

Docket Item # 4  
BAR CASE #2009-0070

BAR Meeting  
May 6, 2009

**ISSUE:** Alterations  
**APPLICANT:** Robert B. Adams and Associates  
**LOCATION:** 501 Wolfe Street  
**ZONE:** RM / Townhouse zone

---

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:** Staff recommends approval of the application as submitted.

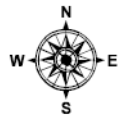
**\*\*EXPIRATION OF APPROVALS NOTE:** In accordance with Sections 10-106(B) and 10-206(B) of the Zoning Ordinance, any official Board of Architectural Review approval will expire 12 months from the date of issuance if the work is not commenced and diligently and substantially pursued by the end of that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



**BAR CASE #2009-0070**

**5/6/2009**



**I. ISSUE:**

The applicant is requesting approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness for alterations at 501 Wolfe Street. All of the proposed alterations are for the east (South Pitt Street) elevation.

The applicant is proposing the following alterations:

- Remove existing brick and concrete steps with iron railing
- Construct new brick steps with iron railing in same location
- Repair and restore two-story porch
- Add monitor window to second-story roof box

**Stoop:**

The applicant is proposing to remove the non-historic brick and concrete steps with iron railing and replace with, in the same location, and approximately the same size, a brick stoop with an iron railing. The lowest tread will extend slightly beyond the width of the stoop and the iron railing will curve accordingly.

**Porch Restoration:**

- Replace existing rotted porch flooring on first story and remove non-historic decking on second story
- Inspect all joists and beams and repair/replace as necessary and make porch elements level and plumb as possible
- Replace first floor ceiling with bead board to match second floor
- Inspect columns and bases for rot—repair/replace as necessary
- Repair/replace wood railings as necessary; repair balusters and replace missing pieces; remove non-historic bottom rail trim to improve drainage

**Roof Box Alterations:**

- Inspect roof and roof box above second-story window and make weather-tight
- Install one true divided light, single-glazed wood window measuring approximately 3 feet by 1 foot on north elevation of roof box and install bead board on interior ceiling of roof box

**II. HISTORY:**

A two-story dwelling first appears on this lot in the 1891 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map. A one-story frame porch first appears on the Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from 1896. The current configuration of the house, with the projecting bay at the northernmost part of the house, connected by a two-story porch, first appears in the 1921 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map.

In 1966, the Board approved an application for window alterations.

**III. ANALYSIS:**

The proposed alterations comply with Zoning Ordinance requirements.

**Stoop:**

May 6, 2009

The existing porch stoop, made of brick and concrete, does not appear to be historic. The proposed brick stoop is consistent with the *Design Guidelines* which state that “stoops, steps and railings should be made of materials which are sympathetic to the building materials generally found in the historic districts” and “should be appropriate and compatible with the historic architecture of the building.” Staff finds that the proposed brick stoop with simple iron railing is appropriate.

Porch Restoration:

The *Design Guidelines* note that “porches should be appropriate to the historical style of the structure” and “should be made of materials which are sympathetic to the building materials generally found in the historic districts.” Since the alterations to the porch are repairs and in-kind replacements as necessary, the porch and the alterations are consistent with the *Guidelines*. Staff finds that the proposed alterations related to the rehabilitation of the porch are all considered to be historically appropriate repairs and replacement, as necessary.

Roof Box Alterations:

Staff notes that the existing roof box configuration is likely not original and was created to ameliorate an awkward situation (the top portion of the second-story window being cut off by the porch). The applicant is proposing to improve the roof box by allowing light into the interior through the addition of a monitor element. The proposed window will be installed on the north elevation and will be only slightly visible. The current roof box is painted a dark color to be as unobtrusive as possible and will continue to have the same color scheme. The *Design Guidelines* recommend that: “...windows should be appropriate to the historic period of the architectural style of the building.” The *Guidelines* also state that single-glazed, true divided light windows with interior storm sash are the preferred replacement window type. Staff supports the alteration to the roof box and the selection of a single-glazed, true divided light, wood window, finding the alterations to the roof box to be discreet and the proposed window to be an appropriate selection.

In the opinion of Staff, the proposed alterations and repairs are all appropriate and consistent with the *Design Guidelines*. Staff supports the application as submitted.

**IV. STAFF RECOMMENDATION:** Staff recommends approval of the application as submitted.

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

Alexandria Archaeology:

**Archaeology Finding**

1. Fire insurance maps indicate that houses were present on this block in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century with a structure situated on this lot by 1891. The property has potential to yield archaeological resources that could provide insight into domestic activities 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.

Historic Alexandria:

R. Approve.

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.

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. All improvements to the city right-of-way such as curbing, sidewalk, driveway aprons, etc. must be city standard design. (T&ES)
- R3. All work within the public right of way requires separate permitting from the Department of Transportation and Environmental Services. (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

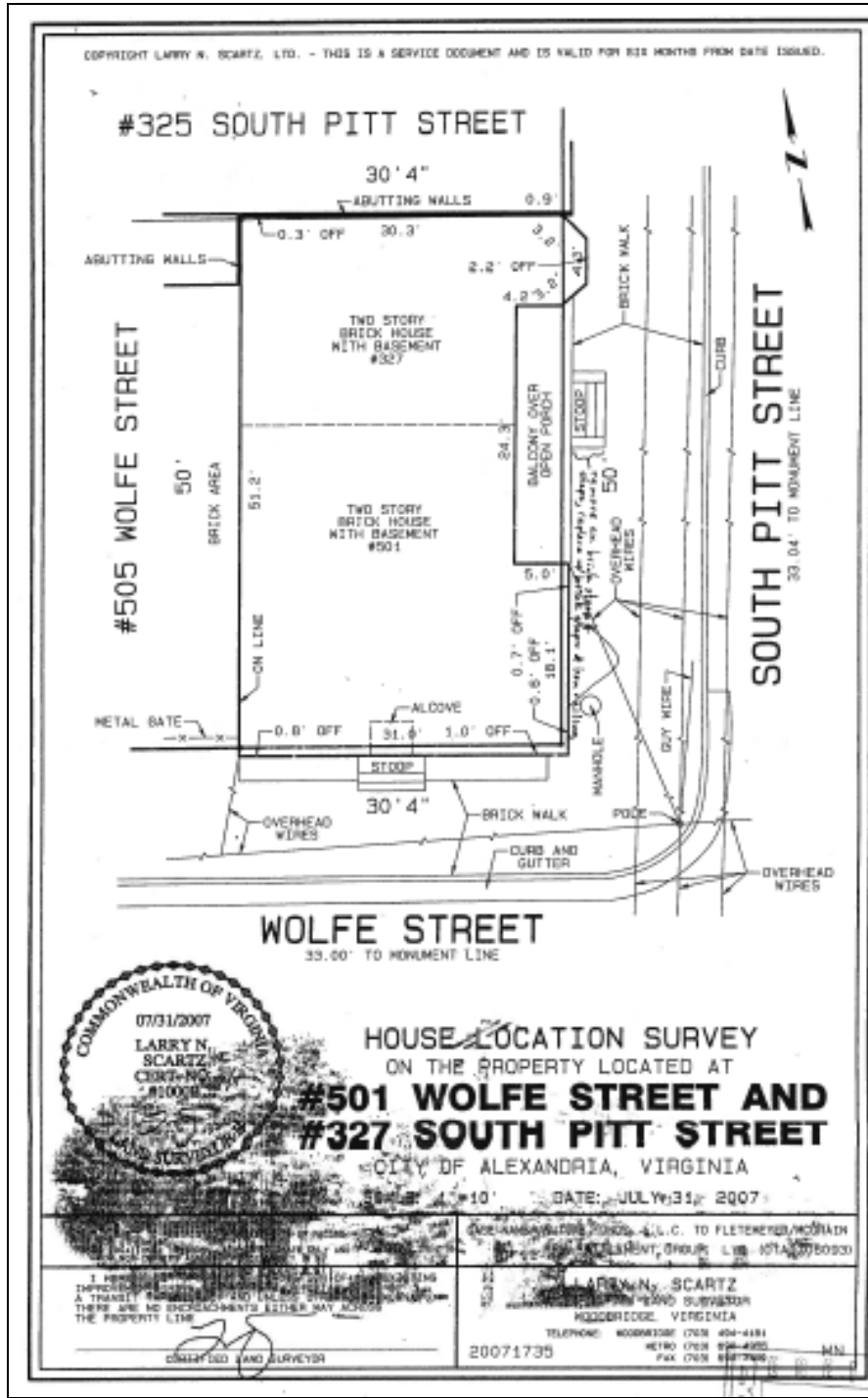


Figure 1. Plat of 501 Wolf Street.





Figure 2. Oblique view of 501 Wolfe Street, existing conditions.



Figure 3. East (South Pitt Street) elevation showing two-story porch, stoop and roof box.



**Figure 4. Detail of porch illustrating areas in need of repair.**



**Figure 5. Detail of first floor of porch.**





Figure 6. Detail of stoop.



Figure 7. View of roof box from second story porch ceiling.

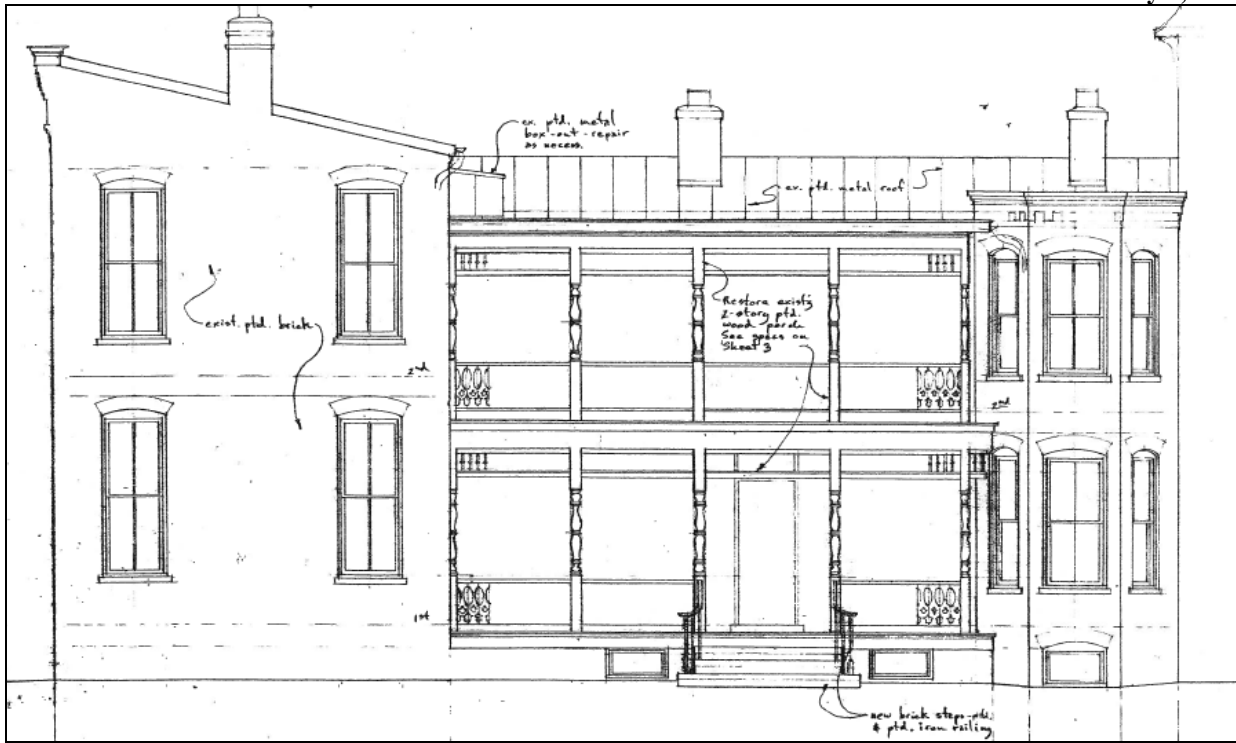


Figure 8. East elevation with proposed alterations.

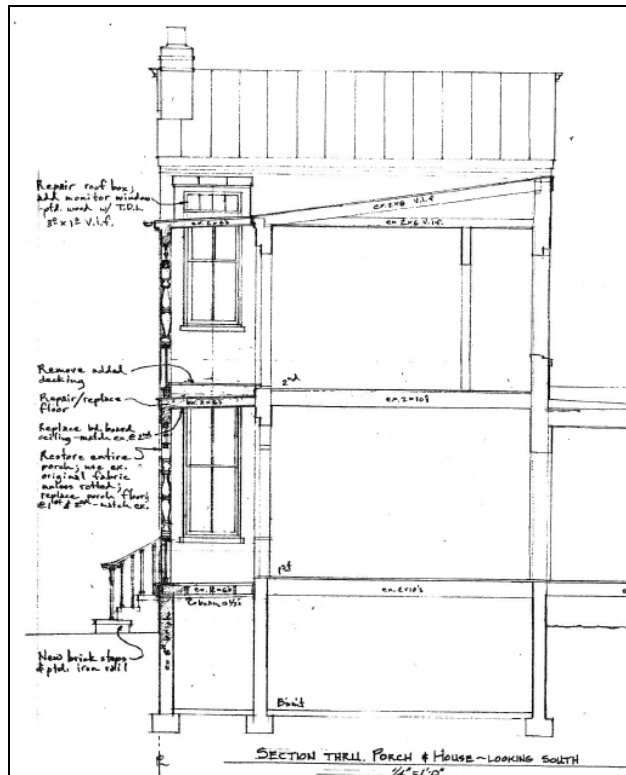


Figure 9. Section through porch looking south showing proposed alterations.

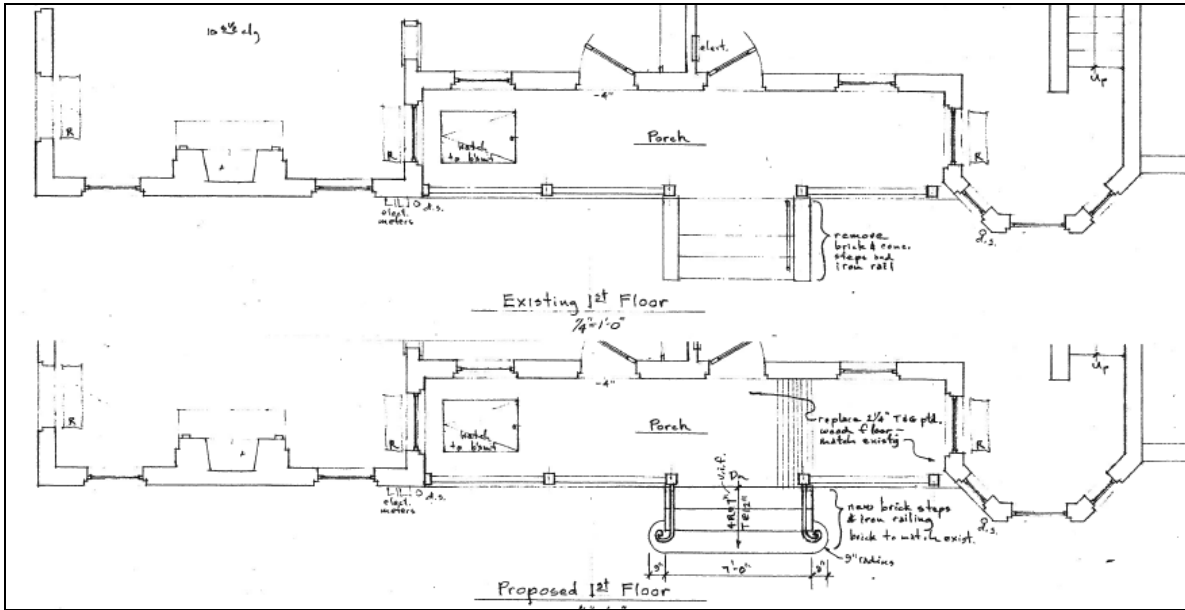


Figure 10. Plan of existing and proposed porch and stoop, first story.

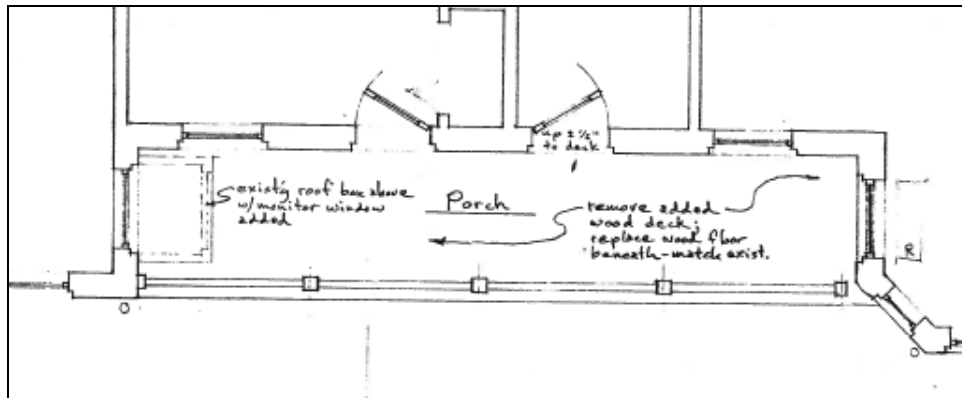


Figure 11. Plan of existing porch, second story, with proposed alterations.