

Docket Item # 2  
BAR CASE # 2008-0248

BAR Meeting  
January 21, 2009

**ISSUE:** Demolition/Encapsulation  
**APPLICANT:** Robert Bentley Adams & Associates  
**LOCATION:** 702 South Fairfax Street  
**ZONE:** RM/Residential

---

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

1. \*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.
2. \*The applicant/developer shall not allow any metal detection to be conducted on the property, unless authorized by Alexandria Archaeology.
3. 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.



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 two-story addition at 702 South Fairfax Street. The proposed addition will require the demolition/encapsulation of the east elevation of the rear ell, demolition of an existing one-story rear addition, and demolition/encapsulation of 228 square feet of the rear wall of the main block and 45 square feet of the south side elevation of the rear ell for construction of a small 8 square foot addition.

**II. HISTORY:**

The residential structure at 702 South Fairfax Street is a two-story, two-bay frame townhouse which City real estate records dates to 1880. The G.M. Hopkins *City Atlas of Alexandria* depicts a building, similar in configuration to the existing dwelling, at this location in 1877. The building appears on the *Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps* from 1896 (the first year which covers this area). Only the main block is depicted on the 1896 map. The rear ell first appears on the *Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps* from 1907. The existing one-story rear shed addition (attached to the rear ell) was constructed after 1958, according to *Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps* from that year.

In 1959, the Board approved the installation of white aluminum siding to the building. In 1979 the Board approved alterations to the building.

**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. Staff finds that the proposed area for demolition/encapsulation is limited to the smallest and least visible elevation. Staff finds that the

existing rear one-story addition is not historic. Furthermore, the historic townhouse will maintain its integrity and the existing rear ell form will be continued on the proposed addition. Therefore, Staff recommends approval of the application as submitted.

Staff notes the conditions and comments from Alexandria Archaeology and Transportation and Environmental Services.

**IV. STAFF RECOMMENDATION:**

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

4. \*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.
5. \*The applicant/developer shall not allow any metal detection to be conducted on the property, unless authorized by Alexandria Archaeology.
6. 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.

**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 Additions and Alterations to the existing structure must comply with the 2006 edition of the Uniform Statewide Building Code (USBC).
- C-6 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-7 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-8 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-9 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:

- R-1 Approve.

Alexandria Archaeology:

**Archaeology Finding**

1. Tax records from 1850 note the presence of three free African American households on the block, but the exact addresses are not known. The G.M. Hopkins insurance map shows a structure on the lot in 1877. The property therefore has the potential to yield archaeological resources that could provide insight into domestic activities, perhaps relating to African Americans, in 19<sup>th</sup>-century Alexandria.

**Archaeology Recommendations**

\*1. 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.

\*2. The applicant/developer shall not allow any metal detection to be conducted on the property, unless authorized by Alexandria Archaeology.

3. 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.

Transportation and Environmental Services:

**FINDINGS**

F1. An approved grading plan may be required at the time of building permit application. Insufficient information has been provided to make that determination at this time.

In summary, City Code Section 8-1-22(d) requires that a grading plan be submitted to and approved by T&ES prior to the issuance of building permits for improvements involving:

- the construction of a new home;
- construction of an addition to an existing home where either
  - the addition exceeds the area of the existing building footprint by 100% or more;
  - or
  - the construction of the addition results in less than 50% of the existing first floor exterior walls, in their entirety, remaining;
- changes to existing grade elevation of 1-foot or greater;
- changes to existing drainage patterns;
- land disturbance of 2,500 square feet or greater.

1.

2. Questions regarding the processing of grading plans should be directed to the T&ES Site Plan Coordinator at (703) 838-4318. Memorandum to Industry No. 02-08 was issued on

April 28, 2008 and can be viewed online via the following link.

**<http://alexandriava.gov/uploadedFiles/tes/info/gradingPlanRequirements.pdf>**

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

- R1. The building permit plans shall comply with requirements of City Code Section 8-1-22 regarding the location of downspouts, foundation drains and sump pumps. Refer to Memorandum to Industry dated June 18, 2004. [Memorandum is available online at the City web site under Transportation\Engineering and Design\Memos to Industry.]. (T&ES)
- R2. Applicant shall be responsible for repairs to the adjacent city right-of-way if damaged during construction activity. (T&ES)
- R3. All improvements to the city right-of-way such as curbing, sidewalk, driveway aprons, etc. must be city standard design. (T&ES)
- R4. No permanent structure may be constructed over any existing private and/or public utility easements. It is the responsibility of the applicant to identify any and all existing easements on the plan. (T&ES)
- R5. An erosion and sediment control plan must be approved by T&ES prior to any land disturbing activity greater than 2,500 square feet. (T&ES)
- R5. Compliance with the provisions of Article XIII of the City's zoning ordinance for stormwater quality control is required for any land disturbing activity greater than 2,500 square feet. (T&ES)

VI. IMAGES

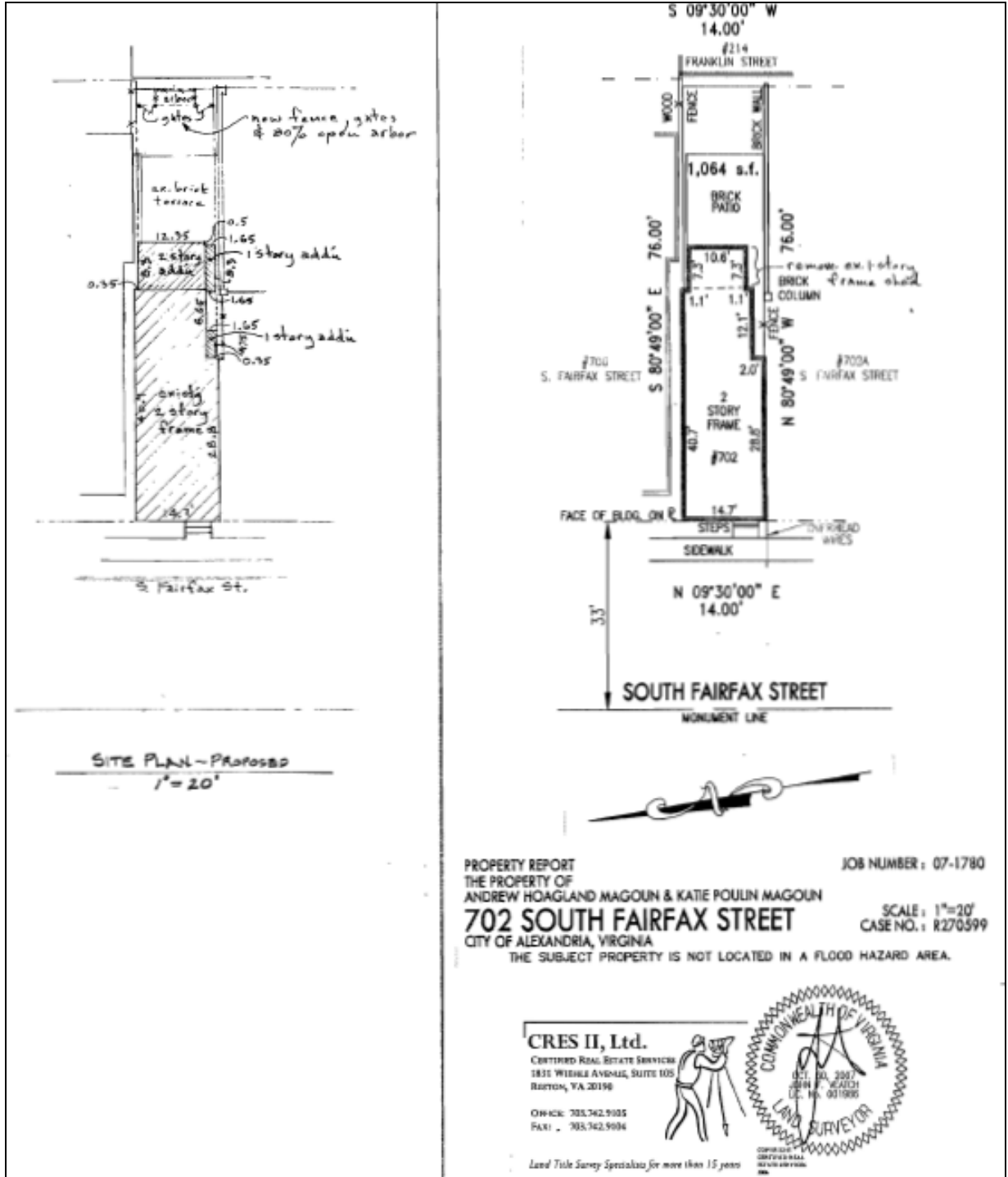


Figure 1. Existing (right) and proposed (left) site plan.



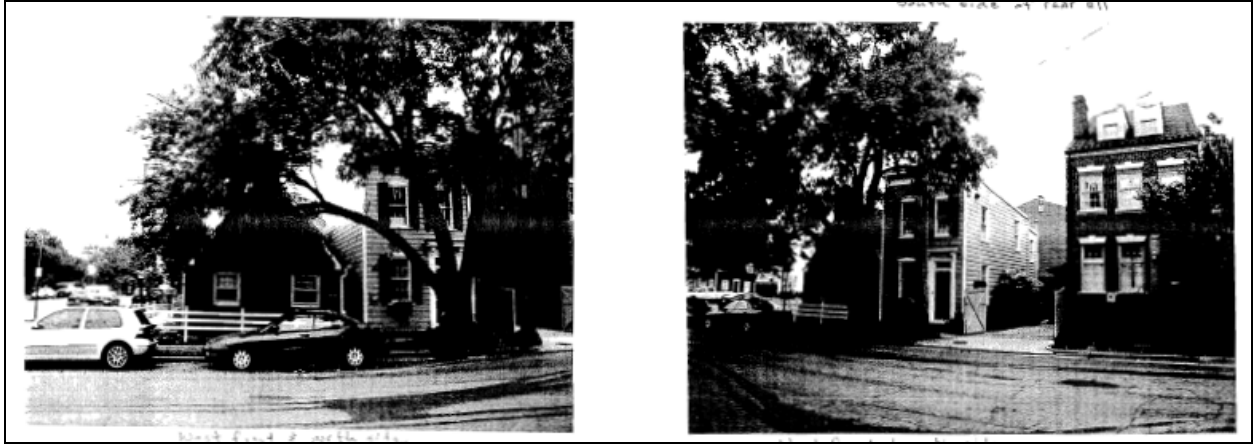


Figure 2. Views of front (west) elevation and side (south) elevation from South Fairfax Street.



Figure 3. South elevation of rear ell.

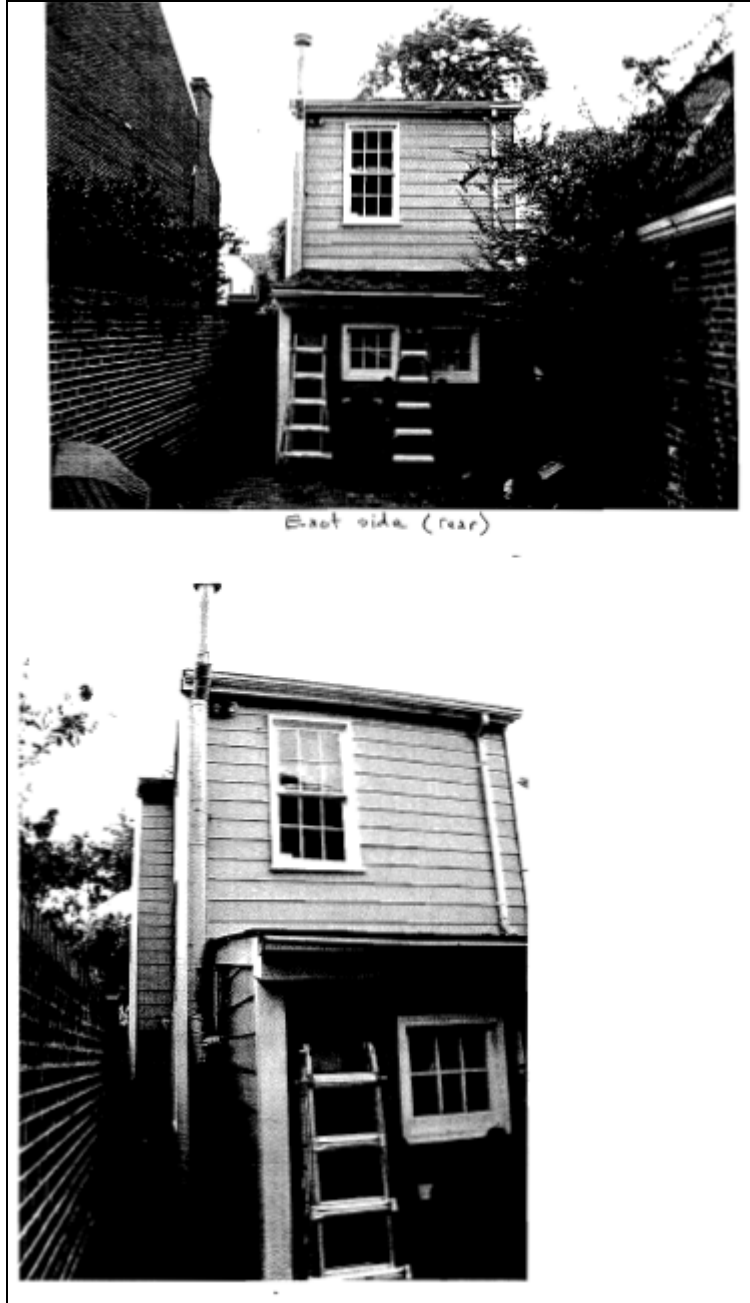


Figure 4. Rear (east) elevation - one-story addition proposed for demolition and rear elevation proposed for encapsulation.