Docket Item # 13
BAR CASE # 2009-0122

BAR Meeting
July 8, 2009

ISSUE: Alterations

APPLICANT: Fred L Brewer

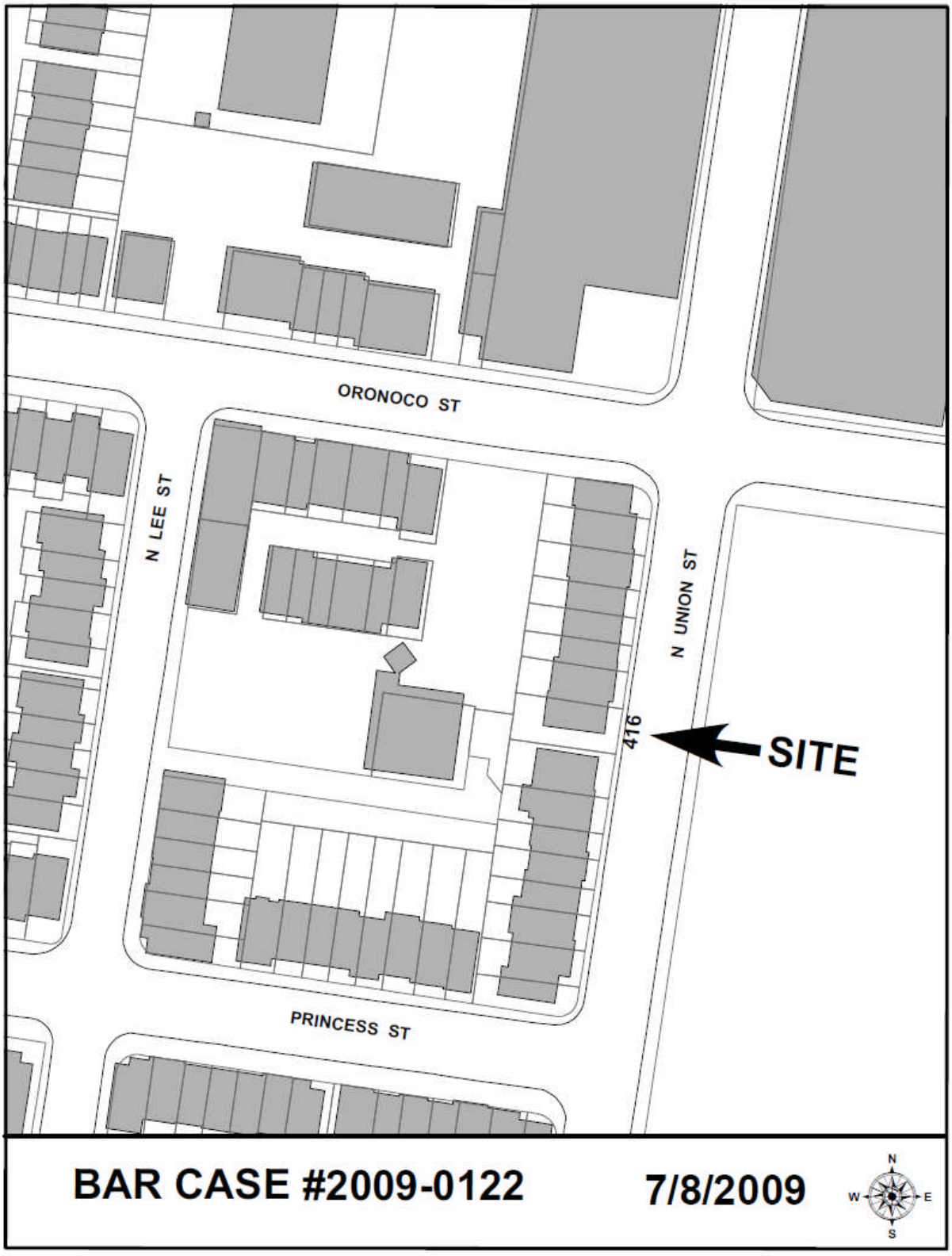
LOCATION: 416 North Union Street

ZONE: RM

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Staff recommends approval of the application with the condition that applicant submit to Staff for final approval a specification sheet for a railing that is constructed of either wood or a wood composite of high-quality, paintable and solid throughout material.

**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.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I. ISSUE:

The applicant is requesting approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness for the installation of a roof access deck at 416 North Union Street. The applicant has indicated the installation of a roof access hatch for the purpose of egress to the roof deck; however it will not be visible. The only portion of the proposed alterations visible from the public-right-of-way will be the railing around the perimeter of the roof deck. The applicant has selected a Fairway composite railing system with square balusters that will measure three feet in height. On the flat portion of the roof where the proposed roof deck is located, the existing membrane roofing material will be removed and replaced with Duradek vinyl pedestrian traffic membrane which is a combination roofing and outdoor flooring material. The installation of the roof deck will require the relocation of two AC units from their existing location on the roof to within the boundaries of the new railing. The Board granted a waiver of HVAC screening for the existing units in 2002 (BAR2002-0295) due to their minimal visibility.

II. HISTORY:

The three-and-one-half-story brick veneer townhouse at 416 North Union Street was constructed in 1974 as part of a complex of Federal revival style townhouses. When originally constructed, this development was not within the boundaries of the Old and Historic Alexandria District. Since that time, the boundaries have been adjusted and the property now falls within the boundaries. As noted above, the Board approved a waiver of HVAC screening in 2002 (BAR2002-0295) which is the only previous BAR case for this property.

III. ANALYSIS:

The proposed alterations comply with Zoning Ordinance requirements.

According to the *Design Guidelines*, "Roof decks should be constructed so that they do not interfere with the historic roofline of the building," and although most of the roofs in this townhouse complex along Union Street appear to be gable designs from the street, they are actually flat for a large portion of the central area of the roof. Many homeowners have adapted the flat portion of their roofs for use as a roof deck due to their optimal location for observation of the Potomac River. These townhouses are *not* historic buildings, but *are* compatible with the overall character of the historic district. As stated in the *Design Guidelines* "decks should be made of materials which are sympathetic to the building materials generally found in the historic districts." In Staff's opinion, the alterations associated with the installation of roof decks have generally had limited visibility from the public right-of-way, and overall have maintained the level of detail and materials appropriate to these buildings. It is for this reason that Staff supports the installation of the roof deck but finds the composite railing chosen by the applicant to be inappropriate and incompatible with the district. While Staff is not opposed to a wood composite railing it should be high-quality, paintable and solid throughout. Therefore staff recommends approval of the application with the condition that applicant submit to Staff for final approval a specification sheet for a railing that is constructed of either wood or a wood composite of high-quality, paintable and solid throughout material.

Most recently the Board approved similar roof decks at 408 North Union Street (BAR2008-0168) and 424 North Union Street (BAR2003-0105).

IV. STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Staff recommends approval of the application with the condition that applicant submit to Staff for final approval a specification sheet for a railing that is constructed of either wood or a wood composite of high-quality, paintable and solid throughout material.

V. CITY DEPARTMENT COMMENTS

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

Code Administration:

C-1 Where appliances are located ≤ 10' from a roof edge or open side with a drop ^[≥ 24", guards shall be provided (USBC 2801.1)

C-2 Structural calculations are required to verify the ability of the existing roof to support the additional weight of the A/C unit.

C-3 Guardrail structural design and construction must comply with USBC.

C-4 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.

Historic Alexandria:

No comments received.

VI. IMAGES

Figure 1. Photograph of 416 North Union Street

Figure 2. Photograph depicting roof decks of neighboring properties.

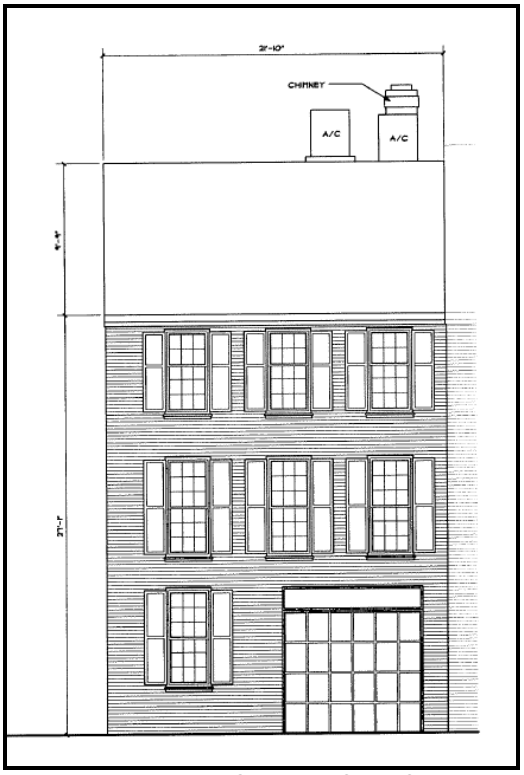

Figure 3. Elevation of existing front facade.

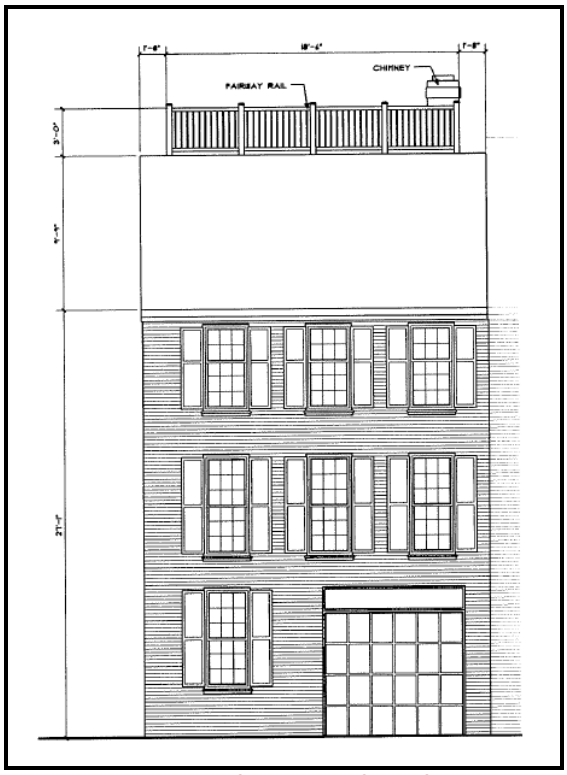

Figure 4. Elevation of proposed front facade.

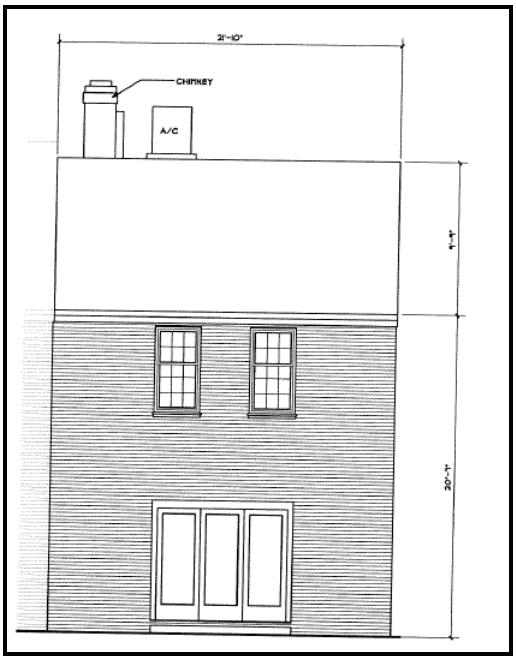

Figure 4. Existing rear elevation.

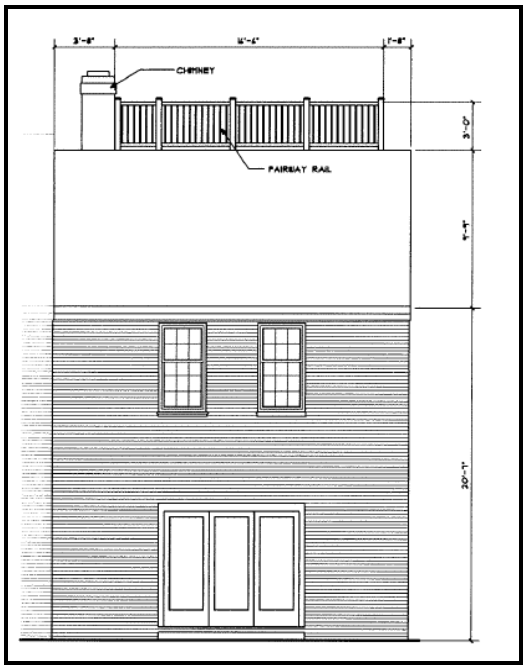

Figure 6. Proposed rear elevation.

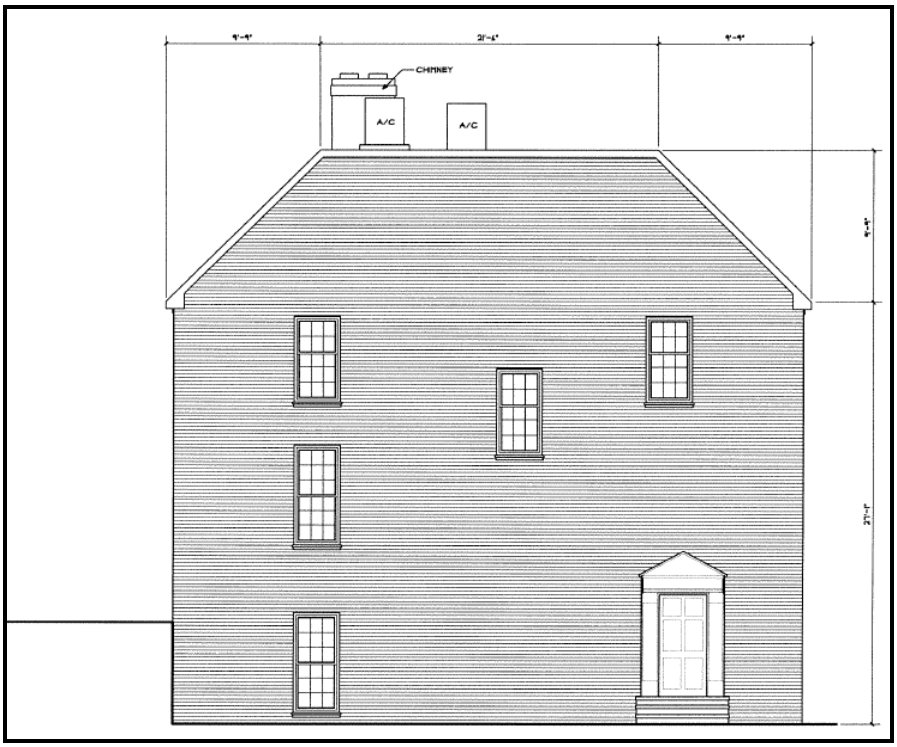

Figure 7. Existing south elevation.

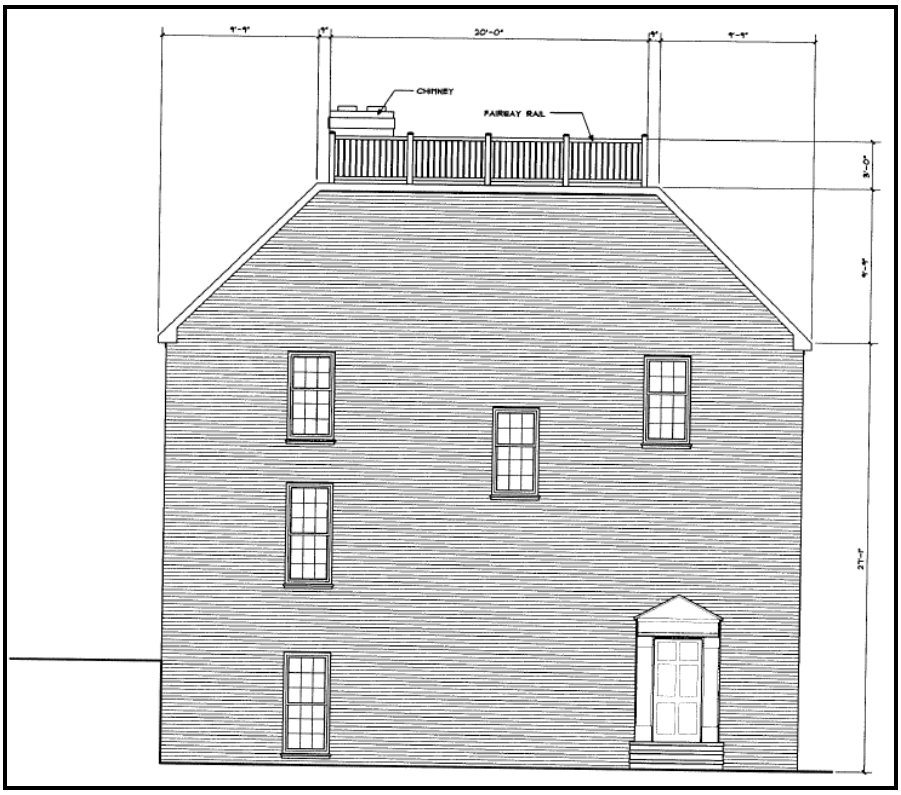

Figure 8. Proposed south elevation.

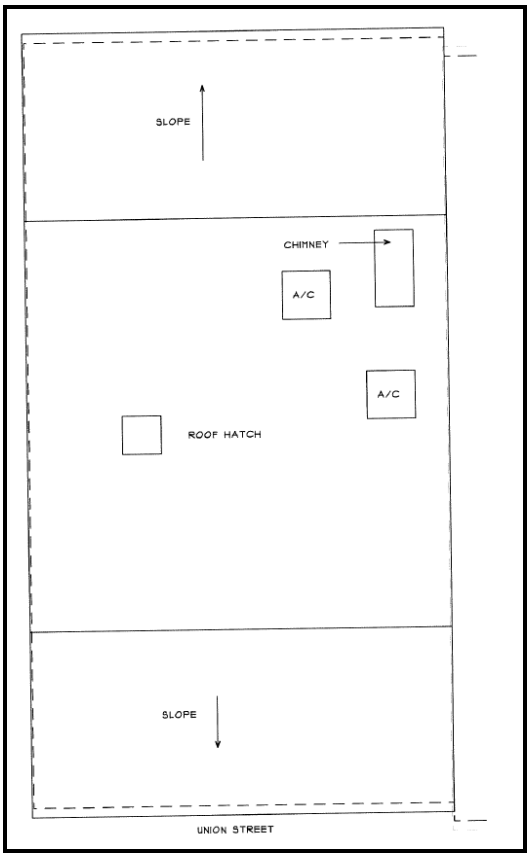

Figure 5. Existing roof plan.

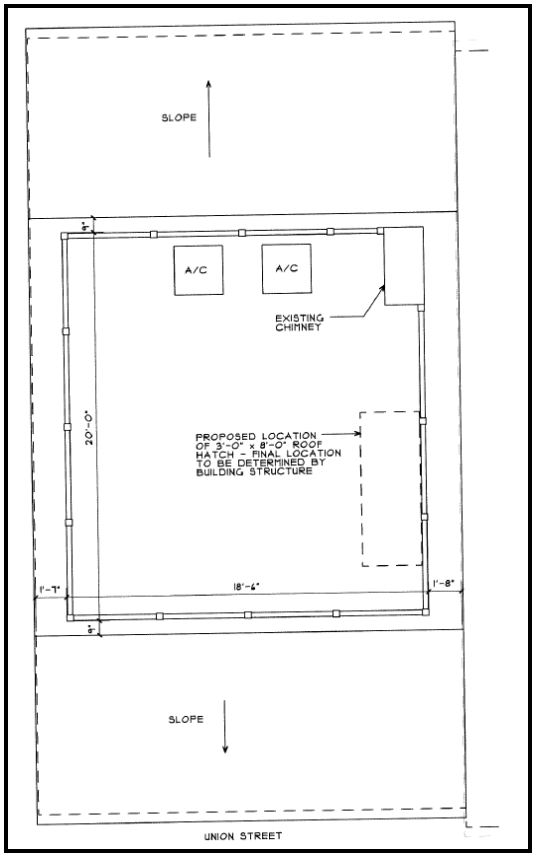

Figure 6. Proposed roof plan.