

Docket Item # 9  
BAR CASE # 2008-0002

BAR Meeting  
March 19, 2008

**ISSUE:** Permit to Demolish  
**APPLICANT:** Kermit Keith Long  
**LOCATION:** 117 South Columbus Street  
**ZONE:** CD/Commercial

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**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:** Staff recommends approval of the Permit to Demolish as submitted.

(Insert sketch here)

**I. ISSUE:**

The applicant has requested approval of a Permit to Demolish in order to remove the existing garage at the rear of the property at 117 South Columbus Street.

The brick garage fronts on the private north-south alley behind the Morrison House Hotel, but is also visible from the two east-west alleys that bisect the block. There have been a number of alterations to the garage over the years, including the addition of a multi-paned window and single door on the west elevation where the garage doors were located, and new fascia boards and an asphalt shingle roof. The garage has a number of significant structural failures on the east and north elevations, primarily above the window headers but also between the windows and the foundation. The interior of the garage also has significant structural damage on the south wall.

**II. HISTORY:**

The two-and-a-half story brick building at 117 South Columbus Street dates from circa 1880. While originally constructed as a residence, it was converted to commercial and retail uses some time ago. The garage at the rear of the property was constructed much later, probably during the 1920s or 1930s – the first time it appears on the Sanborn map is in 1941.

Staff could locate no previous Board approvals for this property. In two recent cases, the Board has approved the demolition of mid-20<sup>th</sup> century garages in the historic district, at 811 Prince Street (BAR Case #2005-0199, October 5, 2005) and 217 North Saint Asaph Street (BAR Case #2006-0007, February 15, 2006).

**III. ANALYSIS:**

In considering a Permit to Demolish or Capsulate, the Board must consider the following criteria set forth in the Zoning Ordinance, Sec 10-105(B):

- (1) Is the building or structure of such architectural or historical interest that its moving, removing, capsulating or razing would be to the detriment of the public interest?
- (2) Is the building or structure of such interest that it could be made into a historic shrine?
- (3) Is the building or structure of such old and unusual or uncommon design, texture and material that it could not be reproduced or be reproduced only with great difficulty?
- (4) Would retention of the building or structure help preserve the memorial character of the George Washington Memorial Parkway?
- (5) Would retention of the building or structure help preserve and protect an historic place or area of historic interest in the city?
- (6) Would retention of the building or structure promote the general welfare by maintaining and increasing real estate values, generating business, creating new positions, attracting tourists, students, writers, historians, artists and artisans, attracting new residents, encouraging study and interest in American history, stimulating interest and study in architecture and design, educating citizens in American culture and heritage, and making the city a more attractive and desirable place in which to live?

In the opinion of Staff, none of the above criteria are met. The garage dates from the mid-20th century and has had a number of inappropriate alterations over the years. It no longer retains its integrity and does not contribute to the significance of the circa 1880 historic property. Additionally, staff questions whether the existing garage could be rehabilitated given the

severely deteriorated physical condition of the structure. Therefore, staff recommends approval of the application as submitted.

The applicant has no immediate plans to make improvements to the rear of the property once the garage is demolished. However, staff reminds the applicant to consult with staff should any alterations, such as a new fencing, be proposed on the property.

**IV. STAFF RECOMMENDATION:**

Staff recommends approval of the Permit to Demolish as submitted.

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 taken to prevent the spread of rodents from the construction site to the surrounding community and sewers.

C-2 Permission from adjacent property owners is required if access to the adjacent properties is required to complete the proposed demolition. Otherwise, a plan shall be submitted to demonstrate the construction techniques utilized to keep construction solely on the referenced property.

Historic Alexandria:

R-1 Recommend approval.

Alexandria Archaeology:

F-1 Tax records indicate that structures were present on this street face by 1810. This property has potential to yield archaeological resources that could provide insight into residential life in early Alexandria.

F-2 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.