

Docket Item # 10
BAR CASE # 2009-0207

BAR Meeting
October 7, 2009

ISSUE: Alterations
APPLICANT: Mr. and Mrs. B. Patrick Costello, Jr.
LOCATION: 807 South Royal Street
ZONE: RM / Residential

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Staff recommends denial of the application.

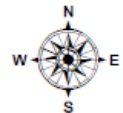
****EXPIRATION OF APPROVALS NOTE:** In accordance with Sections 10-106(B) and 10-206(B) of the Zoning Ordinance, any official Board of Architectural Review approval will expire 12 months from the date of issuance if the work is not commenced and diligently and substantially pursued by the end of that 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, 703-746-4200 for further information.



BAR CASE #2009-0207

10/7/2009



I. ISSUE:

The applicant is requesting approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness for replacement windows on the front (east) elevation of 807 South Royal Street. The existing windows appear to be the original windows and are true divided light, singled-glazed wood windows. There are currently aluminum storm windows as well. The proposed replacement windows are simulated divided light, double-glazed wood windows manufactured by Pella. They are proposed to match the existing light configuration which includes two six-over-six windows and one nine-over-nine window. The proposed windows will have a 7/8 inch muntin with an interior spacer bar and exterior applied muntins.

II. HISTORY:

807 South Royal Street is a two-story, two-bay brick townhouse that was part of the original construction of the Yates Garden subdivision in 1941. Yates Garden, a multi-block townhouse development with a Colonial Revival design vocabulary, was developed by Edward Carr beginning in 1939, however, complete build out of the subdivision was not completed until the early 1960s.

Staff could not locate any recent BAR approvals for this property.

III. ANALYSIS:

The proposed window replacement complies with zoning ordinance requirements.

The *Design Guidelines* clearly state that “a central tenet of the philosophy of historic preservation is that original historic materials should be retained and repaired rather than replaced. An informed and careful analysis of the existing condition should be made before any decision to replace historic materials is made. It is often cheaper to keep historic materials and repair them rather than replace an item with new material. Storm windows or new weatherstripping will make a historic sash quite efficient without replacement.” The *Guidelines* also state that single-glazed, true divided light windows with interior storm sash are the preferred replacement window type. While interior storm windows are preferred, exterior storm windows are also generally appropriate. In addition, the *Guidelines* note that “windows with fixed or applied muntins have been approved for the rear elevation of a structure which has minimal visibility from a public right of way.”

In reviewing the submitted application, Staff finds no convincing reason why the original windows cannot be retained and repaired. The photographs indicate that the existing windows are operable and in good condition and a site visit by Staff confirmed this condition. Staff recommends that the existing windows be repaired and retained and that the applicant consider new storm windows as necessary. Many studies have shown that a wood window in good condition fitted with a storm window can be as energy efficient as the more expensive replacement window, without the loss of historic fabric. An energy audit is often necessary to determine the best course of action for energy efficiency. Many homeowners mistakenly believe that a wholesale window replacement will improve energy efficiency when in reality many smaller, less expensive modifications, such as new weatherstripping/caulking, new insulation, and repairs to existing windows and storms, can achieve greater gains in energy efficiency at much less cost. In addition, historic windows were made using higher quality materials such as

first-growth wood, and constructed so that their longevity would be insured through routine maintenance such as reglazing, replacing sash cords and weatherstripping. New 'maintenance-free' windows cannot, by definition, be repaired, and will likely begin a replacement cycle that requires new windows every 20 years or so.

While several townhouses in Yates Garden have replacement windows, Staff reminds the Board that some were not necessarily approved by the Board. Others may have been approved in the past, but would not necessarily be approved today. The retention of historic windows is of on-going concern to both the Board and BAR Staff, so much so, that in 2008 the Board added language to the window policy that states that no replacement of original windows dating before 1860 should occur. Recognizing that original windows are one of the best character-defining features of a building, Staff recommends that replacement windows only be approved when the existing historic windows are beyond repair, which is not the case at 807 South Royal Street.

The rear elevation is not visible from the public right-of-way and therefore not within the Board's purview.

IV. STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Staff recommends denial of the application.

V. CITY DEPARTMENT COMMENTS

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

Code Administration:

No comment.

Historic Alexandria:

No comments received.

VI. IMAGES



Figure 1. Front (east) elevation of 807 South Royal Street.



Figure 2. Detail of window proposed for replacement.



Figure 3. Interior view of window proposed for replacement on first story.



Figure 4. Interior view of window proposed for replacement on second story.



Figure 5. Interior view of window proposed for replacement on second story.

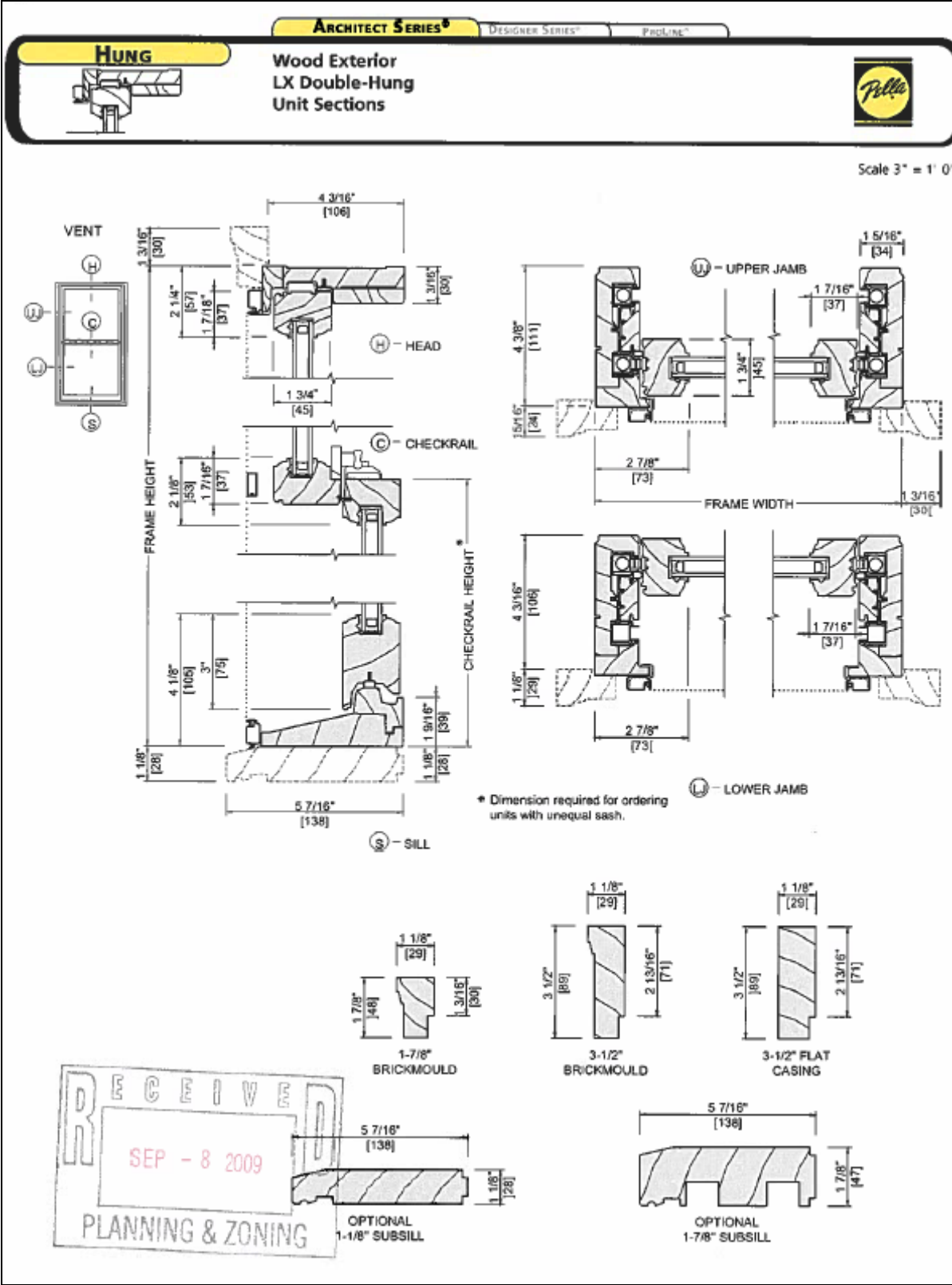


Figure 6. Specifications for proposed replacement windows.

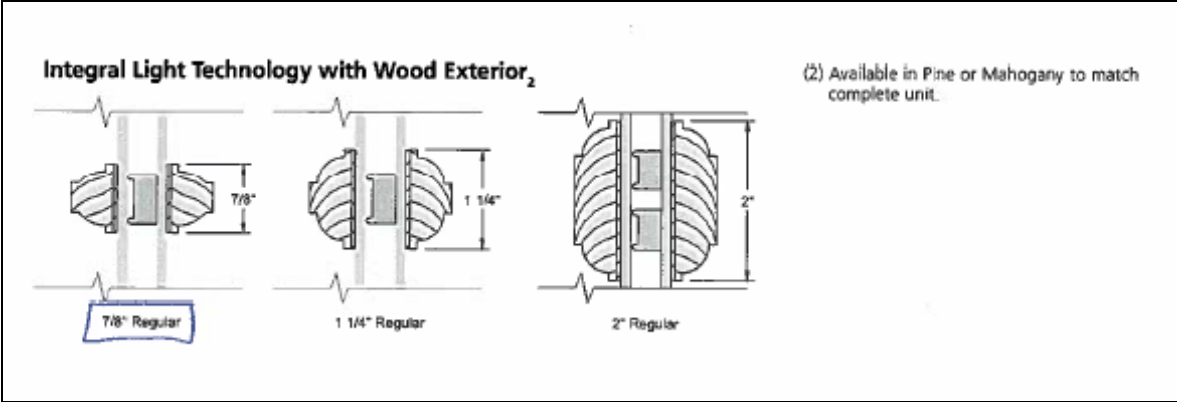


Figure 7. Detail of simulated divided light.