

Docket Item # 4  
BAR CASE #2009-0295

BAR Meeting  
April 7, 2010

**ISSUE:** Alterations  
**APPLICANT:** Duncan Blair for Patrick Street Associates, LLC  
**LOCATION:** 211 North Patrick Street  
**ZONE:** RB/Residential

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**CITY COUNCIL ACTION MARCH 13, 2010: Remanded back to BAR.**

**BOARD ACTION JANUARY 6, 2010: Denied in part and approved in part, 4-3.**

On a motion by Dr. Fitzgerald, seconded by Mr. Spencer, the Board voted to deny portions of the application and approve portions of the application, in accordance with the staff recommendations. The Board denied the Certificate of Appropriateness to remove the existing slate roof and install a new standing seam metal roof and approved the use of authentic slate shingles in the same dimensions, color and pattern to match the existing historic roof to the extent possible. The vote on the motion was 4-3, with Chairman Hulfish, Mr. Smeallie, and Mr. Keleher voting in opposition.

**REASON:** The Board generally agreed with the Staff analysis and found the use of a different replacement roofing material to be inappropriate.

**SPEAKERS:** Duncan Blair, attorney for the applicant, represented the application.  
Craig Miller, one of the applicants, spoke in support of the application.  
John Hynan, representing the Historic Alexandria Foundation, expressed concerns about the application and recommended denial.  
Murney Keleher expressed concerns about the type of metal proposed for the replacement roof, stating that tin was more appropriate than aluminum.

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:** Staff recommends denial of the Certificate of Appropriateness to remove the existing slate roof and install a new standing seam metal roof and approval of authentic slate shingles in the same dimensions, color and pattern to match the existing historic roof to the extent possible.

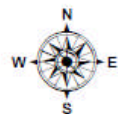
\*EXPIRATION OF APPROVALS NOTE: In accordance with Sections 10-106(B) and 10-206(B) of the Zoning Ordinance, any official Board of Architectural Review approval will expire 12 months from the date of BAR approval if the work is not commenced and diligently and substantially pursued by the end of that 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 #2009-0295**

**1/6/2010**



**I. ISSUE:**

The applicant is requesting approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness for alterations at 211 North Patrick Street. The Board previously approved removal of the existing slate. The applicant now proposes to replace the existing historic slate roof with a new Carlisle Eco Star synthetic slate roof to generally match the dark gray color of the existing slate.

The applicant has provided a sample of the synthetic slate shingles which will be available at the public hearing.

**II. UPDATE**

The applicant appealed the BAR's January 6, 2010 denial of replacement of the original slate roof with a prefinished standing seam aluminum roof to City Council on March 13, 2010. At the Council hearing, the applicant proposed the use of synthetic slate as an alternative to the metal roofing. The applicant noted that the synthetic material is half the weight of genuine slate, is made of recycled materials, has already been approved for use on structures throughout the historic district, and has the same visual appearance as genuine slate.

Because synthetic slate shingles had not previously been presented to the Board for consideration, City Council remanded the case back to the BAR. City Council also directed staff to work with the Boards of Architectural Review over the next several months to develop policies to clarify for the public where it was appropriate to use modern and environmentally sustainable materials on structures in the historic districts.

Staff has attached the report given to City Council for the appeal, which contains a copy of the original BAR staff report as reference.

**III. ANALYSIS**

While the *Design Guidelines* discuss the repair of existing slate roofs and strongly encourage their retention, they do not directly address appropriate replacement materials when the slate has reached the end of its useful life – as it has here. It has been the general practice of the Board since the *Guidelines* were published in 1993 that existing slate roofs, whether on historic or modern buildings, must be replaced with genuine slate. Where the original roof material was not known, and the existing roofing was a modern but lower quality material, such as composition shingles, any replacement roofing material was appropriate that had been commercially available during the original period of construction of the building. Thus, as example, if the subject ca. 1890 building had an existing composition roof, then wood shingles, standing seam metal, or genuine slate would all be appropriate replacements.

Unfortunately, this practice has not been written and adopted as a policy of the Board and made clear to the public, the industry or to City Council. Staff will, therefore, work with the Board to clarify the appropriate use of modern materials over the next few months.

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The Board has approved the use of some other substitute materials, such as Hardiplank, on the rear of a building or materials such as Fypon or glass fiber reinforced concrete (GFRC) for cornices where the material was elevated and unable to be touched by a pedestrian on the sidewalk. These products were generally approved when the original material was missing or unknown. The National Park Service Preservation Brief #16 *The Use of Substitute Materials on Historic Building Exteriors*, does state that “In limited circumstances substitute materials that imitate historic materials may be used if the appearance and properties of the historic materials can be matched closely and no damage to the remaining historic fabric will result.” (p.1)

Staff strongly prefers the use of synthetic slate to the previously proposed standing seam aluminum roof because it does a much better job of emulating the texture and color of the original slate. However, while Staff acknowledges that the appearance of the proposed synthetic slate has a convincing texture and depth, it has not been on the market for long enough to tell how it will age. The first generation of fiberglass based synthetic slate, approved several times in the early 1990s for use on modern structures in the historic district, became brittle and failed with long term exposure to ultraviolet and is no longer available. The proposed material from the Carlisle Roofing Company is made of recycled rubber and is flexible. The manufacturer is well known in the industry and has been in business for many years. As previously noted, Staff has no objection to use of this product on modern buildings and the Board has approved its use numerous times in the past.

However, the recommendation of Staff continues to be that the only appropriate material to replace genuine slate on this highly visible and historic Queen Anne structure is genuine slate.

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

Staff recommends denial of the Certificate of Appropriateness to install a new synthetic slate roof and approval of authentic slate shingles in the same dimensions, color and pattern to match the existing historic roof to the extent possible.

#### **STAFF**

Al Cox, FAIA, Historic Preservation Manager, Planning & Zoning

**Attachment:** City Council appeal staff report of 3/13/10

**V. CITY DEPARTMENT COMMENTS**

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

Code Administration:

C-1 Roof drainage systems must be installed so as neither to impact upon, nor cause erosion/damage to adjacent property.

Office of Historic Alexandria:

S- 1 Repair/replace deteriorated slate roof with authentic slate of similar dimensions and color