

Docket Item # 8
BAR CASE # 2008-0053

BAR Meeting
June 18, 2008

ISSUE: Alterations
APPLICANT: Rosemary Furfaro and James Woods
LOCATION: 511 Queen Street
ZONE: RM/Residential

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Staff recommends approval of the application for a Certificate of Appropriateness with the following conditions:

1. That the proposed fence shall not exceed 6 feet in height (but may be installed upon the existing railroad ties) and that the applicant shall provide specifications to staff of the proposed fence for approval prior to its installation;
2. That the proposed trellis be reduced in height by at least one foot from approximately 9 feet to 8 feet; and,
3. That the applicant shall provide staff with an alternate lantern that is more historically appropriate for final approval.



BAR CASE #2008-0053

6/18/2008



I. ISSUE:

The applicant is requesting approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness for exterior alterations to the property. The proposed alterations include: installation of a board and lattice cedar fence and gate at the rear of the property, installation of a board and lattice fence to screen trash area, installation of gas lanterns on the front wall, and installation of a cellar entryway on the front elevation. In addition, the applicant is requesting a modification of the previously approved second-story balcony railing on the rear addition.

Cedar Fence and Gate at Rear of Property

The applicant proposes to remove an existing 7' wood fence and single gate and install a 7' high cedar fence on the east and west rear property lines. The proposed fence, single gate and double gate will be stained white and feature a shiplap panel topped by approximately one foot of rectangular lattice. The applicant proposes to replace an existing wood gate on a rear brick wall and to add a double gate as part of the fence on the east side. The applicant proposes to enclose the existing trash area at the rear of the brick wall with the same board and lattice fence.

In addition, the applicant proposes the installation of a trellis made of a stained white cedar post and arch, with decorative knobs along the arch. The proposed trellis will be located along the east side of the property near the rear of the existing dwelling. The existing brick wall at the rear of the property will remain.

Lighting

Two lantern-style copper lamps are proposed for installation atop the brick wall fronting Queen Street on each side of the wood entry gate. Each lantern will measure approximately 20" in height by 9" in width. The form of the lantern is a rectangle with an applied grid of metal straps on each side.

Cellar Entryway

The applicant proposes to install a wood cellar entryway on the front elevation of the building within an interior courtyard. The proposed entryway will cover an existing set of stairs to the cellar. It will not be visible from the public right-of-way. The applicant proposes to construct the doors of the cellar entrance with cedar primed and painted to match existing wood trim and to install wrought iron hardware.

Revision of Balcony

The applicant proposes to reduce the balcony depth to 20". The previously approved balcony was approximately 4 feet in depth.

II. HISTORY:

511 Queen Street is a freestanding, two-story, brick flounder-style house. The original portion of the house was constructed in 1784 according to Ethelyn Cox in *Alexandria Street by Street* (p. 144). The middle section likely dates from the late-nineteenth century. A one-story section at the rear dates from 1976 (Building Permit #9811, 10/18/76, Erik Preisser, designer). This addition was not reviewed by the Board because it was determined that the one story rear

addition was not visible from the public right-of-way. The 1976 addition has been further modified by the addition of a second story as well as a second two-story rear addition.

In 2006, the Board approved application for a Permit to Demolish and Capsulate, a Certificate of Appropriateness, and a Waiver of Rooftop HVAC Screening Requirement (BAR Case #2006-0260/61/62, December 6, 2006). These items were a reapplication of the previous year's approvals and resulted in the expansion of an existing one-story addition to two stories, and an additional two-story addition directly in line with the existing addition. In 2005, the Board approved application for a Permit to Demolish and Capsulate, a Certificate of Appropriateness, and a Waiver of Rooftop HVAC Screening Requirement (BAR Case #2005-0299/30/31, January 18, 2006). These items resulted in approval for the expansion of an existing one-story addition to two stories, and an additional two-story addition directly in line with the existing addition.

III. ANALYSIS:

The proposed alterations comply with zoning regulations. Section 7-202(B)(3) of the zoning ordinance allows in a required side or rear yard open and closed fences not to exceed 6.00 feet in height. However, Section 7-202(C) of the zoning ordinance permits the BAR to waive or modify fence regulations if the Board finds that a proposed fence is in keeping with the character of the district or architecturally appropriate.

In the opinion of staff, the proposed additions are generally appropriate and compatible with the existing residential building at 511 Queen Street. Staff has concerns regarding the height of the proposed fence and the style of the proposed lantern.

Fence/Gate/Enclosure

In reviewing applications for fences, the *Design Guidelines* state that they should be appropriate in materials, design and scale to the period and character of the structure they surround.

The existing wood fence is in a deteriorated condition and nearly covered in vegetation. The existing fence sits atop railroad ties on the east elevation along a utility easement. Due to the heavy overgrowth, the railroad ties are not easily visible at this time. The height of the existing wood fence and railroad ties ranges from 8' to 8.5'. The board and lattice fence is proposed to be 7' in height and constructed on top of the existing railroad ties. As a result, the height will range from 7.5' to 8' on the east elevation. Staff has strong concerns regarding the construction of what will mostly be an 8' fence.

The east and north elevations are most visible from the alley, and in part from North Pitt Street. The alley slopes slightly upward and is a dead end. The alley is wider than most alleys in Old Town and accommodates parking spaces for several properties, hence the additional visibility from the public right-of-way. The rear yards of the properties on North Pitt Street, adjacent to the rear of 511 Queen Street, generally have 6' fences and are at a slightly lower grade. The existing brick wall at the rear of 511 Queen Street is approximately six feet in height.

The applicant has explained that the grade of the rear yard is approximately 1½ -2' higher than the surrounding grade at the alley. While, staff understands the desire to have a fence at least six feet in height in the interior of the yard, the BAR's purview is what is visible from the public

right-of-way. Staff does not find a compelling reason for approving what will amount to an eight foot fence. There is no architectural or historic reasoning to approve such a height. However, recognizing the grade difference, staff considers that a board fence with open lattice top, reduced to six feet overall but still allowed to be installed on the existing railroad ties, would be the most acceptable option.

The proposed trellis located at the rear of the upper patio features an arch with decorative knobs. The proposed height (as measured from the drawings submitted) will be approximately 9' in height and 11' above the alley grade. Again, staff is concerned regarding this height. Staff recommends the trellis height be reduced by at least one foot.

Staff has no objections to the proposed trash enclosure provided that the fence is no taller than six feet.

The applicant should bring a cut sheet of the proposed fence design to staff for approval prior to installation. Staff supports the proposed fence design reduced to six feet.

Lighting

Staff has concerns regarding the design of the lantern that is out of character with other lighting fixtures in the district. The lighting appears to be too heavy in form and medieval or Tudor in character, making it inappropriate for this 18th-century dwelling. In addition, the proposed height and size of the lanterns will be prominent on the front brick wall, making it advisable to have a more appropriate design. One alternative would be to remove the grills on the faces of the lantern. Staff requests that the applicant propose a more historically appropriate lantern for staff approval.

Cellar Entryway

The proposed cellar entryway has an appropriate design and selection of materials that will complement the materials of the building. In addition, the entryway, located in an interior courtyard, will not be visible from a public right-of-way. Staff has no objection to the cellar entryway.

Revision of Balcony

Staff has no objection to the reduction of the balcony depth from 4' to 20".

IV. STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends approval of the application for a Certificate of Appropriateness with the following conditions:

1. That the proposed fence shall not exceed 6 feet in height (but may be installed upon the existing railroad ties) and that the applicant shall provide specifications to staff of the proposed fence for approval prior to its installation;
2. That the proposed trellis be reduced in height by at least one foot from approximately 9 feet to 8 feet; and,
3. That the applicant shall provide staff with an alternate lantern that is more historically appropriate for final approval.

V. 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 Alterations to the existing structure must comply with the current edition of the Uniform Statewide Building Code (USBC).
- C-3 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-4 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-5 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:

R-1 Approve.

Alexandria Archaeology:

No comments received.

VI. IMAGES

511 QUEEN STREET BAR PLAN REVIEW DOCUMENTS



VIEW OF PROPERTY FROM
THE EAST IN 6 FOOT
PUBLIC EASEMENT



REAR ELEVATION

Contact: Lyndl Thorsen at Great Seal Incorporated 211 North Union Street, Suite 100 Alexandria, Virginia 22314
Office: (703) 519-1259 Fax: (703) 780-4070 Email: e-plans@msn.com

Figure 1. Existing fence and rear elevation.

511 QUEEN STREET BAR PLAN REVIEW DOCUMENTS



VIEW OF NEIGHBORS FROM
REAR YARD LOOKING NORTH
TOWARDS PUBLIC ALLEY



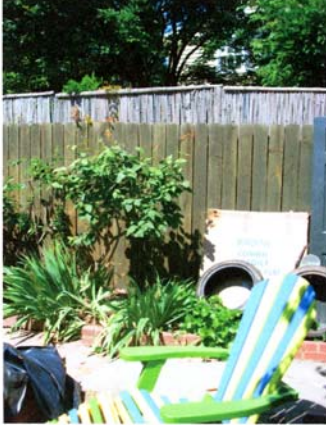
VIEW OF PROPERTY REAR
FROM PUBLIC ALLEY

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Figure 2. Existing conditions.

511 QUEEN STREET BAR PLAN REVIEW DOCUMENTS

HEIGHTS OF EXISTING FENCE LINES AND GROUND CONDITIONS OF ADJACENT PROPERTIES.



1: NEIGHBORS FENCE =7'-6"



2: NEIGHBORS TRELLIS =8'-3"



3: VIEW AT REAR OF PROPERTY
GRADE CHANGES BEGIN AT
CORNER LOT LINE AND GROUND
DECLINES TOWARDS PUBLIC
UTILITIES.



4: HEIGHT OF NEIGHBORS
FENCE IS 9'-1"



5: EXISTING FENCE =7'-1"



6: PUBLIC UTILITY



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Figure 3. Existing conditions.

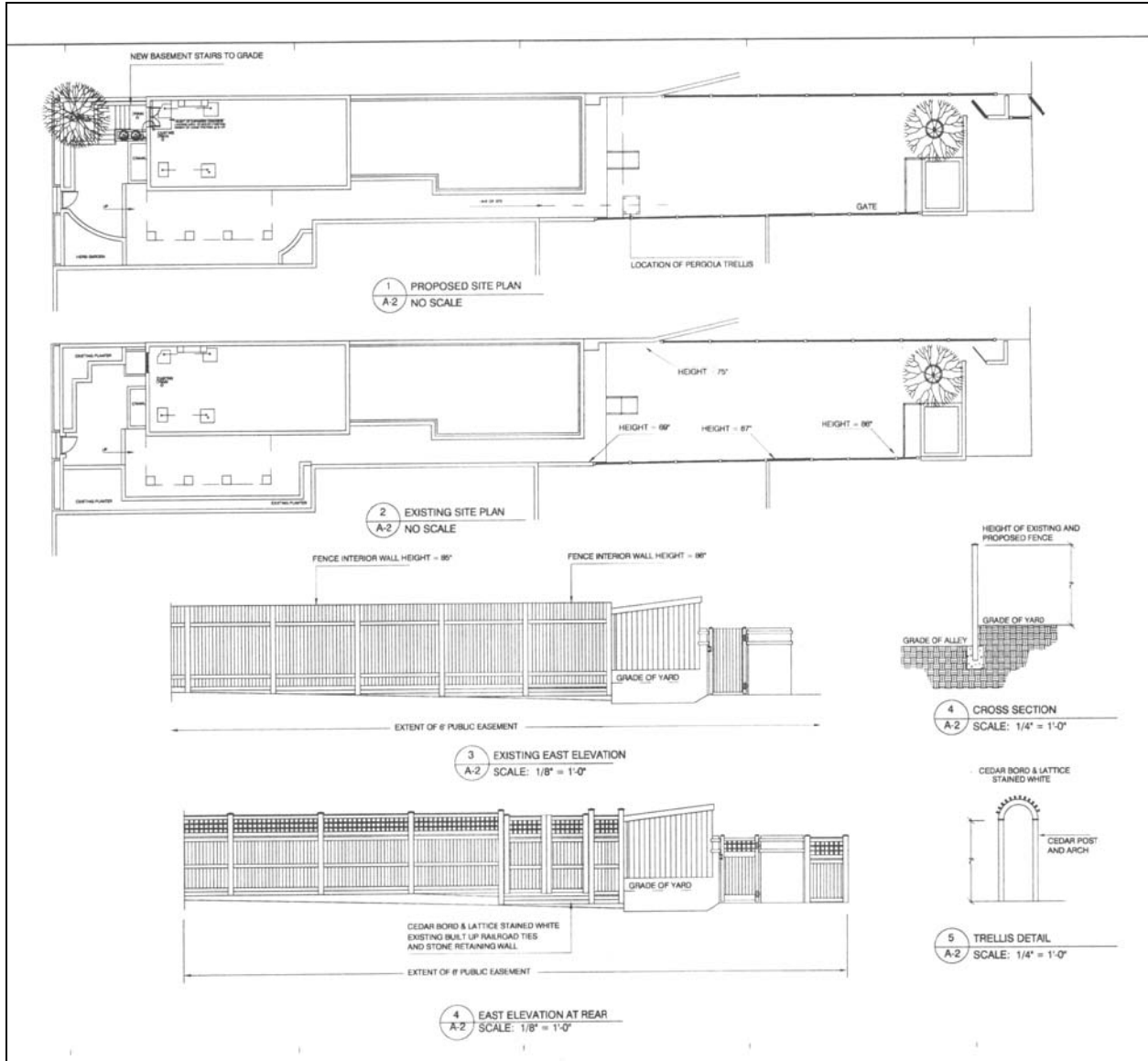


Figure 4. Proposed site plan, fence and trellis.

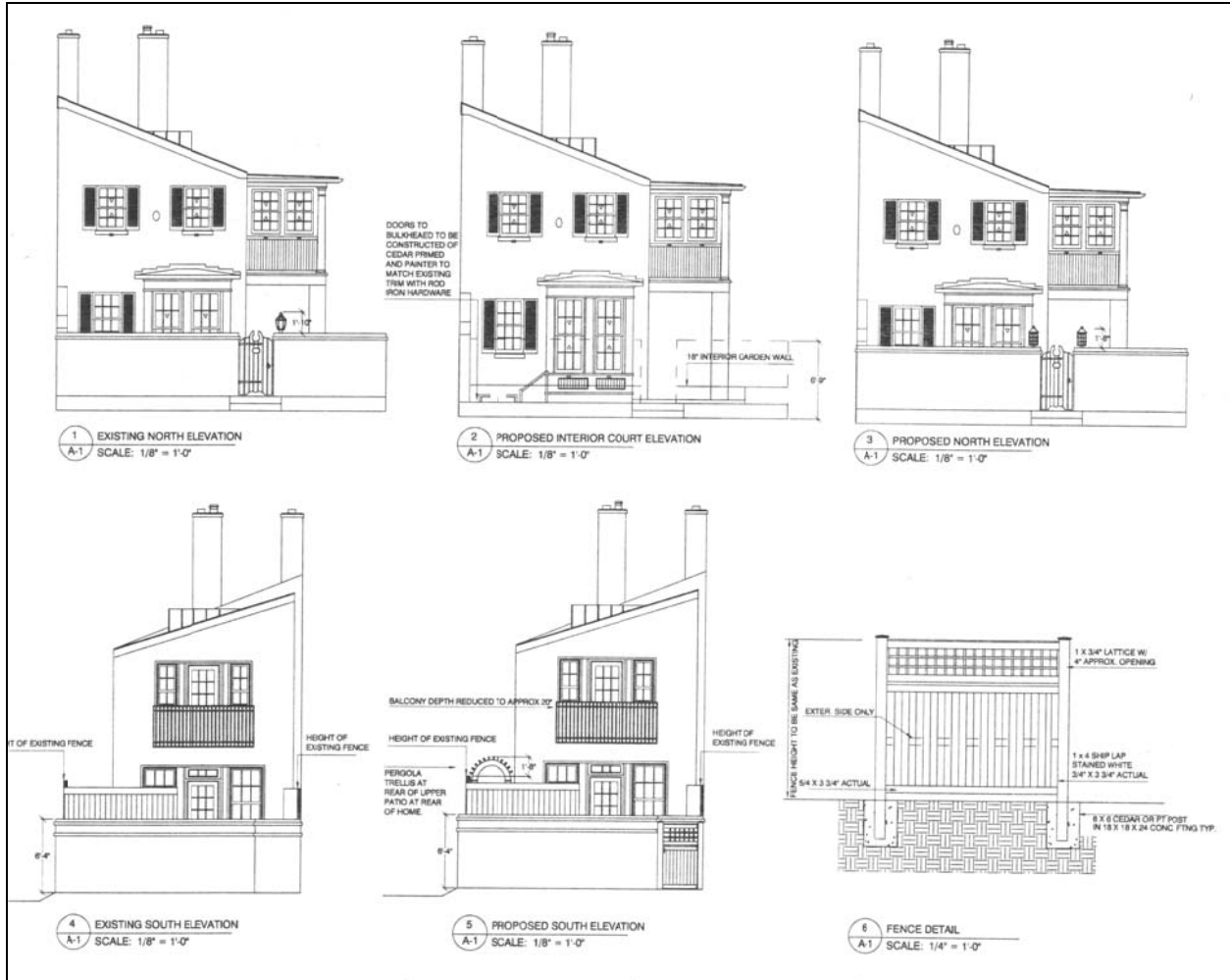
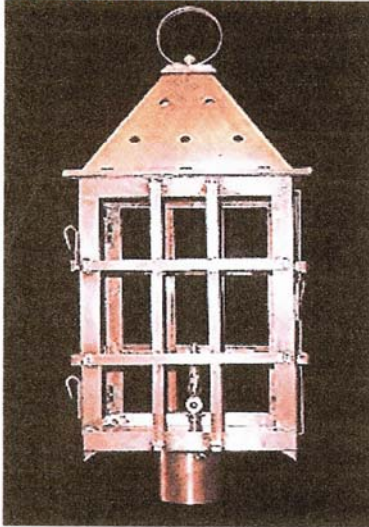


Figure 5. Existing and proposed elevations.

511 QUEEN STREET BAR PLAN REVIEW DOCUMENTS

DESIGN ELEMENTS



COPPER LANTERN 20" X 9"
LANTERNS MAY BE FOUND
AT:
WWW.FRENCHQUARTER.COM



CEDAR FENCE TO BE SAME HEIGHT AS EXISTING

CEDAR FENCE MAY BE
FOUND AT:
WWW.AVOCEDARFENCES.COM

Figure 6. Details of proposed lantern and lattice fence.