

Docket Item # 6
BAR CASE #2009-0236

BAR Meeting
November 4, 2009

ISSUE: Permit to Demolish/Encapsulate

APPLICANT: Robert Bentley Adams & Assoc. (Scot McBroom) for Jesus Medrano and Bonnie Rideout

LOCATION: 5 Potomac Court

ZONE: RM/Residential

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Staff recommends approval of the application with the following conditions:

1. *The applicant/developer shall call Alexandria Archaeology (703/838-4399) two weeks before the starting date of any ground disturbance so that an inspection schedule for city archaeologists can be arranged.
2. *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.
3. *The applicant/developer shall not allow any metal detection to be conducted on the property, unless authorized by Alexandria Archaeology.
4. 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 Erosion and Sediment Control, Grading, and Sheeting and Shoring) so that on-site contractors are aware of the requirements. Additional statements to be included on the Final Site Plan will be determined in consultation with Alexandria Archaeology.

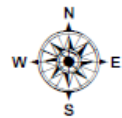
*EXPIRATION OF APPROVALS NOTE: In accordance with Sections 10-106(B) and 10-206(B) of the Zoning Ordinance, any official Board of Architectural Review approval will expire 12 months from the date of issuance if the work is not commenced and diligently and substantially pursued by the end of that 12-month period. In the case for a certificate or permit for a project that requires a development special use permit or site plan under section 11-400 of the zoning ordinance, the period of validity shall be coincident with the validity of the development special use permit or site plan as determined pursuant to section 11-418 of the ordinance.

**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 #2009-0236, 0237

11/4/2009



NOTE: This docket item requires a roll call vote.

I. ISSUE:

The applicant is requesting reapproval of a Permit to Demolish for a number of different areas of demolition and capsulation at 5 Potomac Court, part of a comprehensive renovation and addition project.

A similar application was originally considered and approved by the Board in 2006 (BAR Case #2006-00123, 1/3/2007) but construction was not undertaken within the required 12 month period. The applicant applied for reapproval of previously approved plans in 2008 (BAR Case #2008-0007, 2/6/2008). Again, construction was not undertaken within the required 12 month period. The applicant is returning to request approval of many of the same items as well as an expanded scope of work.

The two story brick clad house at 5 Potomac Court rests on a raised basement. The ground slopes down to the south leaving the basement or ground level exposed at the rear of the house. The sections of the house to be demolished and capsulated include:

North (front) elevation:

- Demolition of portions of the existing front steps for altered steps.

West (side) elevation:

- Demolition of portions of the west wall on the first and second levels for three new window openings.
- Demolition of portions of the west wall on the first and ground levels for two new door openings.
- Encapsulation of a small portion of the west wall at the south end on the ground level for a new screened porch.

South (rear) elevation:

- Demolition of most of rear wall from ground to eaves (approximately 13 feet 4 inches feet wide by 30 feet high) and capsulation with new three story bay window. The rear wall currently has a variety of windows and doors at each level.
- Demolition of portion of roof approximately 6 feet 8 inches by 17 feet for a new shed dormer.

The total amount of proposed demolition/encapsulation is 700 square feet.

No demolition or encapsulation is proposed for the east side elevation. The house at 5 Potomac Court is visible from Potomac Court, Windmill Hill Park and Union Street.

II. HISTORY:

5 Potomac Court is a two story brick end unit townhouse dating from 1967. The Board approved the development of six attached and semi-attached townhouses on Potomac Court on June 8, 1966. This property is one of several facing on Potomac Court whose rear yards overlook Union Street at the eastern end of the Wilkes Street Railroad Tunnel.

Staff did not locate any BAR reviews for 5 Potomac Court subsequent to the original 1966 approval for the development.

The Board previously has approved demolition/capsulation for a number of other properties on Potomac Court. In 2004, the Board approved a Permit to Demolish and Certificate of Appropriateness for an addition at the ground level and a new screened porch at the first floor at the rear of 6 Potomac Court (BAR Case #s 2004-0232 & 0233, 11/3/2004). In the same year, the Board also approved a demolition permit and certificate of appropriateness for a front dormer and three story bay on the south side of 8 Potomac Court (BAR Case #'s 2004-0011 & 0012, 2/18/2004). In 2002, the Board approved a Permit to Demolish and a Certificate of Appropriateness for a dormer on the rear of 9 Potomac Court (BAR Case #'s 2002-0222 & 0223, 9/4/2002).

The Board has twice approved a Permit to Demolish/Encapsulate at 5 Potomac Court, first in 2006 (BAR Case #2006-00123, 1/3/2007) and then in 2008 (BAR Case #2008-0007, 2/6/2008). Both times the approval expired before work was initiated.

III. ANALYSIS:

In considering a Permit to Demolish, 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 shrine?
- (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 believes none of the above criteria are applicable in this case. The house dates to the last half of the twentieth century and possesses no special architectural or historical significance. In addition, the most substantial demolition and capsulation will occur at the rear of the house.

Staff notes the conditions from Alexandria Archaeology.

IV. STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends approval of the application with the following conditions:

1. *The applicant/developer shall call Alexandria Archaeology (703/838-4399) two weeks before the starting date of any ground disturbance so that an inspection schedule for city archaeologists can be arranged.
2. *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.
3. *The applicant/developer shall not allow any metal detection to be conducted on the property, unless authorized by Alexandria Archaeology.
4. 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 Erosion and Sediment Control, Grading, and Sheeting and Shoring) so that on-site contractors are aware of the requirements. Additional statements to be included on the Final Site Plan will be determined in consultation with Alexandria Archaeology.

STAFF:

Catherine Miliaras, Historic Preservation Planner, Planning & Zoning
Stephen Milone, Division Chief, Land Use Services

V. CITY DEPARTMENT COMMENTS

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

Code Enforcement:

- 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.

Historic Alexandria:

No comments received.

Alexandria Archaeology:

Archaeology

F-1 This property has potential to yield archaeological resources that could provide insight into domestic activities in the early 19th century. The 1810 tax records indicate that houses were present on a lot that stretched from Union to Lee Street, parallel to Wilkes on this block. The 1877 G.M. Hopkins atlas shows several structures on the property. There may also be some potential for archaeological evidence of waterfront/industrial activities of the late 18th and early 19th centuries. The east side of Union Street across from this block was the site of Roberdeau's wharf in the 18th century, and Roberdeau's distillery was located on the block at the corner of Union and Wolfe streets.

F-2 If this project is a federal undertaking or involves the use of any federal funding, the applicant shall comply with federal preservation laws, in particular Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966. The applicant will coordinate with the Virginia Department of Historic Resources and the federal agency involved in the project, as well as with Alexandria Archaeology.

Conditions

R-1 *The applicant/developer shall call Alexandria Archaeology (703/838-4399) two weeks before the starting date of any ground disturbance so that an inspection schedule for city archaeologists can be arranged.

R-2 *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-3 *The applicant/developer shall not allow any metal detection to be conducted on the property, unless authorized by Alexandria Archaeology.

R-4 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 Erosion and Sediment Control, Grading, and Sheeting and Shoring) so that on-site contractors are aware of the requirements. Additional statements to be included on the Final Site Plan will be determined in consultation with Alexandria Archaeology.

Transportation and Environmental Services:

RECOMMENDATIONS

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

VI. IMAGES:



Figure 1. Existing north (front) elevation.



Figure 2. Existing west (side) elevation.



Figure 3. Existing south (rear) elevation.



Figure 4. View from Windmill Hill Park.

