

Docket Item # 7 & 8  
BAR CASE # 2010-0061/0062

BAR Meeting  
May 5, 2010

**ISSUE:** Permit to Encapsulate & Addition

**APPLICANT:** George and Karen Zent

**LOCATION:** 907 South Saint Asaph Street

**ZONE:** RM/Residential

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**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:** Staff is recommending approval of the application for a Certificate of Appropriateness with the following conditions:

1. That all of the wood surfaces on the proposed wood entry staircase be painted or stained; and,
2. That the new windows be simulated, divided light, wood composite windows, which contain 7/8" muntins that are permanently bonded to the interior and exterior of the insulating glass simulating a divided light appearance, with manufacturer specification cut sheets to be submitted to Staff for review and approval prior to filing for a building permit.

**\*\*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 #2010-0061, 0062 5/5/2010**



**Note:** Staff coupled the reports for BAR #2010-0061 (Permit to Demolish/Encapsulate) and BAR #2010-0062 (Certificate of Appropriateness) for clarity and brevity. This item requires a roll call vote.

**I. ISSUE:**

The Applicant is requesting approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness to construct an enclosed porch at the rear of their house at 907 South Saint Asaph Street.

The porch will have an east sloping shed roof extending from the first floor of the main building mass. The structure of the porch will be wood and clad in Hardie panel and detailed with wood lattice at its base, wood entry stair, composite decking, wood composite windows and a wood composite three-light door, two flat skylights and a painted standing-seam metal roof.

The footprint of the addition will measure 12'8" feet wide and 12'8" feet deep and will measure one-story in height (roughly 10'3" feet to the cornice; 14'6" feet total height). The addition will project 12'8" feet from the existing rear wall, with an additional 12" for the wood entry stair. The addition will contain 160.3 gross square feet of living space.

**II. HISTORY:**

907 South Saint Asaph Street was constructed in c1940 as part of the George Washington Gardens subdivision by Joseph K. Seidle, Inc., who developed Belle Haven ("Joseph K. Seidle, Inc., Opens New Model Home to Public; Is First in Group of 16," also, real estate advertisement, "Presenting George Washington Gardens in Historic Alexandria Overlooking the Broad Potomac," both Alexandria Gazette, October 19, 1940, p.3.) As such these houses, while stylistically similar to the Yates Garden subdivision by Edward Carr, are a separate subdivision.

*Previous Board Cases*

The Board in April of 1974 reviewed a Certificate of Appropriateness to construct a chimney on the subject property. The BAR denied the application as inappropriate.

**III. ANALYSIS:**

Staff has no objection to the proposed encapsulation of the first story of the rear elevation.

**Permit to Encapsulate**

In considering a Permit to Encapsulate, 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, while this mid-20<sup>th</sup> century townhouse is a successful background building and compatible with nearby historic structures, it is without individual historical interest or uncommon architectural merit and none of the criteria for encapsulation are met and the Permit to Encapsulate should be granted.

### **Addition**

The proposed enclosed porch complies with the RM zone as defined in the City's Zoning Ordinance. The RM zone requires that the lot provide a minimum of 35% open space or 627.2 sq ft. The lot currently provides 1159.41 sq ft or nearly 64% open space, and will provide 994.57 sq ft or 55% open space after construction of the proposed porch.

The construction of additions on any building within a historic district must be evaluated not only for its impact on the building to which it is being attached, but also for the effect of the loss of open space to a historic district's scale and character. In this case, rear sunroom additions are common on this block and similar additions have been constructed by neighbors on either side of the subject parcel. Across the alley to the rear is a large, three story apartment building.

The *Design Guidelines* encourage enclosed porch additions which "are appropriate to the historical style of the structure" and "should not hide or cause the removal of important historic architectural details." It is also recommended that porches "should be painted the predominant color of the building or the color of the trimwork." The *Guidelines* further explain that "Porches should be made of materials which are sympathetic to the building materials generally found in the historic districts." (*Design Guidelines*, Porch - Page 2 & 3).

As the attached photos illustrate, views of the rear of the house where the enclosed porch is proposed are limited to the 15 ft public service alley, which is accessed from Green Street. The area being impacted is not visible from South Saint Asaph Street. The proposal utilizes a design which is simple and contemporary in form and material. While materials such as Hardipanel are not typically recommended by the Board, the visibility of the porch is limited to a small portion of the windows and the porch roof, which will only be visible from the public service alley. As such, staff has no objection to the simplified design or the use of modern construction materials on this mid 20<sup>th</sup> century rowhouse.

The applicant also proposes to install diagonal lattice under the porch. Staff recommends that the

lattice be constructed in a horizontal and vertical configuration, rather than diagonally as horizontal and vertical lattice is the more typical historic lattice configuration in the district and the configuration referenced in the *Guidelines* and that the Board generally approves. Staff is including this as a suggestion rather than a condition since it appears that the lattice will not be visible from the public right-of-way over the existing brick garden wall fence and solid wood gate.

While single-glazed, true-divided-light, double hung wood windows are preferable, and wood composite windows are discouraged window types in the *Design Guidelines*, the Board generally is more flexible on elements of projects which are not visible from the public right-of-way. Staff finds that the proposed windows and doors are appropriate if the specifications include simulated-divided lights. Additionally, it is recommended the windows and doors contain the 7/8" width muntins. This window detail provides the appropriate specification for new construction within the boundaries of the historic district. Staff has also included the standard condition that exterior wood features, such as the steps, be painted or stained.

Additionally, the applicant is not proposing to damage any historic fabric to install this enclosed porch. The existing wall, including the door and window openings located on the rear elevation of the first floor will remain intact, though they will become an interior wall.

For the above reasons, staff recommends approval of the Certificate of Appropriateness for the proposed rear enclosed porch addition.

**STAFF:**

Michele Oaks, Historic Preservation Planner, Planning & Zoning  
Al Cox, FAIA, Historic Preservation Manager

**IV. CITY DEPARTMENT COMMENTS:**

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

Code Administration:

No Comments Received.

Transportation and Environmental Services (T & ES):

No Comments Received.

Historic Alexandria:

No Comments Received.

Alexandria Archaeology:

No Comments Received.

V. IMAGES:

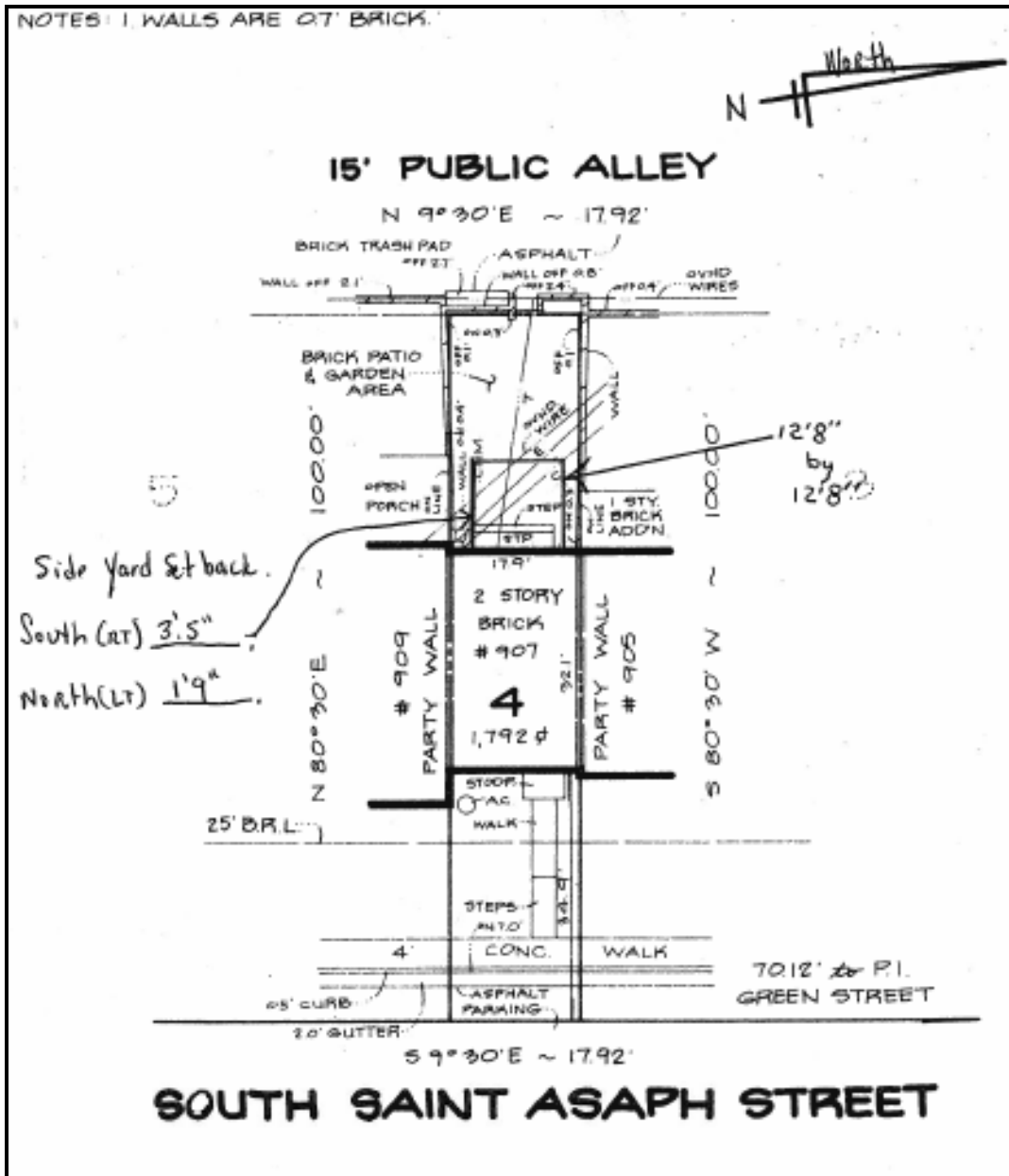


Figure 1: : Survey of 907 South St. Asaph Street, with new porch shown.

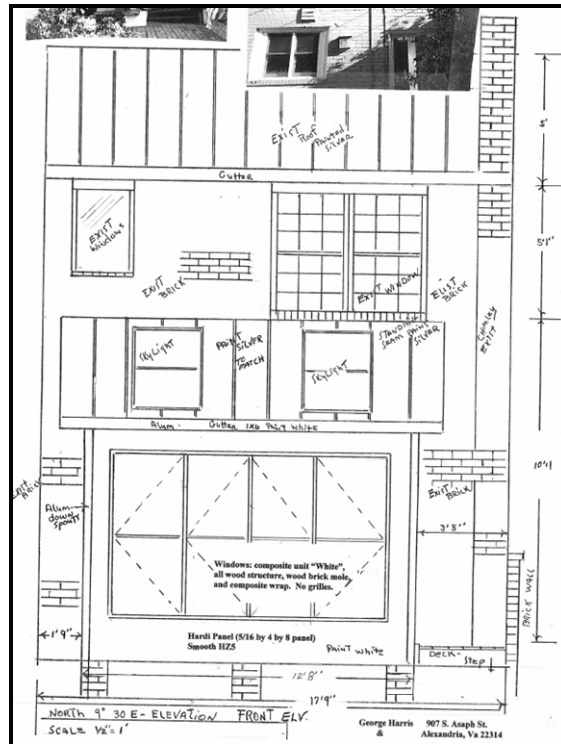


Figure 2: View of the Rear Elevation of Proposed Addition

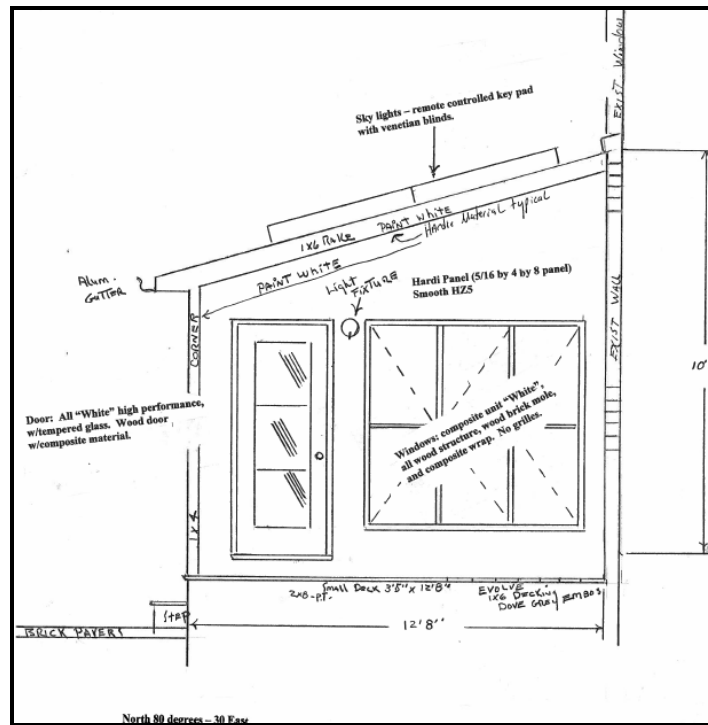


Figure 3: View of the Side Elevation of Proposed Porch Addition



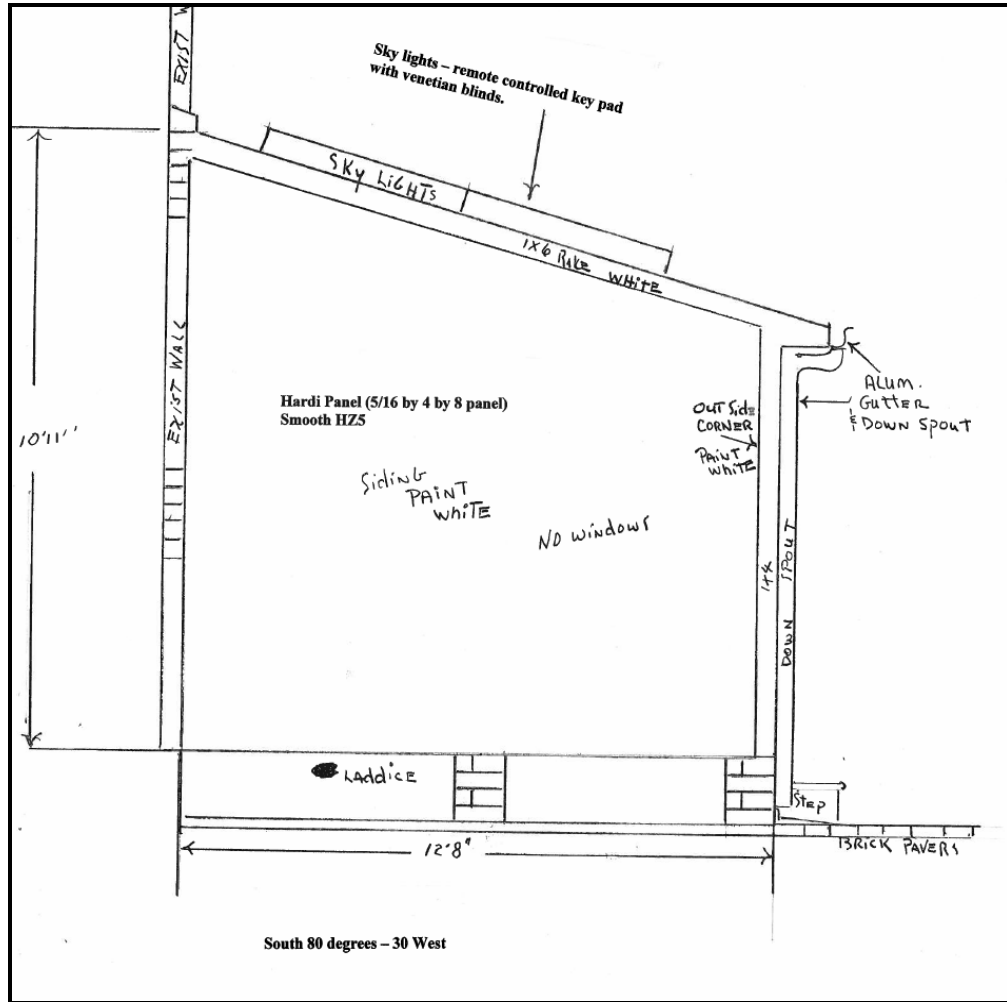


Figure 4: Section of Proposed Porch Addition



Figure 5: Views of Existing Rear Elevation





Figure 6: View of the alley looking south from behind 907 South St. Asaph Street



Figure 7: View of the alley looking north from behind 909 South St. Asaph Street