

Docket Item #'s 10 & 11
BAR CASE # 2008-0166
BAR CASE #2008-0173

BAR Meeting
October 15, 2008

ISSUE: Addition/Alterations and Waiver of Vision Clearance

APPLICANT: Stephanie Dimond

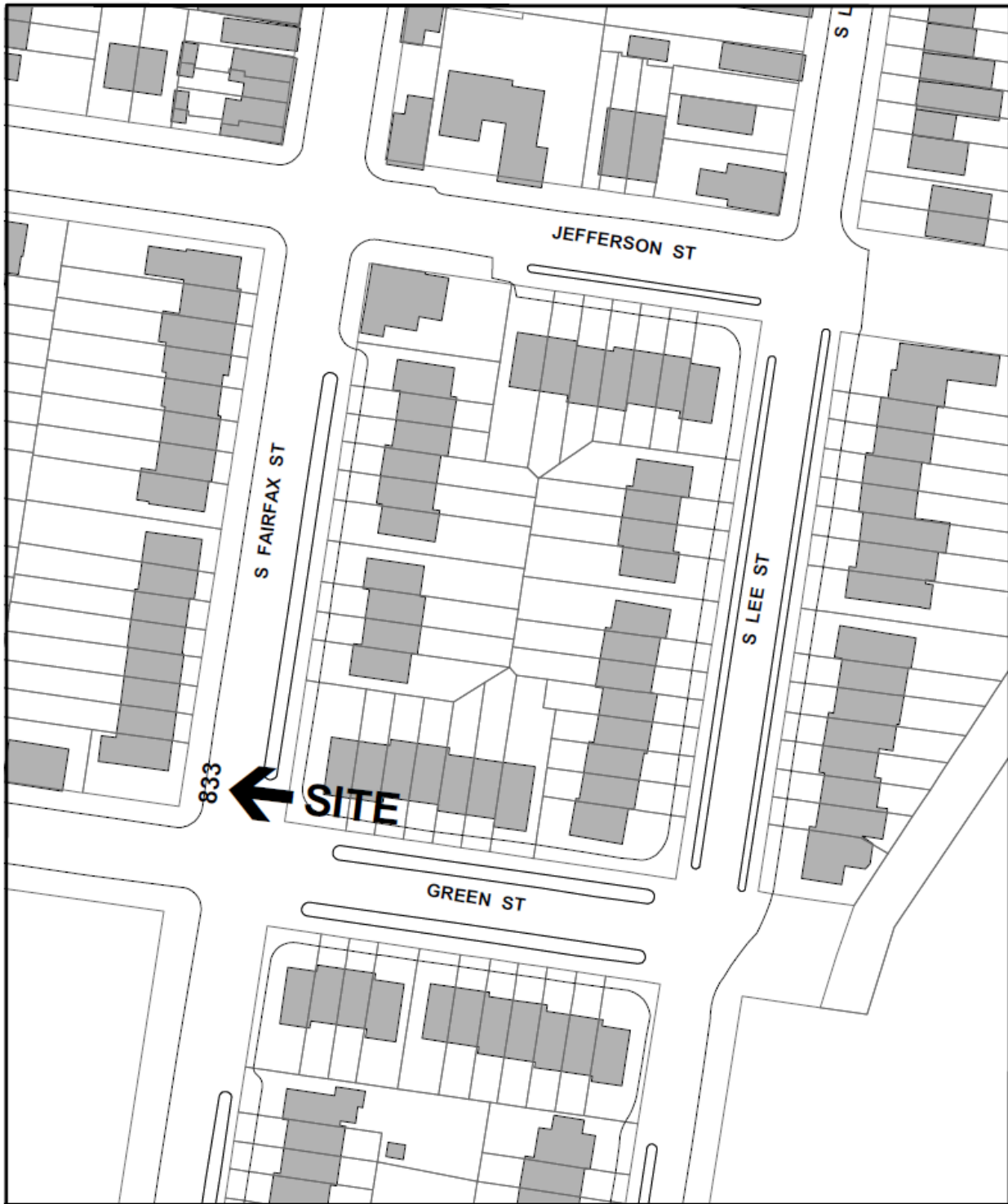
LOCATION: 833 South Fairfax Street

ZONE: RM/Residential

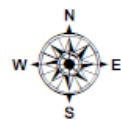
STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends approval of the application with the following conditions:

1. That the applicant provide window specifications for true divided light, double-glazed wood windows for final approval by Staff.
2. The statements in archaeology conditions below shall appear in the General Notes of all site plans and on all site plan sheets that involve demolition or ground disturbance (including Basement/Foundation Plans, Demolition, Erosion and Sediment Control, Grading, Landscaping, Utilities, and Sheeting and Shoring) so that on-site contractors are aware of the requirements:
 - a. 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.
 - b. The applicant/developer shall not allow any metal detection to be conducted on the property, unless authorized by Alexandria Archaeology.



BAR CASE #2008-0165, 0166, 0173 10/15/2008



Note: Docket Item #9 must be approved before this item may be considered.

I. ISSUE:

The applicant is requesting approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness for an addition and alterations and a Waiver of Vision Clearance at 833 South Fairfax Street.

Addition

The applicant proposes to construct a two and one-half story side addition measuring approximately 16.5' by 27'. The addition will be set back approximately 3.25' from the wall plane of the front (east) elevation and approximately 4' from the wall plane of the rear (west) elevation. The existing rowhouse measures approximately 18.5' by 33.6'.

The front (east) elevation of the proposed addition will have two bays. On the first floor will be two six-over-six, double-hung, double-glazed, true divided light, wood windows with rowlock lintels and operable wood shutters. The upper story will have two through-the-cornice gabled dormers with wood trim and six-over-six, double-hung, double-glazed, true divided light wood windows.

The side (south) elevation of the proposed addition will read as a three-story symmetrical façade with a gable roof. It will feature a large exterior chimney chamfered at the uppermost story. There will be six six-over-six, double-hung, double-glazed, true divided light wood windows, one each on either side of the chimney on all three levels. The windows on the first floor (middle) will be larger than those on the basement and second story levels. Like the front, all the windows will have rowlock lintels and operable wood shutters. The profiles of the gabled dormers will be partially visible from the side elevation.

The rear (west) elevation will read as a two-bay, three-story façade. At the basement level there will be two individual multi-light wood doors with rowlock lintels. The first story will have two six-over-six, double-hung, double-glazed, true divided light wood windows with rowlock lintels, the same size as the other first floor windows on the front and side elevations. The second story will have two through-the-cornice gabled dormers with wood trim and six-over-six, double-hung, double-glazed, true divided light wood windows. This elevation will have no shutters.

The addition will be constructed of brick to match the original townhouse. The window and door trim on the addition will be the same color as the window and door trim on the original portion of the house. The applicant will use a more streamlined/stripped down cornice on the addition than what is on the existing building. The applicant proposes to use asphalt shingles on the addition, to match the existing roof.

Alterations

The existing front portico will be replaced. The proposed portico will be located at the existing stoop. It will be supported by two simple Doric columns made of wood and will have a standing seam metal roof.

The existing enclosed porch on the rear elevation will undergo alterations. The existing space at the basement level will be enclosed. The south elevation will have multi-light wood French doors and sidelights. The west elevation will have a series of six, six-light wood casement windows with wood paneling and trim. The north elevation, located 4' from the property line, will have a set of three faux shutters and wood paneling and trim. The second story of this addition, located at the first floor of the existing house, will retain its existing six-light wood windows on all elevations. New wood paneling and trim will replace the existing wood siding on all three elevations. The applicant proposes a new standing seam metal roof.

The applicant is proposing to replace the existing true divided light, double-hung, single-glazed wood windows with the same windows proposed for the addition.

Waiver of Vision Clearance

The applicant is also requesting a Waiver of Vision Clearance for the proposed addition at 833 South Fairfax Street (BAR Case # 2008-0166). The applicant must seek the vision clearance waiver from the Board as the proposed addition extends into the vision clearance triangle at the intersection of Fairfax and Green streets.

II. HISTORY:

833 South Fairfax Street is a two-story, two-bay brick end unit rowhouse that was constructed in 1958 as part of the Yates Garden subdivision in a Colonial Revival design vocabulary. The rowhouses in the 800 block of South Fairfax Street were initially approved by the Board in 1955 (5/12/55), but not actually constructed until 1958. Yates Garden was developed by Edward Carr beginning in 1939, however, complete build out of the subdivision was not completed until the early 1960s.

The Board approved the construction of a garden shed in the rear yard of 833 South Fairfax Street in 1984 (BAR Case #84-151). In 1992, the Board approved an after-the-fact replacement in-kind stockade fence and terraced timber planters (BAR Case #92-167). In 2004, the Board approved the construction of a fence and a waiver of vision clearance (BAR Case #s 2004-0185 and 2004-0203).

III. ANALYSIS:

The proposed addition and alterations comply with the zoning ordinance requirements if a Waiver of Vision Clearance is approved.

Staff is aware that the proposed addition is slightly more than 70% of the existing house and that the Board has previously expressed a preference for additions that represent no more than 50% increase in the size of the house. Having said that, Staff is cognizant that there are large additions to townhouses within the Old and Historic Alexandria District, specifically in Yates Gardens, where the proposed additions have been determined by the Board to be appropriate and consistent with the *Design Guidelines*.

In the opinion of Staff, the proposed addition is appropriate and compatible with the two-story townhouse at 833 South Fairfax Street and conforms to the *Design Guidelines* for residential additions. The design of the addition is compatible in style, material and fenestration with the

existing brick townhouse. The form and massing of the addition expresses the “prevailing shape” of the original building, as discussed in the *Guidelines*. The *Guidelines* also recommend that new additions be differentiated from the existing buildings. Staff believes the applicant has achieved this by (1) offsetting the footprint of the addition to break the wall plane, (2) having the height of the addition lower than the existing house, and (3) using stripped down ornamentation on the addition. While the addition introduces a new mass into the side yard, it retains the integrity of the historic portion of the house and reads as secondary to the existing rowhouse. Staff finds the existing house does not have a clear architectural rhythm. Staff finds that instead of trying to create an addition with a rhythm and fenestration similar to the existing rowhouse, that the proposed addition, with its balance and symmetry, is appropriate and serves as a contextual background to this string of rowhouses.

Dormers

The *Design Guidelines* note that “the style of the dormer should be appropriate to the architectural style of the existing structure” and that “dormer sashes should be operable and should be the same type as the other window sashes on the structure.” Staff finds that the proposed through-the-cornice dormers, though not common, are appropriate in this circumstance. The applicant explained that the intention of the through-the-cornice dormer was to maintain a lower overall roof height on the addition. Staff finds that through-the-cornice dormers are occasionally found on Colonial Revival buildings, as evidenced in historic examples in the district. While this type of dormer would be inappropriate if used throughout the district, Staff finds the proposed through-the-cornice dormers to be appropriate here.

Windows, Shutters and Doors

The use of true divided light, double-hung, double-glazed, wood windows and doors is appropriate and consistent with the *Design Guidelines*. While single-glazed windows would be most preferable, the *Guidelines* and Board have found that double-glazed windows are acceptable. Staff finds the replacement of the existing windows to be acceptable as it will assure a uniform muntin width and window profile for both the existing house and addition. Generally the Board has supported window replacement in Yates Garden if the proposed windows are consistent with the *Guidelines*. Staff recommends that the applicant provide specifications for the proposed windows for final approval by Staff. The installation of operable wood shutters is consistent with the *Design Guidelines* and the architectural style of Yates Garden.

Materials

The selection of materials on the proposed addition contributes to compatibility with the existing rowhouse. The use of matching brick on the addition is appropriate. Regarding roofing materials, the *Guidelines* recommend that “new and replacement roofs should be made of material appropriate to the period of significance of the structure.” The building dates from the late 1950s making asphalt composition shingles an acceptable choice. The applicant should match the new roof with the existing roof and use a high-quality asphalt composition shingle.

Chimney

The *Design Guidelines* advise that “new chimneys should be appropriate to the period of the structure” and that “chimneys should be appropriate to the scale of the structure.” Staff finds

that both of these conditions are met with the proposed chimney. Further the placement of the chimney provides a strong anchor on the side elevation.

Alterations

Upon inspection, Staff finds that the existing entrance portico is likely not original, or, if it is original, is in a deteriorated condition. Staff finds that the proposed entrance portico is an appropriate portico for a Colonial Revival rowhouse. Staff finds that the proposed alterations to the enclosed porch rear addition are appropriate. The replacement of non-historic wood siding with wood paneling and trim is acceptable. The reuse of the existing wood casement windows, and new wood casement windows to match the existing are appropriate. The standing seam metal roof has been identified as a historically appropriate roofing material in the *Guidelines*.

Waiver of Vision Clearance

Staff has no objections to the Waiver of Vision Clearance and recommends approval. The site is highly visible but is located in a less frequented section of the historic district. The property slopes down to the south and to the west. Transportation & Environmental Services has no objection to the waiver and notes that there currently is a four-way stop at this intersection.

Staff also notes the conditions from Alexandria Archaeology.

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

1. That the applicant provide window specifications for true divided light, double-glazed wood windows for final approval by Staff.
2. The statements in archaeology conditions below shall appear in the General Notes of all site plans and on all site plan sheets that involve demolition or ground disturbance (including Basement/Foundation Plans, Demolition, Erosion and Sediment Control, Grading, Landscaping, Utilities, and Sheeting and Shoring) so that on-site contractors are aware of the requirements:
 - a. 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.
 - b. The applicant/developer shall not allow any metal detection to be conducted on the property, unless authorized by Alexandria Archaeology.

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-6 Additions and Alterations to the existing structure must comply with the current edition of the Uniform Statewide Building Code (USBC).
- C-7 Additions and 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-8 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-9 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-10 A wall location plat prepared by a land surveyor is required to be submitted to this office prior to requesting any framing inspection.

C- 11 Sheeting and shoring shall not extend beyond the property line; except when the developer has obtained a written release from adjacent property owners which has been recorded in the land records; or through an approved encroachment process.

Historic Alexandria:

No comments received.

Alexandria Archaeology:

Recommendations

1. The statements in archaeology conditions below shall appear in the General Notes of all site plans and on all site plan sheets that involve demolition or ground disturbance (including Basement/Foundation Plans, Demolition, Erosion and Sediment Control, Grading, Landscaping, Utilities, and Sheeting and Shoring) so that on-site contractors are aware of the requirements:

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b. The applicant/developer shall not allow any metal detection to be conducted on the property, unless authorized by Alexandria Archaeology.

Finding:

F-1 The G. M. Hopkins Insurance Atlas indicates that houses were present on this street face by 1877. Although none are shown on this property, there is limited potential for archaeological resources to be present that could provide insight into residential life near the edge of town in 19th-century Alexandria.

Transportation and Environmental Services

T&ES does not object to the waiver of vision clearance for this application. There is an existing 4-way stop at the intersection of S Fairfax & Green. There is a very high likelihood of the 4-way stop staying in place into the future. As long as the 4-way stop at the intersection stays in place, the vision clearance can be compromised to the extent proposed in the application without generating sight distance or safety concerns.

VI. IMAGES



Figure 1. Front (east) elevation of 833 South Fairfax Street.



Figure 2. Side (south) elevation and area proposed for demolition/encapsulation.



Figure 3. Rear (west) and side (south) elevations.



Figure 5. Existing elevations.



Figure 6. Proposed front (east) elevation.



Figure 7. Proposed side (south) elevation.



Figure 8. Proposed rear (west) elevation.



Figure 9. Propose side (north) elevation.