

Docket Item # 4
BAR CASE # 2008-0193

BAR Meeting
April 1, 2009

ISSUE: New Construction
APPLICANT: Sophie Development LLC
LOCATION: 714 Wythe Street
ZONE: OC/Office Commercial

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Staff recommends approval of the application, in conjunction with the conditions of the February 18, 2009 approval, for a revised rear roof line with the following condition:

1. That the uppermost portion of the cornice, the broad band intersecting with the third-story windows, be eliminated.

BOARD ACTION, FEBRUARY 18, 2009: On a motion Mr. Smeallie, seconded by Mr. Spencer, the Board voted to approve the application for a Certificate of Appropriateness for new construction 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 discovery until a City archaeologist comes to the site and records the finds.
2. *The applicant/developer shall call Alexandria Archaeology (703-838-4399) two weeks before the starting date of any ground disturbance so that an inspection schedule for city archaeologists can be arranged.
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 asterick) shall appear in the General Notes of all site plans and on all site plan sheets that involves demolition or ground disturbance (including Erosion and Sediment Control, Grading, Utilities and Sheeting and Shoring) so that on-site contractors are aware of the requirements.
5. That the applicant work with Staff and bring back to the Board a revised design for the roof line of the rear portion of the building.

The vote was 6-0.

REASON: The Board was generally in agreement with the Staff recommendation, but found

that the roof line of the rear portion of the building remained of concern, and directed the applicant to explore an alternative design. The Board thanked the applicant for responding to their previous concerns regarding the front doors, the stoop, and the window configuration on the sides.

SPEAKERS: Sas Gahrai, applicant, spoke in support of the project
Sandra Cope, 626 N. Washington Street, spoke regarding concerns with displaced parking behind her home and business

STAFF RECOMMENDATION, FEBRUARY 18, 2009: Staff recommends approval of the application for new construction 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 call Alexandria Archaeology (703/838-4399) two weeks before the starting date of any ground disturbance so that an inspection schedule for city archaeologists can be arranged.
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 Erosion and Sediment Control, Grading, Utilities and Sheeting and Shoring) so that on-site contractors are aware of the requirements.

BOARD DEFERRAL, JANUARY 7, 2009: On a motion by Mr. Neale, seconded by Mr. Smeallie, the Board voted to defer the application for further study with the following considerations:

1. That the Applicant revise the design of the front elevation to bring the front doors forward.
2. That the Applicant restudy the tower portion of the rear exterior.
3. That the Applicant restudy the side elevations to bring down the cornice line of the roof from the third floor to the second floor.

The vote was 6-0.

REASON: The Board generally agreed with the Staff analysis and found that the proposed new construction should be further studied. While the Board expressed support of the project and overall design, concerns remained regarding the front doors and the rear tower. The Board generally supported the use of shed dormers, though some members expressed concern. The Board found the proposed building materials acceptable. Although the percentage of open space is beyond the purview of the BAR, several Board members voiced questions over the use of the roof deck as open space and loss of ground level open space.

SPEAKERS: Sas Gahrai, the applicant, spoke representing the application.
Elizabeth Campbell, designer, spoke representing the application.
John Hynan, representing Historic Alexandria Foundation, spoke with concerns.
Sandra Cope, 626 North Washington Street, spoke in opposition.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION, JANUARY 7, 2009: Staff recommends approval of the application for new construction with the following conditions:

1. That the applicant remove the different color synthetic slate at the center roof line.
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 call Alexandria Archaeology (703/838-4399) two weeks before the starting date of any ground disturbance so that an inspection schedule for city archaeologists can be arranged.
4. *The applicant/developer shall not allow any metal detection to be conducted on the property unless authorized by Alexandria Archaeology.
5. 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 Erosion and Sediment Control, Grading, Utilities and Sheeting and Shoring) so that on-site contractors are aware of the requirements.

BOARD DEFERRAL, NOVEMBER 5, 2008: On a motion by Mr. Smeallie, seconded by Ms. Neihardt, the Board voted to defer the application for further study with the following considerations:

1. That the applicant revise the design of the front dormer to make it more compatible with the proposed bay rhythm on the front elevation and to reduce its prominence.
2. That the applicant refine the front elevation to articulate that the building is a pair of townhouses rather than a single residence.
3. That the applicant work with Staff for final approval of a wood front door appropriate to the period and style emulated in the building design.
4. That the applicant revise the fenestration of the side elevations and lower the overall height of the frame portion to create a more cohesive relationship with the front elevation.
5. That the vent in the side elevation be painted a color similar to the brick color so that it recedes from the brick wall.
6. That the applicant consider an alternative protective screen for the side elevations other than bollards, such as a vegetative screen. If bollards are to be used, they should be made of metal rather than synthetic material.
7. That the nails not show in the installation of the fiber cement siding and that smooth (non-simulated wood grain) siding be installed.
8. That the fence be painted or stained and be no taller than 6' in height.

The vote was 6-0.

REASON: The Board generally agreed with the Staff analysis and found that the proposed new construction should be further studied. The Board expressed concerns regarding scale, massing, fenestration and design details.

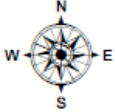
SPEAKER: Sas Gahrai, the applicant, spoke in support.
John Hynan, representing Historic Alexandria Foundation, spoke with concerns.
Sandra Cope, 626 North Washington Street, spoke in opposition.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION, NOVEMBER 5, 2008: Staff recommends deferral for further study with the following considerations to be addressed:

1. That the applicant revise the design of the front dormer to make it more compatible with the proposed bay rhythm on the front elevation and to reduce its prominence.
2. That the applicant refine the front elevation to articulate that the building is a pair of townhouses rather than a single residence.
3. That the applicant work with Staff for final approval of a wood front door appropriate to the period and style emulated in the building design.
4. That the applicant revise the fenestration of the side elevations and lower the overall height of the frame portion to create a more cohesive relationship with the front elevation.
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6. That the applicant consider an alternative protective screen for the side elevations other than bollards, such as a vegetative screen. If bollards are to be used, they should be made of metal rather than synthetic material.
7. That the nails not show in the installation of the fiber cement siding and that smooth (non-simulated wood grain) siding be installed.
8. That the fence be painted or stained and be no taller than 6' in height.

****EXPIRATION OF APPROVALS NOTE:** In accordance with Sections 10-106(B) and 10-206(B) of the Zoning Ordinance, any official Board of Architectural Review approval will expire 12 months from the date of issuance if the work is not commenced and diligently and substantially pursued by the end of that 12-month period.

****BUILDING PERMIT NOTE:** Most projects approved by the Board of Architectural Review require the issuance of one or more construction permits by Building and Fire Code Administration (including signs). The applicant is responsible for obtaining all necessary construction permits after receiving Board of Architectural Review approval. Contact Code Administration, Room 4200, City Hall, 703-838-4360 for further information.



UPDATE:

At the February 18, 2009 hearing, the Board approved the application for a Certificate of Appropriateness for construction of two new townhouses with the condition that the applicant work with Staff to bring back to the Board a revised design for the roof line of the rear portion of the building. The Board supported approval of the project with the exception of the roof line of the rear portion. Finding the proposed roof line to be of concern, the Board directed the applicant to explore alternative designs for this element.

Since the hearing, the applicant has met with City Staff to explore alternatives. One alternative considered was the use of a mansard roof form on the rear portion. However, after analysis and discussion between Staff and the applicant, it was determined that further study was necessary.

I. ISSUE:

The applicant is requesting approval for the roof line of the rear portion of two semi-detached, townhouses located at 714 Wythe Street.

The application before you is for consideration of the roof treatment on the rear frame portion of the building. The Board has already approved a Certificate of Appropriateness for the remainder of the design; therefore this report only addresses the rear roof form. The revised design proposes a pronounced cornice at the base of the third story of the frame portion on the side and rear elevations. The base of the cornice will be at the same height as the cornice on the masonry portion of the building. The revised cornice features a strong band at the base of the third-story windows. The cornice will be made of Fypon, the same material approved for the cornice on the front elevation, and the color will match the trimwork.

II. HISTORY:

By 1896, Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps depict a two-story house with projecting bay set back from the street at this location. By 1902, an enlarged house and an outbuilding at the rear property line were located on the site. By 1958, the Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps depict the site as an almost empty lot with two small outbuildings located at the rear of the property. The site is currently a paved surface parking area with a total lot area of 4,902 square feet and is surrounded by a ten foot public alley.

The applicant has been investigating with Staff the various options for developing this property for a number of years. The development options have included an office building, a multi-unit condominium development and the current proposal of two semi-detached, single-family residences. Staff encouraged the applicant to choose a development that would make the best use of the subject property with the least negative impact on the community. Planning Department BAR and Development Staff have met with the applicant over the past two years to review and revise the proposal.

In September 2008, the Planning Commission voted to approve a request to subdivide the subject property (SUB #2008-0002). The property was subdivided into two lots, each with two parking spaces, to accommodate the proposed development.

Throughout the BAR process, Planning and Zoning Staff have met with the applicant on several occasions. On November 5, 2008 the Board deferred the application for further study. The applicant submitted a revised design for the December 17, 2008 hearing, but later requested a deferral from that hearing. On January 7, 2009 the Board again deferred the application for further study. On February 18, 2009, the Board approved the application for all other elements of the two townhouses.

III. ANALYSIS:

The proposed project complies with SUB #2008-0002 and Zoning Ordinance regulations. If the HVAC or mechanical equipment on the roof is visible from a public right-of-way, it must be screened or a Waiver of Rooftop Screening Requirement must be obtained from the Board. The applicant may be required to file a grading plan administered by T&ES. The front stoop is permitted to encroach into the public right-of-way up to four feet per the Alexandria City Code Sec. 5-2-29.

Staff finds that the latest submission is consistent with the *Design Guidelines* and the direction given by the Board at the previous hearing. Staff found the previous submission, with no differentiation in roof form, acceptable for the rear portion of the building and consistent with the *Design Guidelines*. In response to the Board's concerns, Staff has worked with the applicant and finds the revised treatment appropriate as well. The applicant prepared a study proposing a mansard roof form on the rear portion. Staff found that the mansard roof on the rear portion of a Colonial Revival style house appeared disjointed and inconsistent with the *Guidelines*. Specifically, the mixing of two very distinctive architectural styles from different time periods did not seem an appropriate treatment for minimizing the perceived height and mass of this portion of the building. In addition, the *Guidelines* advise that "the Boards favor contextual background buildings." Staff found that the higher-style roof line on the rear portion made it more visible and less of a background building. In response, the applicant prepared the alternative presented here. The pronounced cornice serves to appropriately reduce the perceived height and bulk of the addition without drawing attention to this rear portion. Staff finds that the revision is generally appropriate but recommends that the broad, flat band element intersecting with the windows be eliminated.

In summary, Staff is supportive of the current scheme with the elimination of the additional broad band trim board intersecting with the third-story windows immediately above the side and rear elevation cornice.

IV. STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends approval of the application, in conjunction with the conditions of the February 18, 2009 approval, for a revised rear roof line with the following condition:

2. That the uppermost portion of the cornice, the broad band intersecting with the third-story windows, be eliminated.

V. CITY DEPARTMENT COMMENTS

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

Code Administration:

- 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 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-7 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-8 A wall location plat prepared by a land surveyor is required to be submitted to this office prior to requesting any framing inspection.

Alexandria Archaeology:

Archaeology Findings:

F-1 Tax records indicate that a small house owned by Captain James Campbell stood on 1/4-acre of this city block facing Columbus Street in 1810. The property was valued at \$250.00 at that time. The exact address of the house is not known, and the structure appears to have been gone by 1830. Subsequent historical documents indicate that the current development property

is located on the site of the stables of the Washington Street Corral built by the Union Army during the Civil War. By 1896, a house was present on this lot. Construction and demolition of the 1890's house would have caused some disturbance to the previous resources, which were fairly ephemeral. Given the scale of this project and the post-Civil War disturbance, the property has limited potential to yield archaeological resources that could provide insight into residential life in 19th-century Alexandria, and into military activities during the Civil War. The applicant must fulfill the requirements below to insure that significant information about the past is not lost as a result of this development.

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 call Alexandria Archaeology (703/838-4399) two weeks before the starting date of any ground disturbance so that an inspection schedule for city archaeologists can be arranged.

*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 Erosion and Sediment Control, Grading, Utilities and Sheeting and Shoring) so that on-site contractors are aware of the requirements.

Transportation and Environmental Services:

RECOMMENDATIONS:

R1. An approved Grading Plan must be attached to the building permit application. The Grading Plan is required because the submitted documentation indicates the construction of a new home. 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.

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>

- R2. 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)
- R3. Applicant shall be responsible for repairs to the adjacent city right-of-way if damaged during construction activity. (T&ES)
- R4. All improvements to the city right-of-way such as curbing, sidewalk, driveway aprons, etc. must be city standard design. (T&ES)
- R5. 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)
- R6. 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)
- R7. 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)

CODE REQUIREMENTS

- C-1 Roof, surface and sub-surface drains be connected to the public storm sewer system, if available, by continuous underground pipe. Where storm sewer is not available applicant must provide a design to mitigate impact of stormwater drainage onto adjacent properties and to the satisfaction of the Director of Transportation & Environmental Services. (Sec.8-1-22) (SUB2008-0002)
- C-2 All utilities serving this site shall be placed underground. (Sec. 5-3-3) (SUB2008-0002)
- C-3 Pay sanitary sewer tap fee prior to release of Grading Plan. (Sec. 5-6-25.1) (SUB2008-0002)

C-4 Any work within the right-of-way requires a separate permit from T&ES. (Sec. 5-3-61)
(SUB2008-0002)

Historic Alexandria:

R-1 Approve.

S-1 Substitute wood trim and clapboard for HardiePlank and Duron.

City Architect:

No additional comments received.

VI. IMAGES



Figure 1. Existing site conditions at 714 Wythe Street.



Figure 2. Looking southeast toward site from North Columbus Street, with St. Joseph's Church on left.

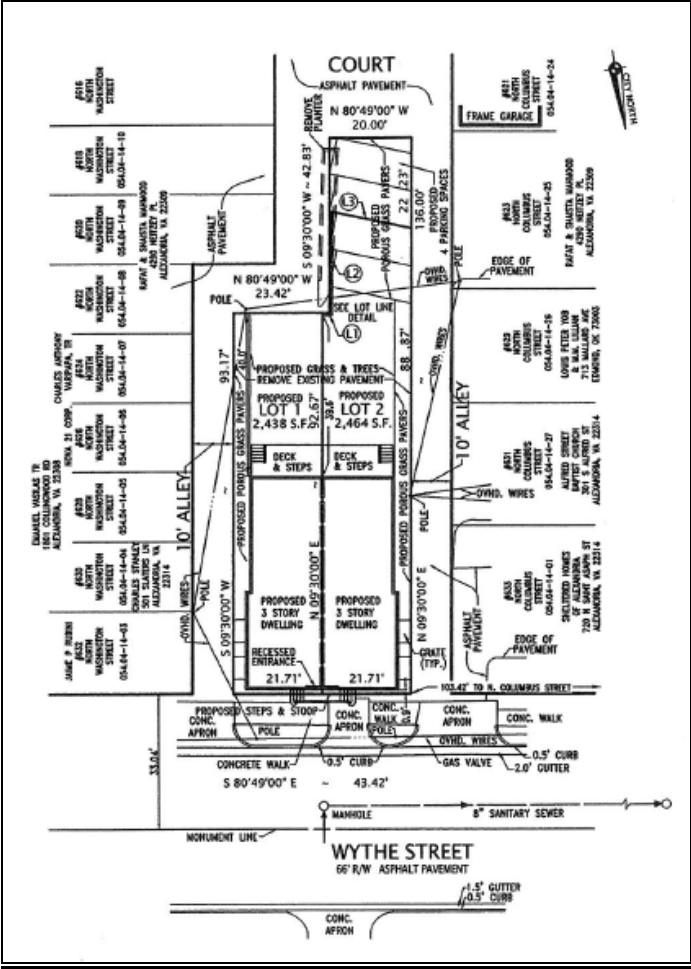


Figure 3. Plat showing subdivided lots and location of proposed dwellings.



Figure 4. Proposed side (east and west) elevations at February 18, 2009 hearing.



Figure 5. Proposed rear (south) elevation at February 18, 2009 hearing.



Figure 6. Study of mansard design, side elevation.



Figure 7. Study of mansard design, rear elevation.

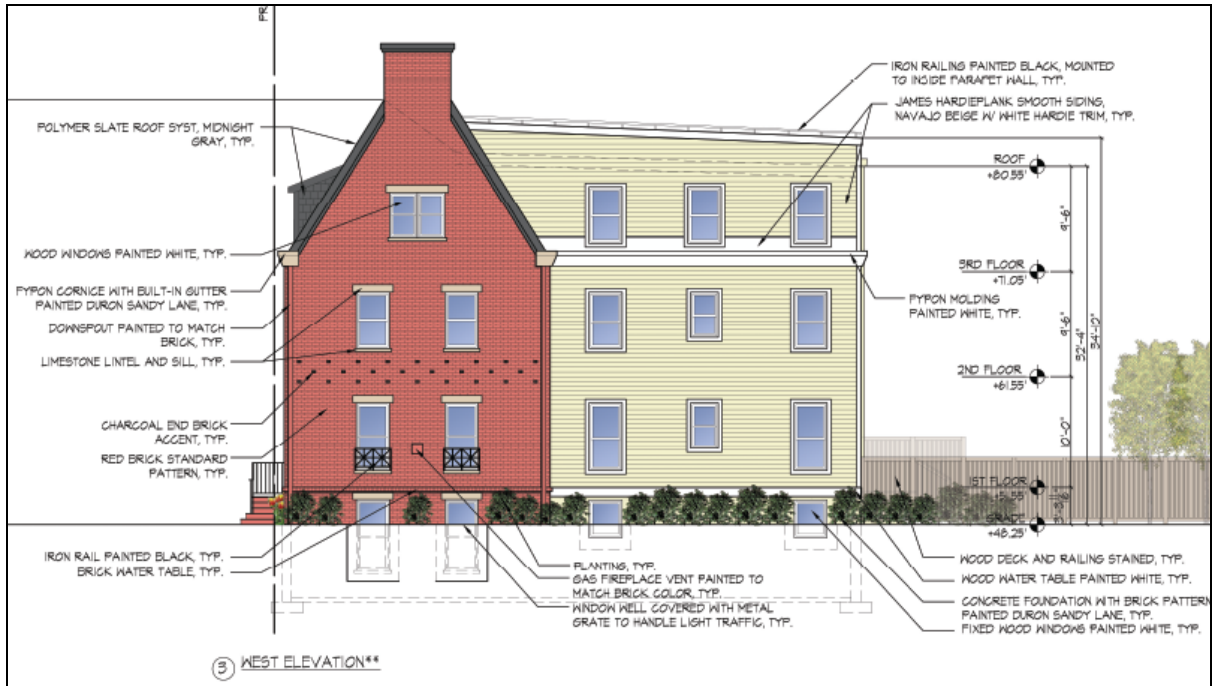


Figure 8. Current submission with cornice on rear portion, side elevation.



Figure 9. Current submission with cornice on rear portion, rear elevation.