

Docket Item # 16  
BAR CASE # 2009-0126

BAR Meeting  
July 8, 2009

**ISSUE:** Demolition/Encapsulation  
**APPLICANT:** Cathleen Cotell by Stephanie Dimond  
**LOCATION:** 607 South Fairfax Street  
**ZONE:** RM/Residential

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**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 or artifact collection 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.

**\*\*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 #2009-0126 & 0127 7/8/2009**



**Note:** This docket 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 rear addition at 607 South Fairfax Street.

The existing one-story enclosed rear porch is proposed to be demolished in its entirety. The footprint of the enclosed porch measures approximately 6.25 feet in depth by 15.5 feet in width by 11 feet in height. In addition, the applicant proposes to demolish/encapsulate the second story area of the two-story rear element, the first story having been previously demolished/encapsulated by the enclosure of the porch. The area of demolition/encapsulation for this wall measures approximately 7.5 feet by 15.5 feet (41.25 square feet). In addition, the entire roof of the two-story rear addition (10 feet by 15.5 feet (155 square feet)) and a portion of the rear gable on the main block will be demolished.

The applicant also proposes to demolish the existing flue above the enclosed porch.

**II. HISTORY:**

The two-bay, two-story frame house with a gable roof at 607 South Fairfax Street has a two-story rear portion with a one-story enclosed porch. Ethelyn Cox in *Historic Alexandria Virginia Street by Street* dates the clapboard building to the early nineteenth century. The house appears as early as 1877 on historic maps, where it is shown on the G.M. Hopkins *City Atlas of Alexandria*. The current configuration, with a two-story rear portion with a one-story porch, first appears on the 1902 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map.

Staff located only one BAR application for the subject property and that was in 1985. Records indicate the application was withdrawn.

The alley beside the house 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?

In the opinion of Staff, none of the criteria for a Permit to Demolish/Encapsulate are met. While historic maps indicate that the one-story rear porch was constructed circa 1900, Staff notes that it has been enclosed and significantly altered over the years. In addition, staff believes that the proposed demolition/encapsulation of the second story of the rear wall is generally considered an acceptable amount. The *Design Guidelines* recommend that chimneys and flues “be maintained *in situ* and not removed without a compelling reason and substantial justification.” However, in this circumstance, Staff finds that it would be extremely difficult both to retain the flue in its current configuration and to support demolition of the enclosed porch.

Unobstructed views to the rear of the house where the demolition and encapsulation are proposed will be limited. The area being impacted is minimally visible from South Fairfax Street and Gibbon streets.

Staff recommends approval of the Permit to Demolish/Encapsulate and notes the comments of Alexandria Archeology, recommending that they be incorporated as conditions of approval.

#### **IV. STAFF RECOMMENDATION:**

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

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**V. CITY DEPARTMENT COMMENTS**

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

- 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.

**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:

**Archaeology Finding**

1. Historic Maps indicate that there was a structure on this property at least by the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and Ethelyn Cox in Historic Alexandria, Virginia Street by Street, states that the standing structure dates to “probably early 19<sup>th</sup> C..” (1976:51). The property therefore has the potential to yield archaeological resources which 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.

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Transportation & Environmental Services:

R1. The building permit must be approved and issued prior to the issuance of any permit for demolition. (T&ES)

VI. IMAGES



Figure 1. Front (east) elevation of 607 South Fairfax Street (left).



Figure 2. Rear (west) elevation showing existing one-story enclosed porch to be demolished.



Figure 3. Rear (west) elevation.



Figure 4. Side (south) elevation.



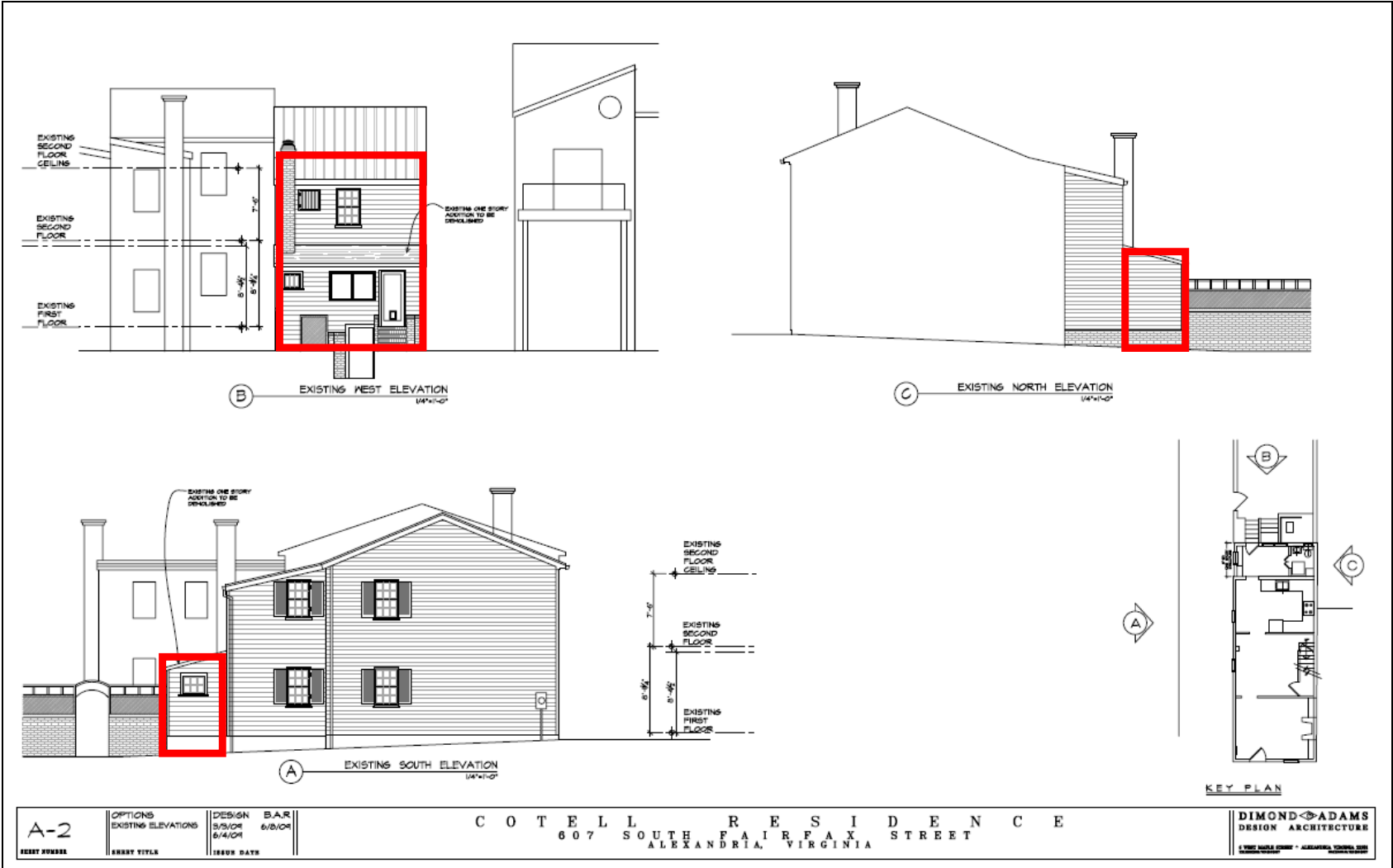


Figure 5. Existing conditions with areas proposed for demolition/encapsulation.