

Docket Item # 14
BAR CASE # 2008-0022

BAR Meeting
March 19, 2008

ISSUE: Alterations
APPLICANT: Scott Leaf
LOCATION: 814 Duke Street
ZONE: RM/Residential

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Staff recommends approval of the application with the following conditions:

1. That the front windows be two-over-two, true divided light wood windows;
2. That the trim material on the rear addition be either wood or fiber cement, not synthetic plastic; and,
3. That the shutters on the front façade be removed.

(Insert sketch here)

I. ISSUE:

The applicant is requesting approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness for alterations at 814 Duke Street. The applicant is in the process of renovating the interior and exterior of the townhouse.

Windows and Doors

The applicant proposes to replace the existing exterior windows and doors (with the exception of the front door) with double-insulated, simulated divided light wood windows and doors. The six-over-six wood and vinyl windows on the front elevation will be replaced with two-over-two windows with an interior spacer bar and 1 ¼" fixed muntins. On the rear of the house the existing multi-light windows would be replaced with new multi-light wood windows and the single-light door will be replaced with a multi-light wood French door.

Siding and Trim

The applicant proposes to replace the existing aluminum siding on the rear addition and the garage with Hardiplank fiber cement siding with a 6" exposure. The trim and corner boards on the addition will be replaced with synthetic plastic material. The siding on the addition and the garage will be painted a medium beige color, the trim will be off white.

Lighting

The exterior lighting will be replaced on both the front and rear elevations using the same copper lantern. The light adjacent to the front door will be gas lit and all others will be electric.

Shutters

The existing fixed shutters on the front façade will be repainted a dark black-green color.

Other Alterations

The rear elevation will have a new kitchen vent hood and direct vent exhaust for a new fireplace and boiler, and the shutters will be repainted a dark black-green.

II. HISTORY:

According to Ethelyn Cox's Historic Alexandria, Virginia Street By Street the two-story with raised basement brick townhouse at 814 Duke Street dates from the mid-19th century. According to the Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps, sometime between 1907 and 1912 a two story addition with a two level side porch was added to the rear of the house. The side porch was then enclosed between 1941 and 1958 (Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps). A garage was present on the property as early as 1912.

Staff could not locate any previous Board approvals for this house; however, it is clear the house was "renovated" at some point because the house currently has windows with interior grilles sandwiched between two panes of glass and aluminum siding.

III. ANALYSIS:

The proposed addition and alterations comply with FAR and zone regulations.

Staff is pleased that the applicant is renovating this historic property and removing some of the historically inappropriate materials. While generally supportive of the application, staff has a few concerns regarding some of the details proposed as part of the renovation.

Windows

The *Design Guidelines* recommend that all windows on historic properties be single glazed (one pane of glass) with true divided lights. Although the Board has on a number of occasions permitted the use of double insulated (two panes of glass) windows with exterior muntins and interior spacer bars, this is usually on less visible elevations. Because windows are such a character-defining feature of a building, Staff recommends that at the very least the front windows be single glazed, true divided light wood windows. Should the Board feel that double insulated windows are appropriate on the front façade, Staff would encourage the retention of the two-over-two light configuration with a true divided light. Although this will make the width of the muntin between 1 ½” and 2” this is not inappropriate for a house of this age (there are many original two-over-two windows in the 800 block of Duke Street with 1 ½” to 2” muntins).

Siding/Trim

The *Design Guidelines* recommend retaining and preserving historic material whenever possible, especially when it is such a principle character defining element like siding. The rear addition has clearly been modified since its construction in the early 1900s, to the point that there is very little historic fabric remaining visible. According to the applicant, only about 30% of the original siding remains under the aluminum siding and is in poor condition. Staff does not object to the use of Hardiplank siding on the addition or the garage, which has also been significantly modified in the past.

The use of plastic trim is inappropriate on a historic residential building. However, since the use of Hardiplank siding is justified in this instance it would also be acceptable if the applicant used a fiber cement trim similar to the siding material.

Shutters

The *Design Guidelines* state that “...shutters should be appropriate to the period of the structure....shutters were not part of the original design vocabulary for several Victorian and early 20th century architectural styles.” Staff recommends that the shutters be removed all together because they are not a historically appropriate feature of this late Victorian townhouse. However, should the Board decide to allow the use of shutters, staff would recommend that they be hinged, operable, and made of wood.

IV. STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends approval of the application with the following conditions:

1. That the front windows be two-over-two, true divided light wood windows;
2. That the trim material on the rear addition be either wood or fiber cement, not synthetic plastic; and,
3. That the shutters on the front façade be removed.

CITY DEPARTMENT COMMENTS

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

Code Enforcement:

- F-1 Structures requiring restoration of an existing window in which the structure is deemed Historic by the BAR staff will be reviewed for compliance with the building code on a individual basis.
- C-1 Alterations to the existing structure must comply with the current edition of the Uniform Statewide Building Code (USBC).
- C-2 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-3 All windows must comply with IRC section R613 (residential) or IBC section 1714.5 (commercial). Specifically they must be listed as per the requirements of AAMA/NWWDA 101/ I.S.2 and/ or AAMA/NWWDA 101/ I.S.2/ NAFS, respectively.
- C-4 New construction 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 details 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 comments received.