

Docket Item # 5
BAR CASE # 2008-0158

BAR Meeting
November 5, 2008

ISSUE: Demolition/Encapsulation

APPLICANT: Karl and Lydia Svoboda

LOCATION: 113 Princess Street

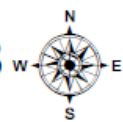
ZONE: RM/Residential

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Staff recommends approval of the Permit to Demolish/Encapsulate with the following conditions:

1. That the applicant further explore the opportunity to retain the chimney *in situ*; and
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.



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UPDATE: Since the deferral for restudy at the October 1, 2008 BAR hearing, the applicant's architect, Christine Leonard, has met with BAR Staff twice to review and address comments made by the Board and the neighbors. Revised plans have been submitted to address concerns raised at the hearing. The revisions include alterations to the front dormer, a reduction in size and changes to the proposed rear addition, and relocation of the elevator shaft. In addition, the applicant has provided materials to the neighbors for their review, and will host an open house on October 30 to answer additional questions and concerns they may have.

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 one-story addition and two-story elevator shaft at 113 Princess Street. The proposed addition will require the demolition/encapsulation of the entire first story and a portion of the second story on the rear elevation. The applicant is also proposing to demolish/encapsulate portions of the roof to accommodate new dormers on both the front and the rear. The applicant is proposing to demolish the existing chimney.

II. HISTORY:

The residential structure at 113 Princess Street is a three-story, three-bay brick townhouse with a front-loading garage. City records date the townhouse to 1970.

Staff could locate no prior Board approvals for this address.

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 the opinion of Staff, none of the above criteria are met. The building is a non-historic structure, constructed in 1970, therefore no historic material will be lost as a result of the request.

Staff is concerned about the proposed demolition of the existing chimney. Staff notes that the removal of the existing, non-historic chimney will not result in the loss of historic fabric. The chimney is minimally visible from the front elevation but clearly visible from the rear elevation. The removal of the chimney is a revision to the original application and is proposed to accommodate relocation of the elevator shaft, to address concerns raised by the neighbors, according to the applicant's architect. However, Staff notes that the existing brick chimney contributes to the compatibility of a non-historic building with the overall character of the historic district. Staff recommends that the applicant further explore the opportunity to retain the chimney *in situ*.

Staff notes the conditions and comments from Alexandria Archaeology.

IV. STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends approval of the Permit to Demolish/Encapsulate with the following conditions:

1. That the applicant further explore the opportunity to retain the chimney *in situ*; and
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.

Historic Alexandria:
Approve.

Alexandria Archaeology:

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 Sheet piling 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.

Archaeology Finding

F-1 Tax records indicate that houses were present on this street face by 1810. The Sanborn Insurance map depicts a cooper's shop, whiskey distillery, and African American residences on or adjacent to the lot by 1885. The property therefore has the potential to yield archaeological resources that could provide insight into residential, commercial, and industrial activities in 19th-century Alexandria. While the construction of the existing house on the lot undoubtedly caused disturbance to evidence of earlier occupation, there is a possibility that remnants of the past activities remain buried on the property.



Figure 2. Front (south) elevation.



Figure 3. Rear (north) elevation.