

Docket Item # 8
BAR CASE # 2009-0098

BAR Meeting
June 3, 2009

ISSUE: Demolition/Encapsulation
APPLICANT: Lewis and Associates LTD by Ray Lewis
LOCATION: 413 South Fairfax Street
ZONE: RM/Residential

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

1. That the following statements 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:
 - A. 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.
 - B. The applicant/developer shall not allow any metal detection or artifact collection to be conducted on the property, unless authorized by Alexandria Archaeology.

****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 #2009-0098, 0099 6/3/2009

Note: This docket item requires a roll call vote.

I. ISSUE:

The applicant is requesting approval of a Permit to Demolish and Encapsulate in order to construct a two story rear addition at 413 South Fairfax Street.

The entire rear wall of the two story ell, with the exception of a triangular portion at the peak, will be partially demolished and encapsulated (roughly 231 square feet). According to the drawings provided by the applicant, the total area of proposed demolition is approximately 77 square feet, which includes a 7 foot by 7 foot section on the first floor and a 4 foot by 7 foot section on the second floor. The existing windows are incorporated in the demolished areas. The existing chimney on the rear elevation was reduced in height and capped some time ago and the remainder of the chimney will also be demolished.

II. HISTORY:

The three bay, two story Georgian style frame house at 413 South Fairfax Street has a two story rear ell and was built c. 1812 by Laughlin Masterson, according to Ethelyn Cox in *Historic Alexandria Virginia Street by Street*. The house appears in its current configuration as early as 1877, when it is shown on the G.M. Hopkins City Atlas of Alexandria. The property owner believes that the front portion of the house was constructed in the 1820s. Staff conducted a site visit which confirms that the ell, which contains the kitchen, was added at a later date but before 1877. Staff's research of the Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps indicates that between 1896 and 1902 a one story outbuilding was constructed on the rear property line; however, that structure no longer exists.

Staff could locate only one BAR approval for the subject property and that was in 1972 when the BAR approved the "removal of ornamentation".

The alley behind the house, where the rear ell is most visible, is private.

III. ANALYSIS:

In considering a Permit to Demolish/Capsulate, 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?

Staff certainly recognizes that 413 S. Fairfax Street is a representative of the City's early 19-century building stock, and possesses an intact flounder form addition from the mid-19th century; therefore, care should be demonstrated in any alterations to the building. As a whole, in Staff's opinion, the building meets Criteria 1& 5. Although the great majority of the house at 413 South Fairfax Street retains a high degree of architectural integrity, as well as its mid-19th century footprint, the area of demolition/encapsulation is limited exclusively to the rear wall of the ell. Staff conducted a site visit to the property and concurred with the applicant's assertion that the rear wall is in extremely poor condition and is failing structurally – the bowing of the wall is significant and can be easily seen. Many areas on the brick have also been repointed in an attempt to repair the wall. The applicant has consulted a structural engineer who determined that the rear wall would need to be rebuilt, rather than retained, even if the proposed addition is not constructed (BAR Case #2009-0099).

During the site visit, the applicant also indicated that the amount of demolition would be less than the amount shown on the plans, The applicant now intends to use the window openings, and removing the portion of brick wall below, to create access to the proposed new space. The remaining sections of the reconstructed rear wall would be retained and encapsulated.

Clear views to the rear of the house where the demolition and encapsulation are proposed are limited to the private alley behind the property. The area being impacted is not visible from South Fairfax Street or South Royal Street.

Given the relatively small area of demolition and the structural failure of the existing rear wall, Staff recommends approval of the Permit to Demolish/Encapsulate. Staff notes the comments of Alexandria Archeology and recommends that they be incorporated as conditions of approval.

IV. STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

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

1. That the following statements 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:
 - A. 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.
 - B. The applicant/developer shall not allow any metal detection or artifact collection to be conducted on the property, unless authorized by Alexandria Archaeology.

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 2006 edition of the Uniform Statewide Building Code (USBC).
- C-7 Alterations to the existing structure must comply with the 2006 edition of the Uniform Statewide Building Code (USBC).
- C-8 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-9 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-10 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-11 A wall location plat prepared by a land surveyor is required to be submitted to this office prior to requesting any framing inspection.

Transportation and Environmental Services:

R-1 The building permit must be approved and issued prior to the issuance of any demolition permit.

Historic Alexandria:

No comments received.

Alexandria Archaeology:

F-1 Tax records from the 19th century indicate that free African Americans were living on this property as early as 1825. The lot was part of the African American neighborhood known as Hayti. The property therefore has the potential to yield archaeological resources which could provide insight into domestic activities of African Americans in 19th-century Alexandria.

R-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.

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

R-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.

VI. IMAGES



Figure 1: Site photos.

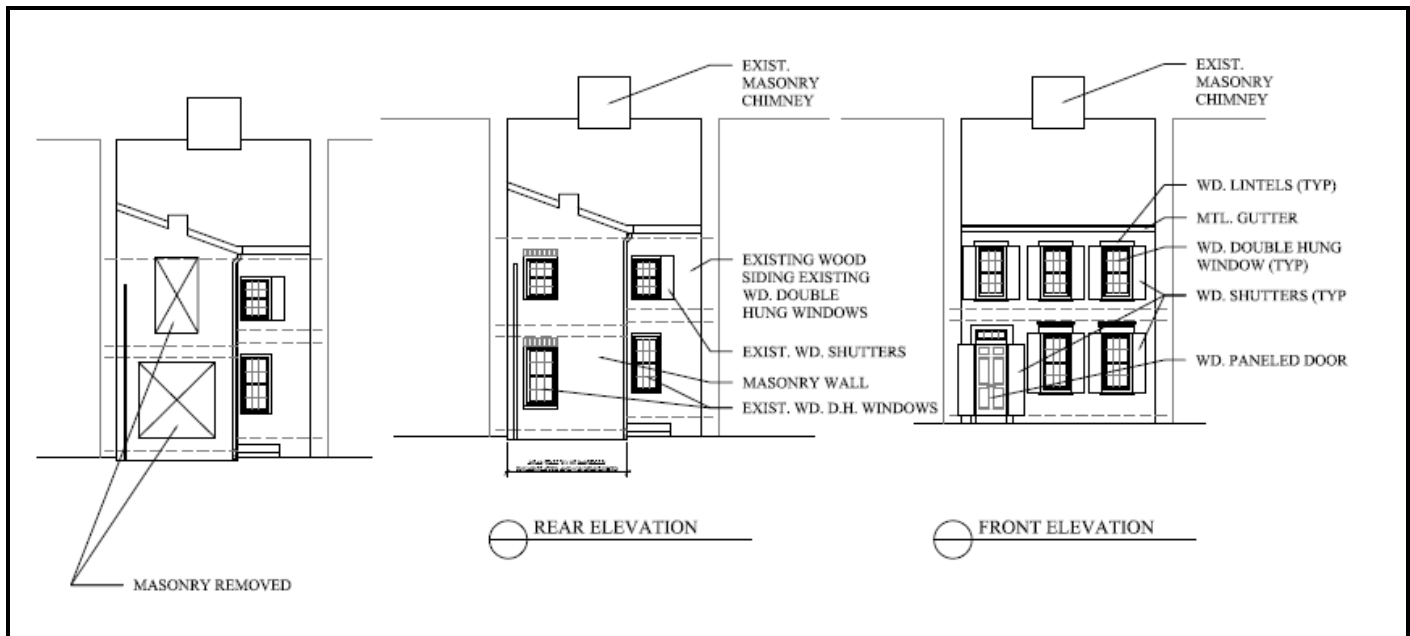


Figure 2: Existing elevations.

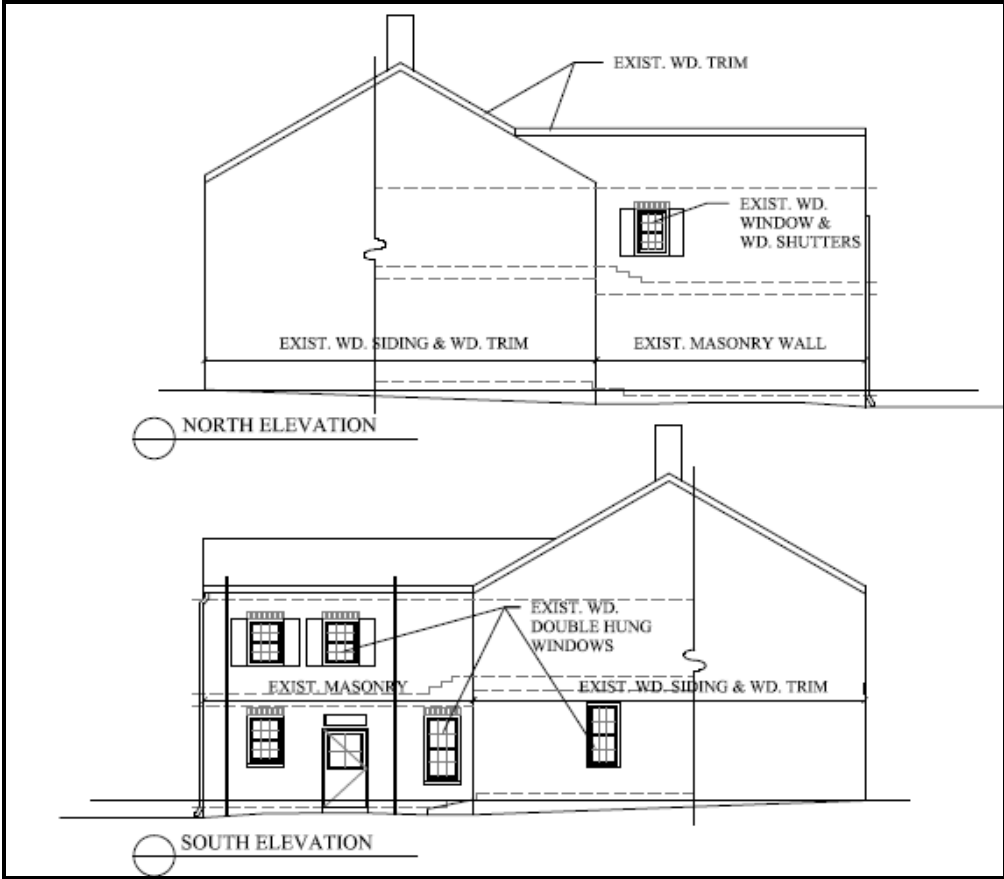


Figure 3: Existing elevations.

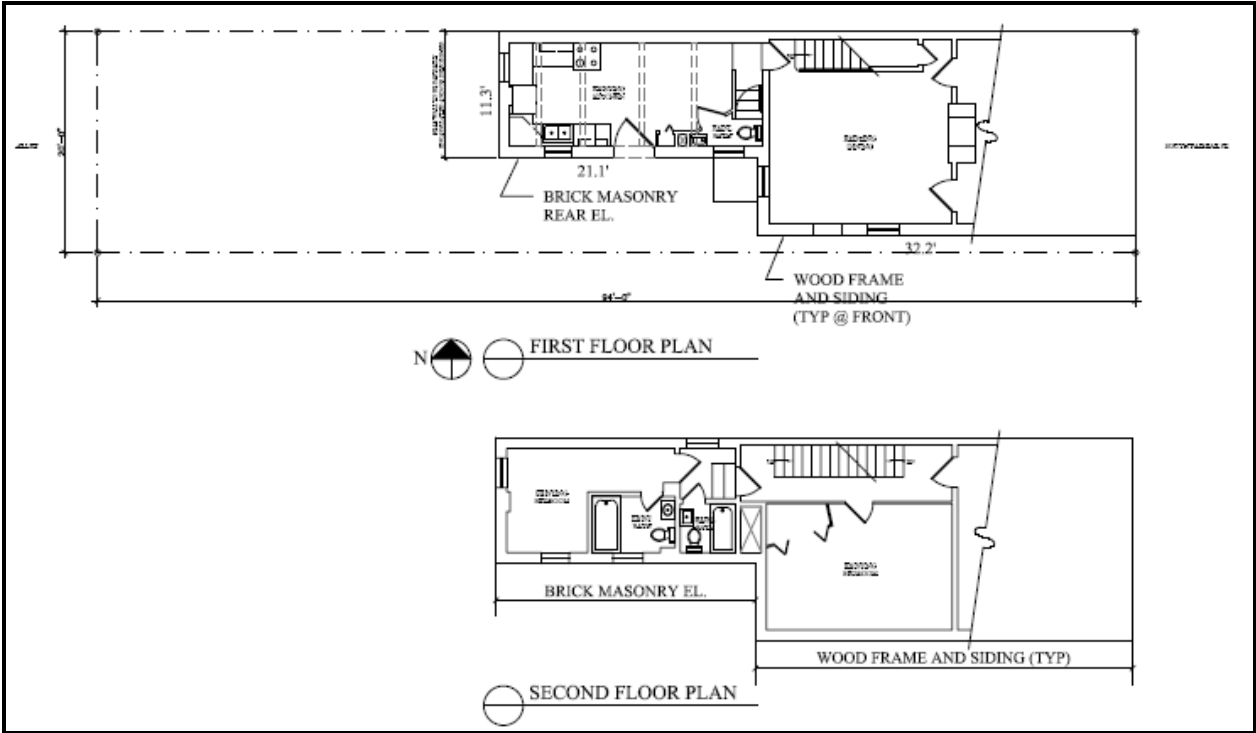


Figure 4: Existing floor plans.