

Docket Item # 12
BAR CASE # 2008-0221

BAR Meeting
December 3, 2008

ISSUE: Alterations

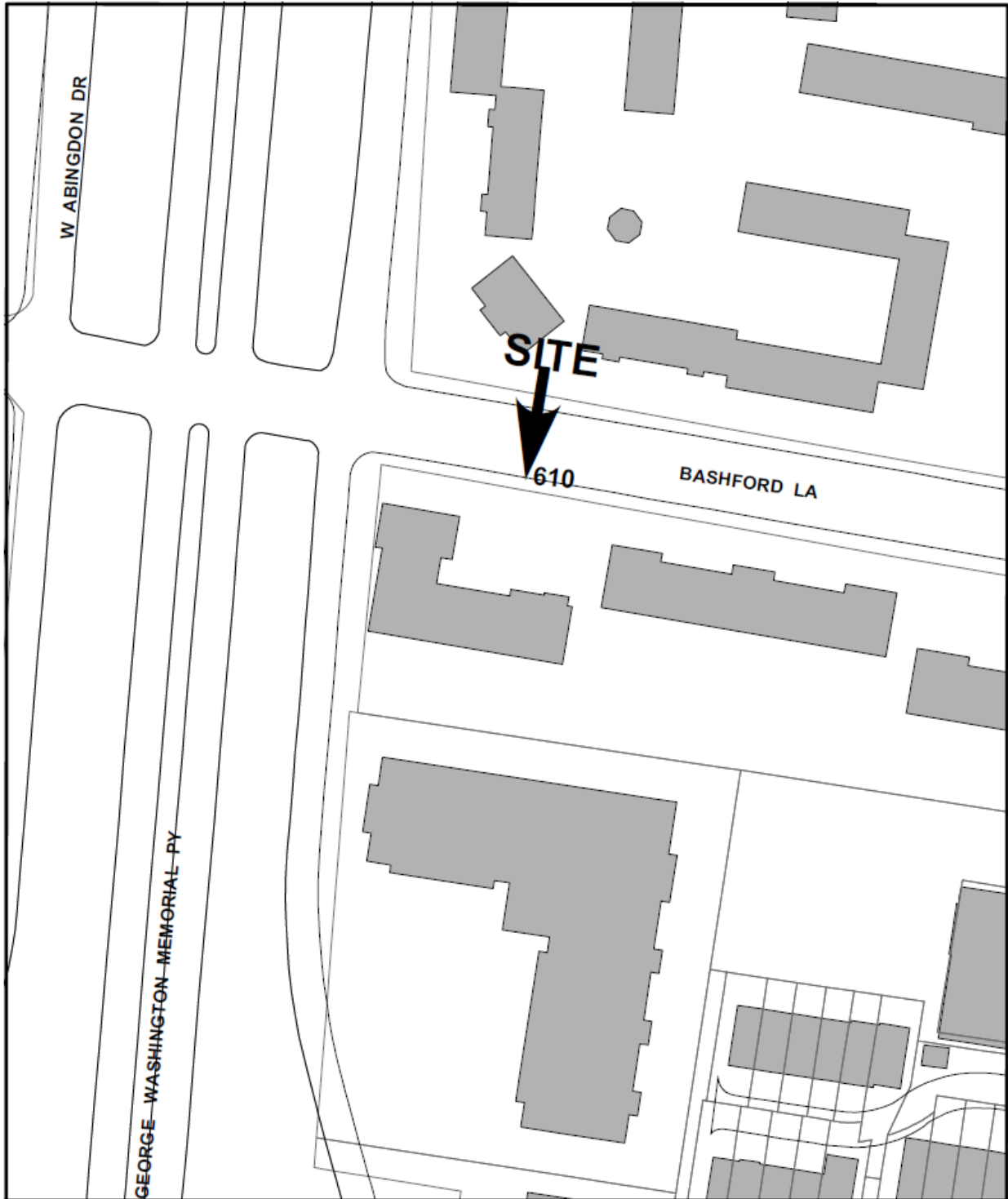
APPLICANT: Riverton Condominiums

LOCATION: 610 Bashford Lane (500, 502, 504, 600, 604, 610, 612 Bashford Lane and 1251 East Abingdon Drive)

ZONE: RCX/medium-density apartment zone

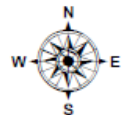
STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Staff recommends approval of the application with the following conditions:

1. That the shutters be wood or a wood composite material approved by Staff;
2. That the shutters be operable; and
3. That the shutters be appropriately sized to fit the window openings.



BAR CASE #2008-0221

12/3/2008



I. ISSUE:

The applicant is requesting approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness for replacement shutters for the three buildings that comprise Riverton Condominiums located at 500, 502, 504, 600, 604, 610, 612 Bashford Lane and 1251 East Abingdon Drive.

The applicant is requesting to replace existing wood shutters, some of which are deteriorated, with replacement vinyl shutters. The existing shutters are not on all windows of the three buildings and the applicant is proposing to only install the replacement vinyl shutters where there are currently shutters, for a total of 94 pairs. The vinyl shutters will be black with a faux grain and have fixed louvers. The applicant has provided a sample of the proposed shutter to Staff.

II. HISTORY:

The properties associated with 610 Bashford Lane (500, 502, 504, 600, 604, 610, 612 Bashford Lane and 1251 East Abingdon Drive) include three two-story brick garden-style apartment buildings that were originally constructed around 1940 as rental apartments called the Locharbor Garden Apartments. They were converted to hotel use in 1986 (SUP #1864). The Executive Club Suites hotel was converted to condominiums.

In 2005, the Board approved a number of alterations including accessibility alterations for the condominium conversion (BAR Case #2005-0042, 3/16/05) and alterations to an entrance at 610 Bashford Lane (BAR Case #2005-0146, 7/6/05). In 1996, the Board approved the installation of screening for a ground level generator (96-209, 9/18/96). The Board approved site and building lighting, entry canopies and two brass individual letter signs attached to garden walls in 1986 (BAR 86-220, 12/17/86).

III. ANALYSIS:

The proposed shutters comply with the zoning ordinance requirements.

In the opinion of Staff, the proposed replacement shutters are inappropriate.

The *Design Guidelines* note that “window and door shutters should be appropriate to the period of the structure...[and] should not be added to a structure in an attempt to make the structure appear older than it actually is.” Staff notes that these garden-style multi-unit buildings from the early 1940s most likely did not originally have shutters. Garden-style buildings from this period were designed for people of modest means and had minimal decoration and detailing. The principle design feature was the siting of the buildings within a landscaped area. The result of these defining design principles was a series of two- or three-story brick buildings with simple brick moldings in a stripped-down Colonial Revival style set within a landscaped area of walkways, open space and trees.

Staff was unable to locate Board approval for the installation of the shutters. The front elevations have wood shutters (several of which are damaged) on most, but not all, windows. The rear elevation has a few vinyl shutters only. While the preferred course of action would be to completely remove the shutters and not replace them, Staff recognizes the applicant’s desire

for shutters and notes that it is not possible to determine if and when the existing shutters were approved. Staff finds that shutters are often appropriate on Colonial Revival-style buildings. Staff finds that shutters may be acceptable on these buildings only if they meet the *Guidelines* for appropriate shutters.

The *Design Guidelines* clearly articulate what are considered appropriate shutters. According to the *Guidelines*, shutters should be “hinged and operable,” “made of wood,” and “be the appropriate size and shape for the opening.” Furthermore, “vinyl...shutters are not appropriate.” Staff objects to the proposed inoperable, vinyl shutters finding them inappropriate. Recognizing the concerns regarding maintenance of wood shutters, Staff recommended that the applicant consider a wood composite shutter, often considered appropriate for historic districts in wet/humid climates. Staff is not aware that the applicant pursued an alternative wood composite shutter.

IV. STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends approval of the application with the following conditions:

1. That the shutters be wood or a wood composite material approved by Staff;
2. That the shutters be operable; and
3. That the shutters be appropriately sized to fit the window openings.

V. CITY DEPARTMENT COMMENTS

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

Code Enforcement:

No comments.

Historic Alexandria:

No comments received.

VI. IMAGES



Figure 1. Existing conditions, Bashford Lane.



Figure 2. Existing conditions, East Abingdon Drive.



Figure 3. Existing conditions on Bashford Lane, showing windows with and without shutters.



Figure 4. Detail of existing deteriorated wood shutter.