

Docket Item # 9
BAR CASE # 2008-0212

BAR Meeting
December 3, 2008

ISSUE: Alterations

APPLICANT: Studio Camus LLC (Lynette Camus)

LOCATION: 619 South Fairfax Street

ZONE: RM/Townhouse

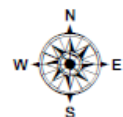
STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Staff recommends approval of the application with the following conditions:

1. That the wood fence and wood gates be painted or stained.
2. *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.
3. *The applicant/developer shall not allow any metal detection to be conducted on the property, unless authorized by Alexandria Archaeology.
4. The statements in archaeology conditions above marked with an asterisk "*" 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.



BAR CASE #2008-0212

12/3/2008



I. ISSUE:

The applicant is requesting approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness for a fence, brick piers and related alterations at 619 South Fairfax Street.

The applicant proposes the following:

- Construct three brick piers (12” in width and 3’9” in height) and a low brick wall (9” in height) with an iron infill fence at the front (east) property line;
- Reuse an existing iron gate at the front (east) property line;
- Replace an existing wood gate on the south property line on the existing, neighboring brick wall, and install two new wood side gates; and
- Replace an existing fence with a new 6’ wood board and batten fence with upper portion square lattice in the rear yard (on the west property line and portions of the north and south property lines).

II. HISTORY:

The two-story, two-bay frame house at 619 South Fairfax Street is a simple, vernacular Victorian era house of a type built in large numbers in Alexandria from the 1880s through the 1920s. It has lost its original one story front porch, but still retains its original Italianate cornice. The dwelling did not appear on the 1877 Hopkins Atlas, but was present on the 1891 Sanborn Fire Insurance map, the first time the southern half of the block was included in the Sanborn mapping.

In 1951, the Board approved a number of alterations at 619 South Fairfax Street, including removing the front porch, replacing the front door with a window, replacing the window sash with multi-light sash, and adding the present rear shed (Certificate of Appropriateness, 5/17/1951 and Building Permit #28783, 7/18/1951). On December 19, 1973, the Board deferred an application for an addition at 619 South Fairfax Street, “pending further information.” It does not appear to have been heard again. On July 11, 1985, the Board approved the installation of new cedar siding at 619 South Fairfax Street (BAR Case #85-65A and Building Permit #28783, 7/18/1985). On September 3, 2003, the Board approved an application for a Permit to Demolish/Encapsulate and to construct a new porch and other alterations (BAR Case #2003-0196/0197). On March 17, 2004, the Board approved a proposed two-story addition (BAR Case #2004-0027) and on April 7, 2004 the Board approved the Permit to Demolish/Encapsulate (BAR Case #2004-0049).

III. ANALYSIS:

The proposed fence, piers and gates comply with the zoning ordinance requirements.

In the opinion of Staff, the proposed alterations are appropriate and compatible with the existing townhouse at 619 South Fairfax Street and conform to the *Design Guidelines* for fences, garden walls and gates. The *Design Guidelines* note that “an important visual feature of the historic districts are the fences, garden walls and gates that define property lines.” Staff finds that the proposed addition is compatible with the architectural style, materials, design and scale of this late 19th-century Italianate dwelling.

The *Guidelines* advise that “masonry fences and walls of brick or stone are generally appropriate through the historic districts” and that ornamental iron or metal fences and gates are appropriate for late 19th- and early 20th-century Victorian structures.” The proposed brick piers and iron infill fence are an appropriate combination for the front fence. This fence is appropriate in materials and design. Further, the openness of the iron fence permits visibility of the front of the historic structure. The proposed iron fence is designed to match the existing iron gate to be reused. The use of brick complements the neighboring brick wall on the south property line. The three side gates (one along the side brick wall and two facing the front) will be wood boards with a slight curve. The two gates on the south elevation will be approximately five feet in height and on the north elevation will be approximately six feet in height, matching the respective heights of the brick wall and proposed wood fence. The replacement wood fence with lattice will be located in the rear yard and will be minimally visible from the public right-of-way. The replacement will be a board and batten fence measuring approximately five feet in height topped by one foot of rectangular wood lattice, consistent with the *Guidelines* which discourage a diamond pattern lattice.

Staff supports the application for the fences, brick piers and gates, finding the proposed alterations consistent with the *Design Guidelines*.

IV. STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Staff recommends approval of the application with the condition that the wood fence and wood gates be painted or stained.

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V. CITY DEPARTMENT COMMENTS

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

Code Enforcement:

C-1 A building permit is required for this project. Plans shall accompany the permit application that fully details the construction.

Historic Alexandria:

Approve.

Alexandria Archaeology:

Archaeology Finding

1. Tax records from the early 19th century indicate that structures were present on this street face. In 1850, there was a free black household in an alley on the block, but the exact address is unknown. By 1891, the Sanborn insurance map indicates that a house was present on the lot. The property therefore has the potential to yield archaeological resources which could provide insight into domestic activities in 19th-century Alexandria.

Archaeology Recommendations

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VI. IMAGES



Figure 1. Front (east) elevation.

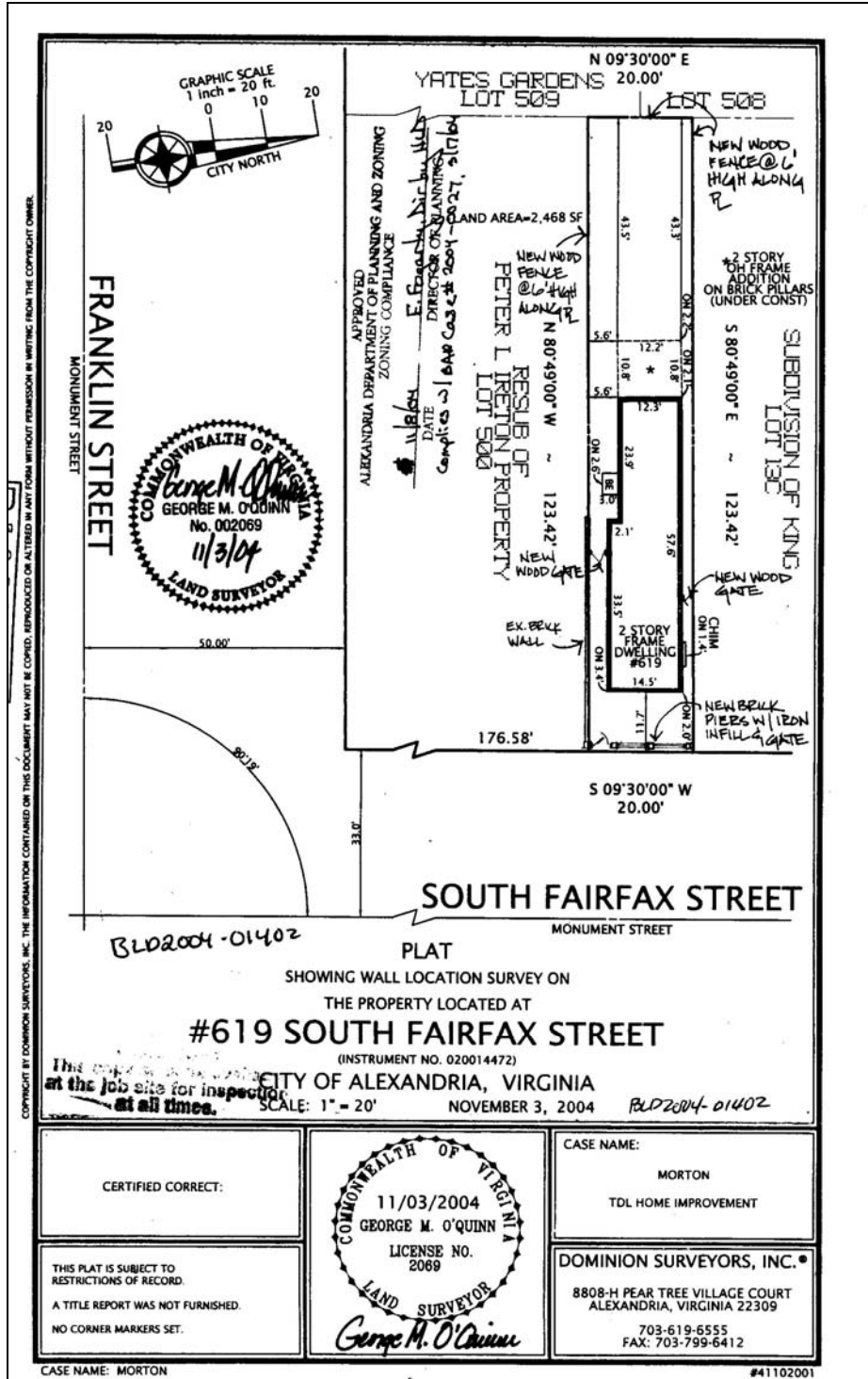


Figure 2. Plat of 619 South Fairfax, indicating location of fence, wall and gates.

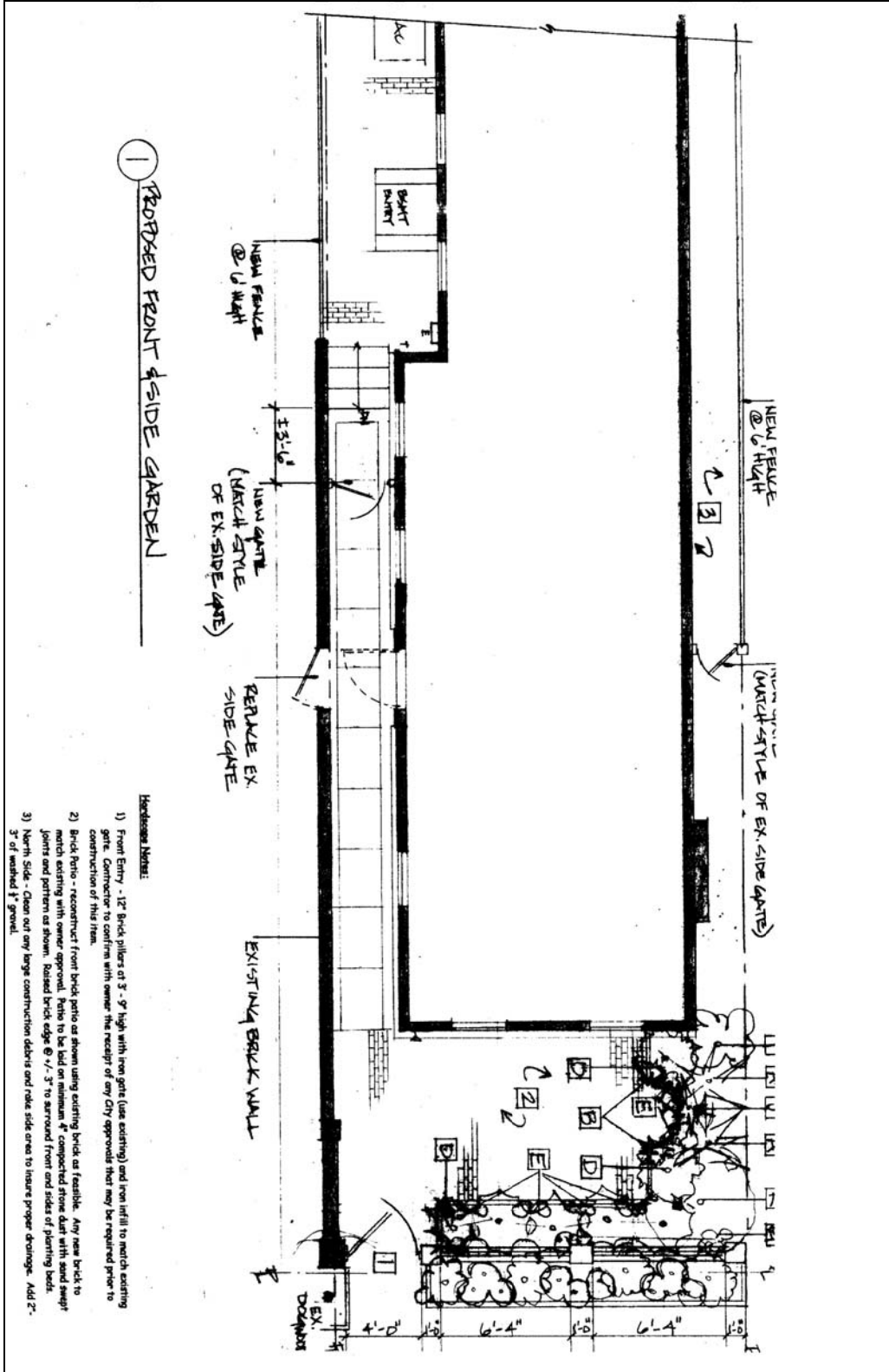


Figure 3. Proposed site plan.

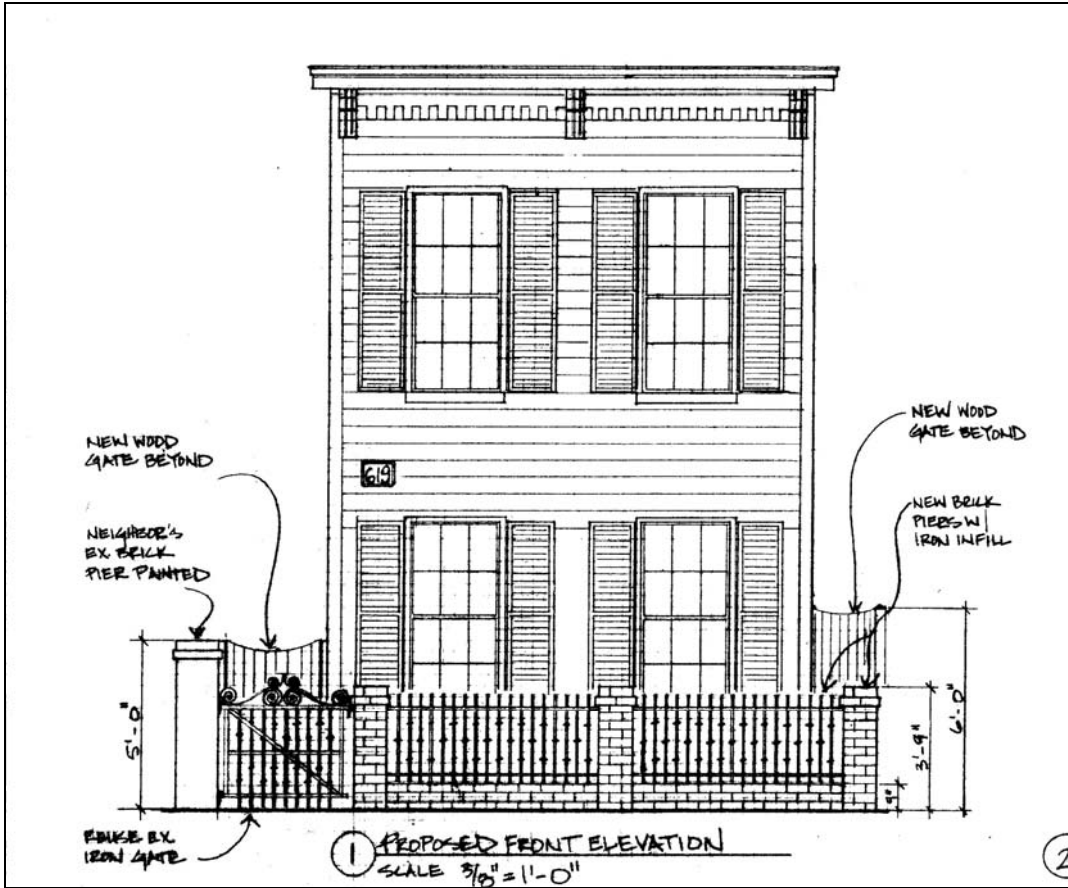


Figure 4. Proposed alterations on front (east) elevation.

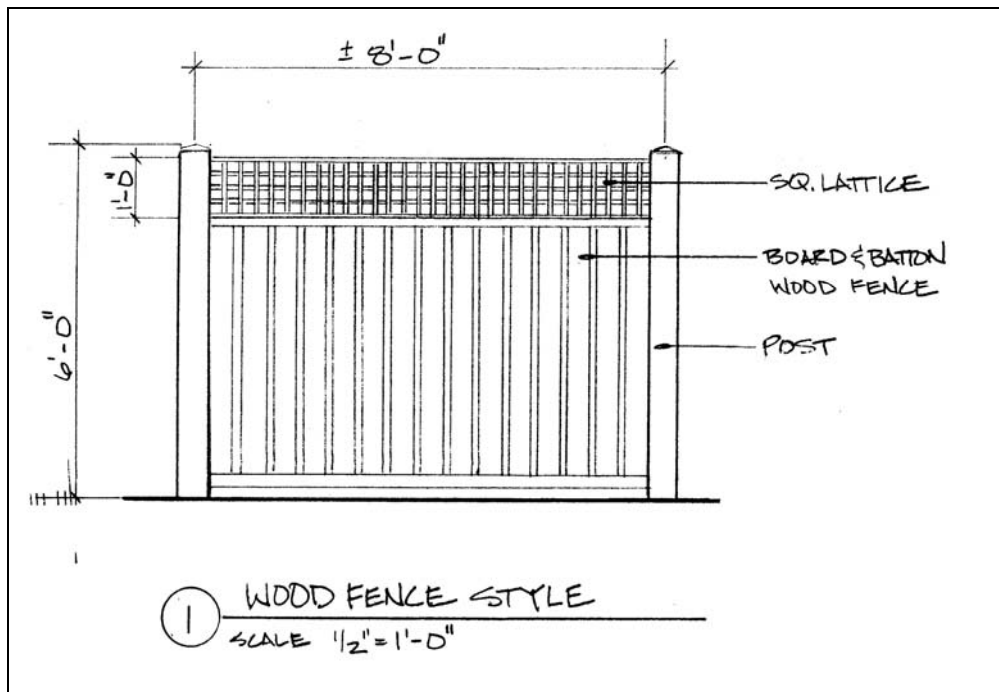


Figure 5. Specifications for proposed wood board fence with lattice.