

Docket Item # 9
BAR CASE # 2008-0133

BAR Meeting
September 3, 2008

ISSUE: Demolition/Encapsulation

APPLICANT: Benjamin and Kira Brooks

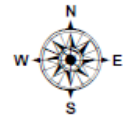
LOCATION: 523 South Lee Street

ZONE: RM/Residential

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



BAR CASE #2008-0133/0134 9/3/2008



Note: This item requires a roll call vote.

I. ISSUE:

The applicant is requesting approval of a Permit to Demolish/Encapsulate in order to construct a second-story addition above the existing one-story rear addition, as well as a pent roof porch overhang at 523 South Lee Street. The second-story rear elevation of the existing ell and the roof of the one-story rear addition will be removed in order to construct the addition. In addition, the existing beaded wood siding on the one-story addition will be replaced and a new window will be added on the west elevation, replacing an existing octagonal window and door.

While not visible from a public right-of-way, another octagonal window on the south elevation of the addition will be removed, and a new door opening will be added, adjacent to the existing double-hung window facing south. This opening is less than 25 square feet.

If the foundation of the one-story rear addition is in poor condition that too will be repaired or replaced. A portion of the south side of the ell will be demolished in order to construct the porch overhang. The existing brick flue at the rear of the house is proposed to be demolished.

II. HISTORY:

The two-story, gable roofed frame townhouse at 523 South Lee Street was constructed between 1831 and 1852 as one of a row of four houses (523 through 529 South Lee Street) on land owned by William H. McKnight (Ethelyn Cox, Historic Alexandria, Virginia: Street by Street, p. 92). The 1877 Hopkins atlas shows the four houses each having a rear ell. This area of the City is not included in the Sanborn Fire Insurance mapping until 1902, when all four houses are shown with identical two story rear ells and one story rear additions. Thus, the existing two-story ell may date to the original construction and most certainly was extant by 1877. The one-story addition probably dates to the late 19th century.

In 1989, the Board approved demolition of portions of the two-story rear ell at 523 South Lee Street and the construction of a new two-story addition (BAR Case #1989-0086, May 17, 1989). That project was never undertaken. The BAR also approved a two-story rear addition and a one-story addition at 525 South Lee Street on April 23, 2003 (BAR Case #2003-0056, 57 and 58). The remaining two townhouses in the original row (527 and 529 South Lee Street) have significant rear additions, although Staff could not locate the relevant BAR approvals.

III. ANALYSIS:

In considering a Permit to Demolish/Encapsulate, the Board must consider the following criteria set forth in the Zoning Ordinance, §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 house?
- (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 Staff's opinion, none of the above criteria are met. The one-story addition which will be partially demolished for the construction of the second-story addition and porch overhang that appear to date to the late 19th century is a simple, architecturally undistinguished structure. The demolition of the west end on the second story of the ell is slightly more problematic as the ell could possibly date to circa 1831 and certainly appears to have been built prior to 1877. However, it is clear that the rear ell at 523 South Lee Street, as well as the rear elevations of the other three townhouses in the original row of four, have not survived intact from the 19th century, with all exhibiting varying degrees of alteration. The area of impact will be small in size and minimally visible from South Lee Street. Thus, Staff recommends approval of the Permit to Demolish/Encapsulate.

IV. STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends approval of the Permit to Demolish/Encapsulate as submitted.

V. CITY DEPARTMENT COMMENTS

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

Code Enforcement:

- 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 A soils report must be submitted with the building permit application.
- C-5 New construction must comply with the current edition of the Uniform Statewide Building Code (USBC).
- C-7 Alterations to the existing structure must comply with the current edition of the Uniform Statewide Building Code (USBC).
- C-8 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-9 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-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 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:
No comments received.

VI. IMAGES

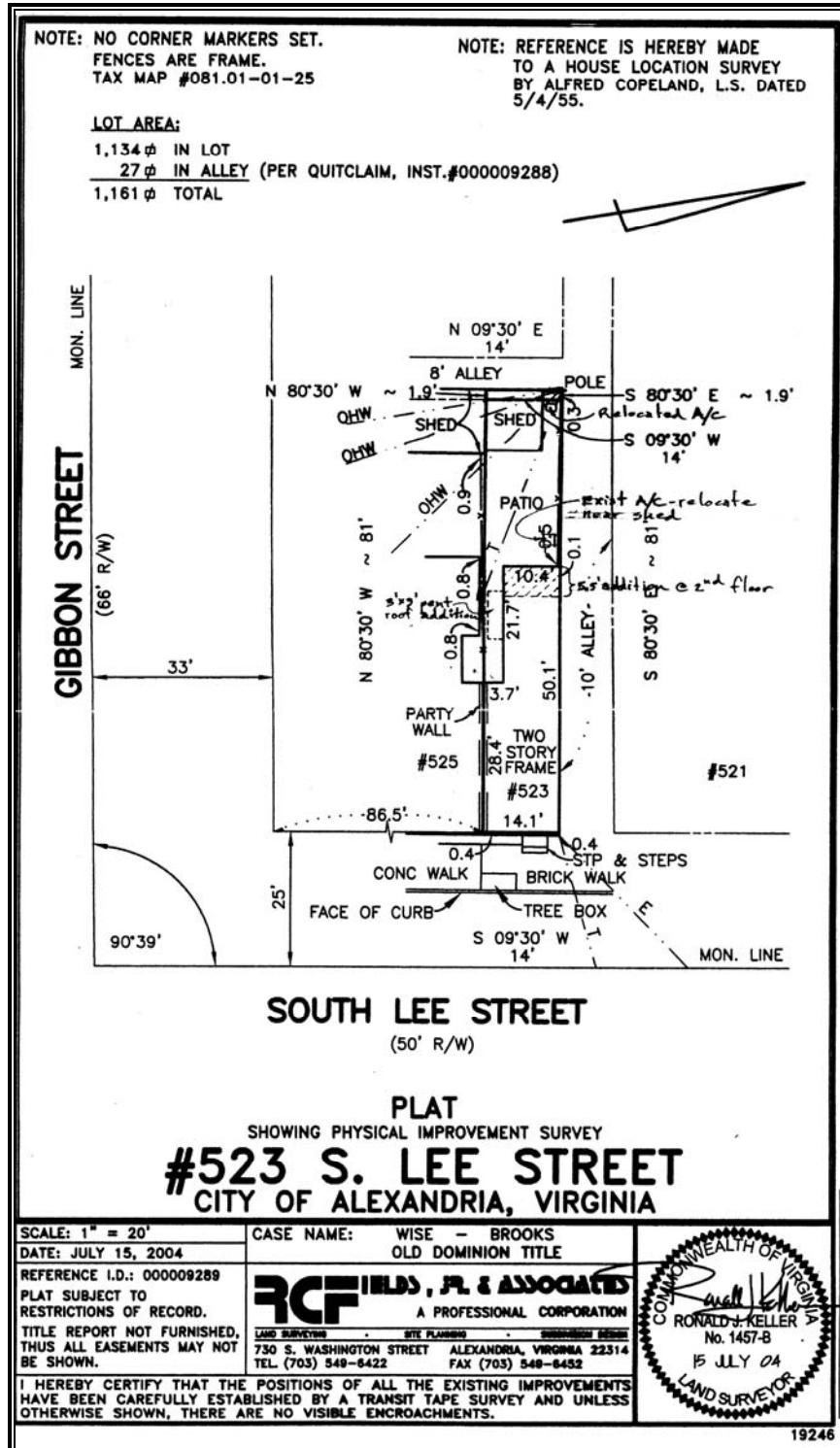


Figure 1: Site Plan

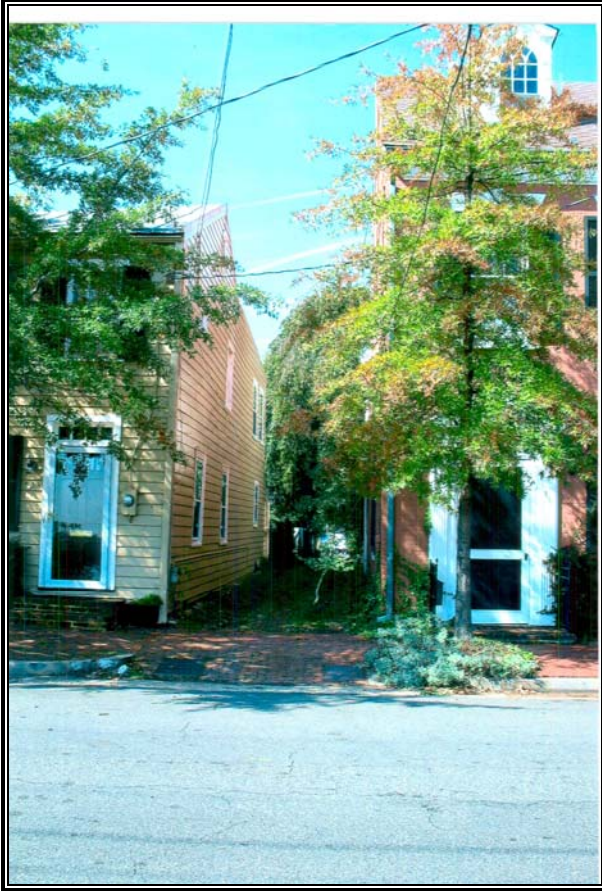


Figure 2: Side along alley

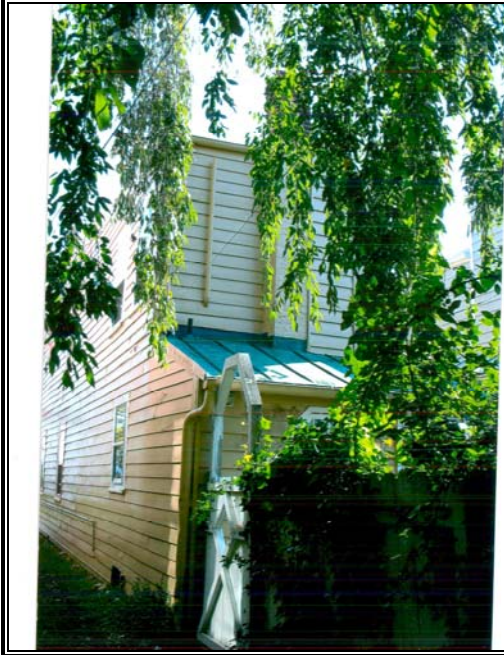


Figure 3: Rear and north side



Figure 4: North side and alley

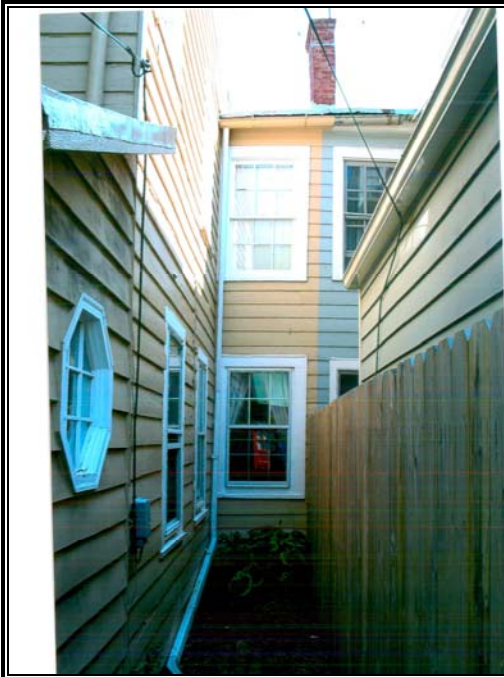


Figure 5: South side of ell and West side main block



Figure 6: Rear - west side