

Docket Item # 6
BAR CASE # 2009-0172

BAR Meeting

ISSUE: Alterations
APPLICANT: St. Paul's Episcopal Church
LOCATION: 228 S. Pitt Street
ZONE: RM/Residential

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

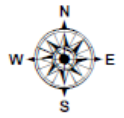
****EXPIRATION OF APPROVALS NOTE:** In accordance with Sections 10-106(B) and 10-206(B) of the Zoning Ordinance, any official Board of Architectural Review approval will expire 12 months from the date of issuance if the work is not commenced and diligently and substantially pursued by the end of that 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 #2009-0172

9/2/2009



I. ISSUE:

The applicant is requesting a Certificate of Appropriateness for alterations at St. Paul's Episcopal Church at 228 S. Pitt Street. The proposed alterations include the following:

- Removal and replacement of the existing three foot tall wrought iron railing located within the arches of the cloister with a new six foot tall wrought iron fence.
- Removal of the existing wrought iron railing that currently stands as a barrier between the walkway and the playground.
- Relocation of the existing security gate to the central arch of the cloister.
- Installation of a new pair of six foot tall steel gates in the archway leading from the porch of the church into the cloister.
- Reconfiguration of the landing leading into Wilmer Hall including the removal of the wrought iron gate and addition of two stairs leading from the landing directly into the walkway.
- Installation of a wrought iron hand rail on the new stairs.
- Replacement of the existing doors into Wilmer Hall with new wood doors that will each have two tempered glass panels.
- Installation of two inch lettering above the doorway and mounted into the brick reading, "Wilmer Hall."
- Re-laying the existing brick walkway.
- Replacement of the existing wooden ceiling with a new T&G wooden ceiling.
- Refurbishment and installation of new "sister" columns on either side of the existing columns on the east side of the cloister.
- Replacement of the existing solid wood doors and transom into Norton Hall with a new single door flanked by two side lights and a glazed fanlight transom. The new door will be solid wood with two lights and the sidelights will be composed of vertical three lights above a wood panel. The door and its surround will be painted to match existing doors on the property.
- Installation of two inch lettering above the doorway and mounted into the transom reading, "Norton Hall."
- Installation of a new light fixture that will be recessed into the soffit above the doorway.

II. HISTORY:

St. Paul's Church was founded in 1809. The Gothic Revival style church building at 228 South Pitt Street was constructed in 1817-1818 according to plans by Benjamin Latrobe. It has been described by Talbot Hamlin as the first Gothic Revival structure in the United States.

Norton Hall, located to the north of the sanctuary, was built in 1899 and expanded and renovated in 1955 and again in 1986. In the early 1930s, the pebble-stone stucco currently on the north wall of the Latrobe sanctuary was applied. Wilmer Hall was constructed at the corner of South Pitt and Duke Streets in 1955 according to plans by Delos H. Smith. Damascus House, located at 413 Duke Street, a two story brick building with a third story in the mansard, attained its present appearance circa 1905.

On February 10, 1955, the Board of Architectural Review approved the demolition of an unnamed building and the old rectory at 417 Duke Street to allow for the construction of Wilmer Hall and approved the design for the new educational building as well as the design for the arcade and courtyard between Wilmer and the sanctuary and renovations to Norton Hall. Past reviews by the Board for the St. Paul's property concern signs and a fence (sign, 3/20/1974; sign, BAR Case #89-137, 8/9/1989; fence, BAR Case #86-197, 11/19/1986). The South Pitt Street facade was resurfaced and exterior accessibility modifications were approved by the Board in 1997 (BAR Case #97-0121, 6/18/1997).

More recently, in 1996 as part of a major renovation, the Board approved a request for a fence and access ramp for the parish hall and sanctuary (BAR Case #96-0163, 9/18/1996). This ramp was not constructed and an alternative ramp was approved by the Board in 1997 (BAR Case #97-0121, 6/18/1997). Alterations to the transom above the main entry doors to the sanctuary were also approved in 1996 (BAR Case #96-0223, 10/02/1996).

On June 7, 2006, the Board approved a Permit to Demolish/Encapsulate and a Certificate of Appropriateness for an addition and alterations to Wilmer Hall and the adjacent Damascus House, facing Duke Street (BAR Case #s 2006-0052 and 2006-0053).

On January 20, 2007, the Board approved a Permit to Demolish/Encapsulate and a Certificate of Appropriateness for alterations to enclose an exterior light well located between the main sanctuary and Norton Hall. (BAR Case #'s 2006-0213 and 2006-0214).

III. ANALYSIS:

The proposed alterations comply with zoning ordinance requirements.

Cloister

As stated by the architect, Thomas L. Kerns FAIA, "the goal of the project is to improve the security and sense of welcome for the existing buildings that flank St. Paul's Episcopal Church." The majority of the work revolves around the cloister located to the south of the church which was constructed in 1955. The cloister is minimally visible to the streetscape due to an existing mature hedge which will mostly obscure from view the new six foot wrought iron fence and security gate. The applicant has indicated that the intention of the new columns is to add visual mass and weight and to improve their function of dividing the playground space from the walkway of the cloister. According to the *Design Guidelines*, "ornamental iron or metal fences and gates are appropriate for late 19th and early 20th century Victorian structures." Staff finds the new steel gate dividing the porch and the cloister to be appropriate both aesthetically and in massing.

Wilmer Hall

The proposed reconfiguration of the landing leading into Wilmer Hall was designed to make the entrance into the hall visually streamlined and pedestrian friendly. Staff finds the reconfiguration to be compatible with the building. Both the new door leading into Wilmer Hall and the lettering above are reflective of the entry way and lettering on the

Duke Street elevation. The applicant has indicated that the new lettering for both Wilmer Hall and Norton Hall will be identical in material and style to the lettering on the Duke Street elevation. The replacement of the wood ceiling and re-laying of the brick walkway are both necessary maintenance improvements.

Norton Hall

In 1996, the Board approved replacement of all of the plywood transoms along the front entrances into the main church sanctuary with glass transoms replicating historic glass transoms with gothic mullions that Staff found evidence to support were originally on the building. (BAR96-0223) It is in this same manner that the applicant has proposed replacement of the doorway leading into Norton Hall with a single door, side lights and fanlight transom. As stated in the *Design Guidelines*, “Exterior doors and surrounding details should complement the architecture of the structure and not detract away from it.” It is the opinion of Staff that the proposed doorway is stylistically compatible with a similar doorway on the Duke Street elevation of the property in addition to complementing the 1996 transom alterations. The proposed light above the Norton Hall door will be recessed into the soffit.

In Staff’s opinion, the proposed alterations are relatively minor, compatible and appropriate to this important building. The alterations do not detract from its integrity yet allow the Church to improve security and a sense of connection between the various components of the church complex.

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

STAFF:

Meredith Kizer, Historic Preservation Planner, Planning & Zoning
Lee Webb, Historic Preservation Manager, Planning & Zoning

V. CITY DEPARTMENT COMMENTS

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

Code Administration:

- C- Building Code Analysis: The following minimum building code data is required on the drawings: a) use group, b) number of stories, and c) construction type.

- C- Additions and alterations to the existing structure and/or installation and/or altering of equipment therein requires a building permit (USBC 108.1). Five sets of plans, bearing the signature and seal of a design professional registered in the Commonwealth of Virginia, must accompany the written application (USBC 109.1).

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

Historic Alexandria:

No comments received.

VI. IMAGES

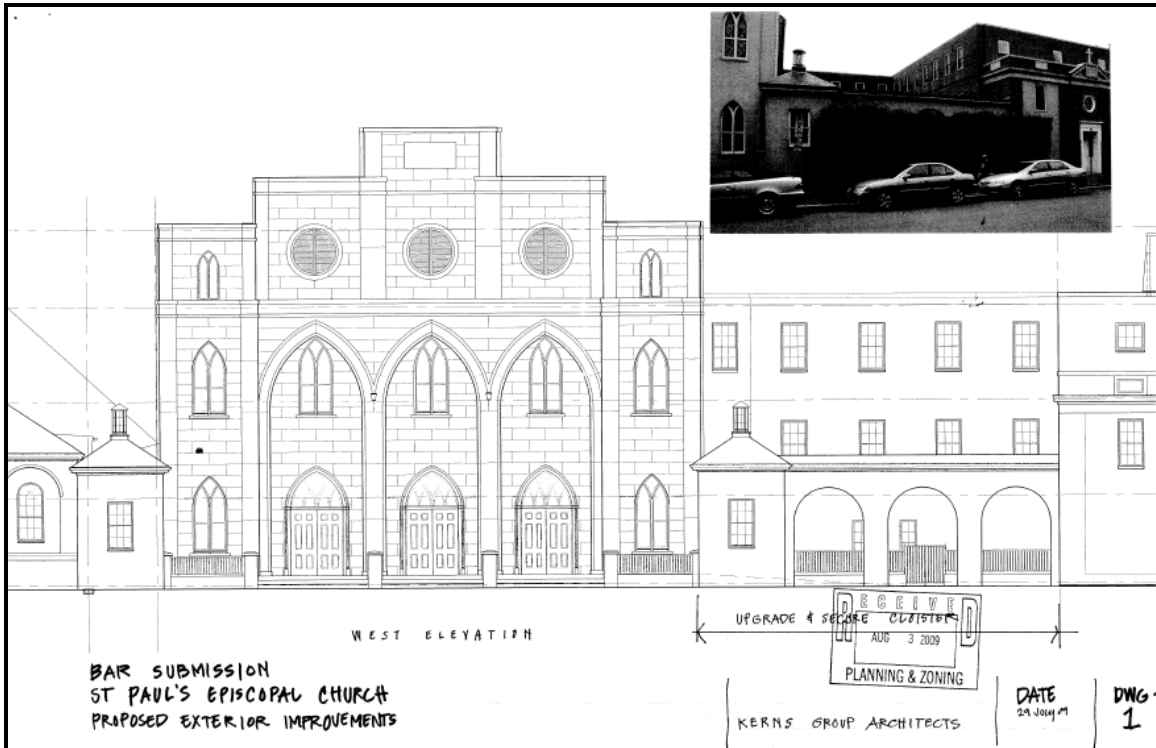


Figure 1. Pitt Street Elevation.

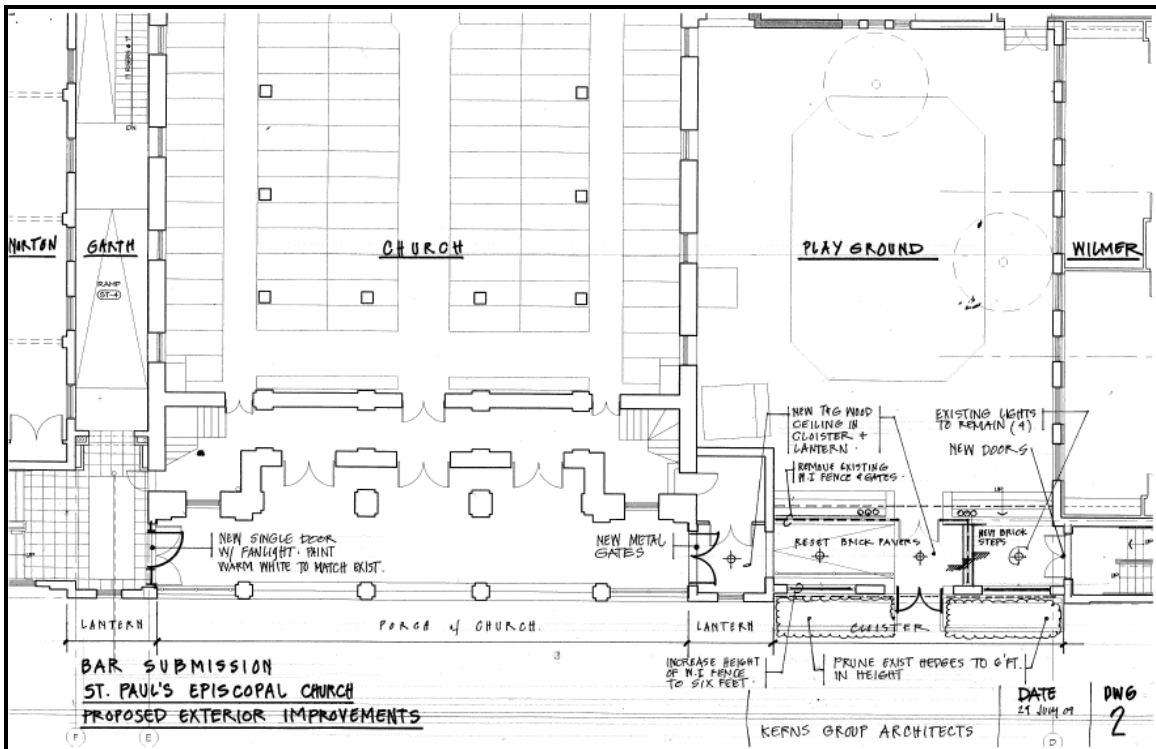


Figure 2. Floor plan of proposed alterations.

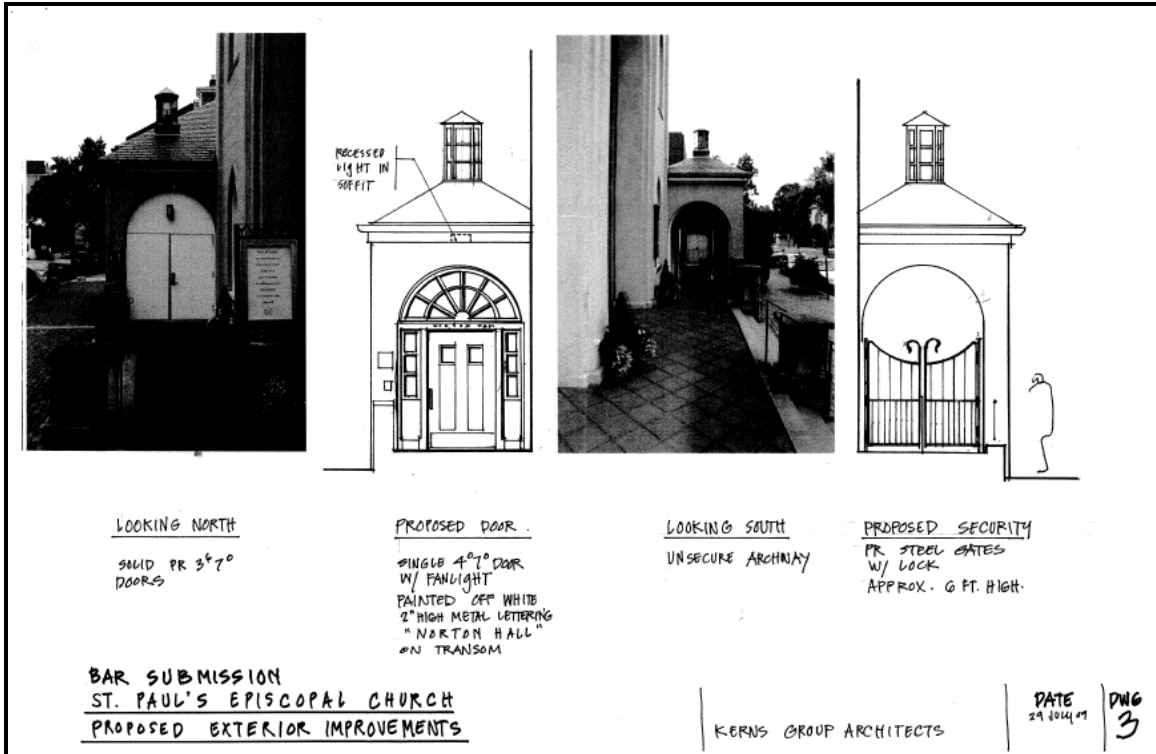


Figure 3. Proposed Norton Hall doorway & cloister entry gate.

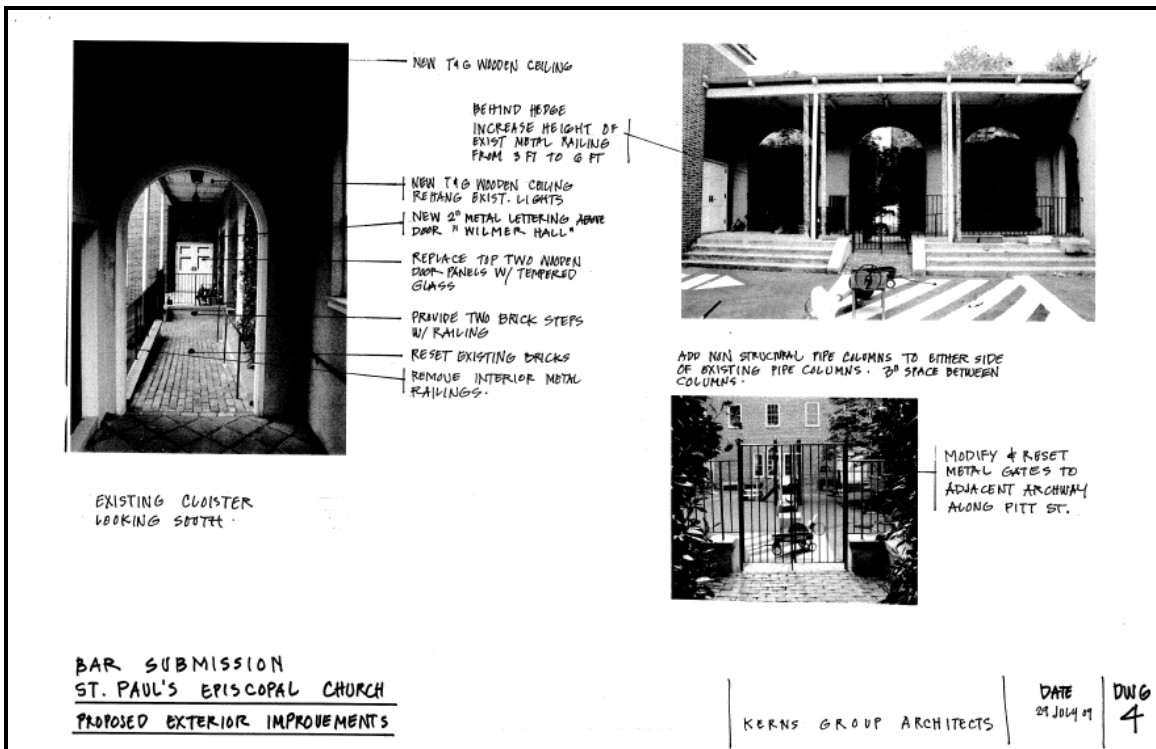


Figure 4. Detail of proposed iron work and columns.

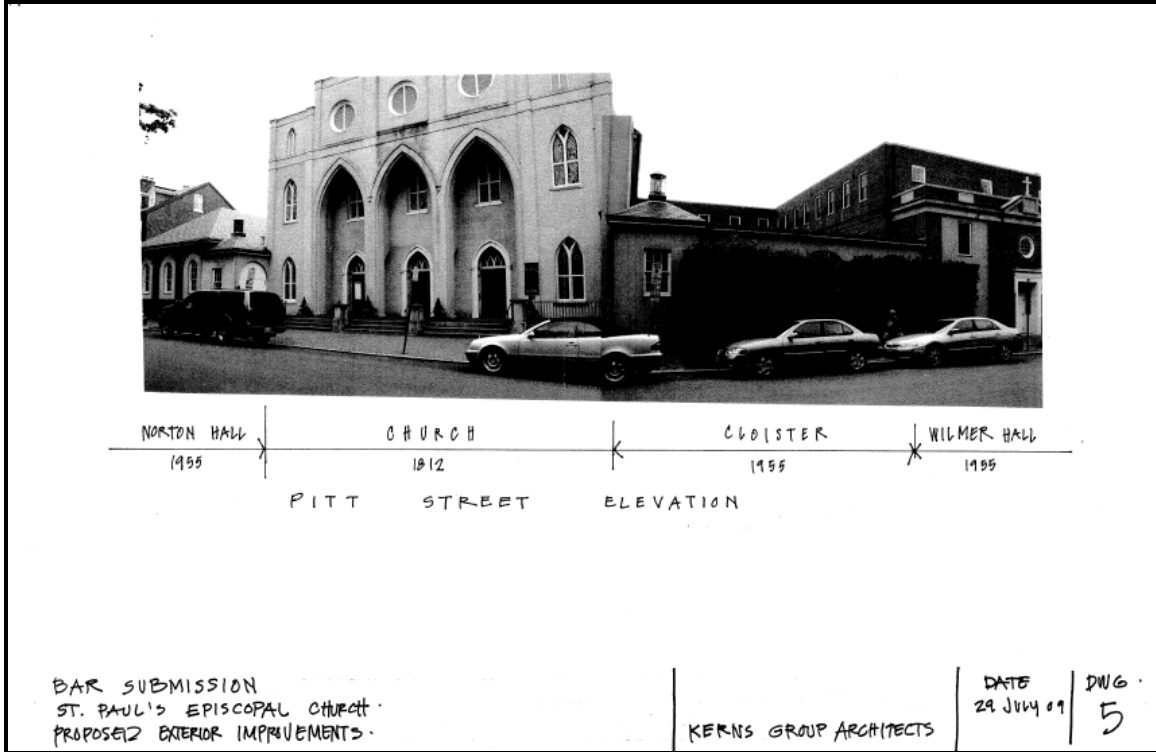


Figure 5. Timeline of the construction of St. Pauls.



Figure 6. Photograph of Duke Street elevation.