domestic Relations Court for the city in 1946 and the facade was extensively reworked to appear as a Georgian Revival courthouse. Milton Latour Grigg (1905-1982), a prominent Virginia architect, designed the rehabilitation. Although it has had subsequent changes in use, the exterior appearance of the building remains largely as completed in 1947. The two story brick building in the northeast corner at the rear of the lot was constructed as a storage building between 1912 and 1921. The small one story addition linking the main building to the secondary building was constructed in the same time frame.

III. ANALYSIS:

The proposed multi-family dwelling with rooftop open space complies with the CD zone regulations.

In the opinion of the staff, the proposed rehabilitation is acceptable. It will provide badly needed maintenance and improvements to this important local landmark. Given the size of the building and the complex nature of the conversion from clubhouse to multi-family dwelling use, Staff believes the proposed alterations and addition are quite minimal. In addition, the proposed alterations are handled in a sensitive manner. They are compatible with the historic character of the building, but, by leaving remnants of the original construction such as lintels and sills, will read as alterations. The most prominent alteration concerns the lowering of the main entranceway. Staff believes this relatively minimal alteration of Grigg's grand entry is acceptable given that the non-original and distracting handicapped ramp will be eliminated as a result. Staff has no objection to the raising of the parapet on the secondary building. The parapet will be raised by relatively minimal amounts and will be constructed to match the existing in appearance.

Sections of the rear area and the rooftop addition are to be clad in fiber cement siding. The Board has adopted the following policy with respect to the product.

1. That fiber cement siding not be installed on an historic structure;
2. That historic materials should not be removed to install fiber cement siding;
3. That fiber cement siding replace other artificial or composite siding;
4. That the nails not show in the installation of the siding; and,
5. That smooth siding be installed.
6. That BAR Staff may administratively approve the installation of fiber cement siding on *non-historic* buildings (those constructed in 1975 or later).

Provided that the siding is smooth and installed so that the nails do not show, the proposed use of fiber cement siding will comply with the Board's policy.

The rehabilitation retains the majority of the existing true-divided-light wood windows. The alterations to door and window openings and creation of new openings is relatively minimal and is handled sensitively. New windows and doors are appropriate in style and material to the existing. However, all eight of the new and replacement windows and doors proposed for the

project will have simulated-divided-lights. A number of these will be within original openings. Staff notes that the *Design Guidelines* discourage the use of simulated-divided-light windows except on rear elevations with minimal visibility from the public right-of-way (Windows, page 3). Staff is concerned that the difference in appearance between the new simulated-divided-light windows and existing true-divided-light windows will be too distracting and recommends that all eight new windows and doors with divided lights have true divided lights.

Staff notes that the Board previously expressed concerns with the use of metal doors. The Design Guidelines do discourage metal doors except in certain limited circumstances (Exterior Doors, pages 3 & 4). However, the doors on the west (front) and north (alley) side will be either existing wood doors or new wood doors. The only metal doors are the four proposed for the first story of the south elevation. Staff does not believe these doors will be visible and thus does not object to their use.

Lastly, Staff believes that the canister lights are acceptable, though modern in design. Their simplicity and ubiquity help to make them relatively unobtrusive. However, the white finish that is proposed will increase their visibility. Thus, Staff recommends that the canister light fixtures have a bronze finish, to match the lanterns proposed for the front entranceway and to better blend in with the brick walls of the building. Staff also recommends that these exterior lights be placed on motion detectors.

Staff notes the comments of Alexandria Archaeology and has included them as a condition.

IV. STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends approval of the application with the following conditions:

1. That the fiber cement siding have a smooth finish and be installed so that the nails are not visible;
2. That the new and replacement windows and doors have true-divided-lights;
3. That the canister light fixtures have a bronze finish; and,
4. That the exterior lights be placed on motion detectors;
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 archaeology conditions above marked with an asterisk (*) 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. 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

Comments from BAR Case #2007-00194

Code Enforcement:

- F-1 The scope of this project is not shown. The current use group is classified as B, Business and shall conform to handicap accessibility requirements of Chapter 11 of the USBC. The submitted application shows the elimination of the handicap accessible entrance with no alternative accessible entrance proposed. The code requirements affecting this project will be determined based upon additional information pertaining to intended use of the structure. The following are general comments. More detailed comments will occur at the time of building plan review.
- F-2 Proposed exits discharge past window openings in the public pedestrian way between 115 and 113 N. Patrick Street. A Code Modification or additional fire protection requirements are required, subject to the approval of the Director of Code Enforcement.
- F-3 The rear gate configuration discharges onto the public access easement. The proposed configuration obstructs the existing gate located at 113 N. Patrick Street. The proposed gate and fence location for this project should be coordinated with the property owner at 113 N. Patrick Street.
- C-1 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-2 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-3 Roof drainage systems must be installed so as neither to impact upon, nor cause erosion/damage to adjacent property.
- 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 Construction permits are required for this project. Plans shall accompany the permit application that fully detail the construction as well as layouts and schematics of the mechanical, electrical, and plumbing systems.
- C-7 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.

Historic Alexandria:

No comment.

Alexandria Archaeology:

The G.M. Hopkins fire insurance atlas indicates that Donald McLean owned this property in 1877. His house was on Alfred Street, and there is no structure shown on the development lot. According to later Sanborn maps, the fire house was built on the property before 1907. The lot therefore has the potential to yield archaeological resources related to yard activities during the late 19th century, and could also provide information about the engine house and activities of the firemen.

Conditons

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.
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4. The designer shall integrate aspects of the historic character of the property into the design of open/public spaces for this project and shall provide interpretive signage that highlights the history of the site.