

Docket Item #3
BAR CASE # 2011-0214

BAR Meeting
September 7, 2011

ISSUE: Landscape Alterations

APPLICANT: Richard and Lois Rawson by Joan Honeyman

LOCATION: 113 South Lee Street

ZONE: RM / Residential

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Staff recommends approval of the Certificate of Appropriateness with the condition that:

1. The statements in the archaeology conditions below shall appear in the General Notes of all site plans and on all site plan sheets that involve demolition or ground disturbance (including Basement/Foundation Plans, Demolition, Erosion and Sediment Control, Grading, Landscaping, Utilities, and Sheeting and Shoring) so that on-site contractors are aware of the requirements:
 - a. 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.
 - b. The applicant/developer shall call Alexandria Archaeology immediately (703-746-4399) 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.
 - c. The applicant/developer shall not allow any metal detection to be conducted on the property, unless authorized by 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.

****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.



I. ISSUE:

The applicant is requesting approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness for landscape alterations at 113 South Lee Street.

South Courtyard

- Install three, free-standing, wood and copper garden trellises along the perimeter brick walls;
- Construct a (10'x10'x8.58') free-standing, wood and copper pergola with stone piers at the rear of the garden;
- Construct a (14.17'x7.75'x8.58') free-standing, wood corner arbor at the northeast corner of the garden

Driveway

- Resurface the existing asphalt driveway with a new asphalt surface bordered with an 8" stone cobble band.

II. HISTORY:

113 South Lee Street is a two-and-one-half story, three-bay brick residential townhouse constructed circa 1803 with later brick rear additions.

The rear section was apparently originally constructed as a two-and-one-half story addition with a one-story connector to the main historic block sometime in the mid-19th century, probably post-Civil War, based upon the brick coursing at the rear addition. The addition was raised to a full three stories and the connector to two stories sometime between 1891 and 1907. Thus, the house assumed its present height approximately 100 years ago.

A recent house history credits the original design, and presumably the construction, of the rear ell to William McVeigh (1803 -1889) on a stylistic basis, but provides no information on the date of construction. The unusual curved wall at the northeast corner of the rear ell has been identified as one of McVeigh's trademarks. We can confirm that the rear ell predates 1877 because it appears on the Hopkins Map of that date. No information is available regarding the designer or contractor of the revised design of the ell in the ca. early 20th century.

There were additions on the front of the adjoining lot at 115 South Lee Street which were attached to 113 from the mid-19th century until well into the middle years of the 20th century.

In 2010 the Board approved plans for alterations and an addition that is currently in its final stages. (BAR Case # 2010-0327/0328). In 2010, BAR Staff administratively approved an in-kind roof replacement.

III. ANALYSIS:

The proposal complies with Zoning Ordinance requirements.

The Design Guidelines state that "[garden and yard structures] should complement and not compete with the architecture of the main building."¹ The Board commonly reviews and

¹ Excerpt from *Design Guidelines* for Accessory Structures Pages 1 & 2.

approves requests for garden structures such items as fences, walls, arbors, and trellises within the historic districts. These garden features could be considered sculptural, rather than architectural, as they are typically free-standing and part of a larger formal landscaped garden design.

The proposed pergola will be located at the rear of the new, formal landscaped garden, inside the existing, six-foot high perimeter wall, approximately 111' back from the public sidewalk. Due to the varying street/courtyard grade differentials, the pergola will extend above the existing rear brick wall approximately 2'-7" and due to the increase in the interior grade, it will be approximately 8' higher than the front brick wall. However, due to the considerable distance from the front ROW and the deciduous and evergreen foliage proposed for the garden, during leaf season it will barely be visible from South Lee Street. Additionally, the pergola will have a footing, yet it will be detached from any other building or structure on the subject property and may be dissembled and removed in the future, if desired.

The trellises will not extend beyond the height of the brick walls where they are being installed. However, due to the interior grade differential and the varying height of the walls, the trellises will be partially visible from the street. As designed, the trellises will be planted with climbing plants, which will visually buffer the structure and incorporate it with the rest of the new, landscape vegetation.

In Staff's opinion, the somewhat modern design of these garden sculptures meets the requirements of the *Design Guidelines*. The trellises, arbor and pergola will all be completely free-standing, are not affixed to any existing historic resources on the subject property, and are easily reversible. Staff, therefore, believes that this design is appropriate and compatible with the historic resource and provides the opportunity for the owner to individualize their property without negatively impacting the existing house's historic fabric. All of the proposed materials, including cedar, copper and stone are historically appropriate and contribute to the compatibility of the proposed landscape alterations.

However, Staff finds it unfortunate that the applicant is retaining the existing asphalt paving surface for parking adjacent to the public sidewalk at this very historic house. Although a cobble border is being installed at the edge of the paving, it would be more historically appropriate and visually compatible if a cobble or paver brick were utilized throughout. Indeed, Staff suggests that it would be even more attractive if the applicant were to connect the adjacent brick sidewalk paving across the front of this property, in lieu of the existing section of concrete public sidewalk.

Staff recommends approval of the Certificate of Appropriateness, as submitted.

STAFF:

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

IV. CITY DEPARTMENT COMMENTS

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

Archaeology:

- F-1 According to *Historic Alexandria, Virginia, Street by Street* by Ethelyn Cox, the house on this lot was completed by 1803. There is the potential for archaeological resources to be present that could provide insight into domestic activities in early Alexandria.
- R-1 The statements in the archaeology conditions below shall appear in the General Notes of all site plans and on all site plan sheets that involve demolition or ground disturbance (including Basement/Foundation Plans, Demolition, Erosion and Sediment Control, Grading, Landscaping, Utilities, and Sheeting and Shoring) so that on-site contractors are aware of the requirements:
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 - c. The applicant/developer shall not allow any metal detection to be conducted on the property, unless authorized by Alexandria Archaeology.

Code Administration

- C-1 Building permits are required for these structures.

Transportation and Environmental Services (T & ES):

RECOMMENDATIONS

- R1. The building permit plans shall comply with requirements of City Code Section 5-6-224 regarding the location of downspouts, foundation drains and sump pumps. Refer to Memorandum to Industry dated June 18, 2004. [Memorandum is available online at the City web site under Transportation\Engineering and Design\Memos to Industry.]. (T&ES)
- R2. Applicant shall be responsible for repairs to the adjacent city right-of-way if damaged during construction activity. (T&ES)
- R3. All improvements to the city right-of-way such as curbing, sidewalk, driveway aprons, etc. must be city standard design. (T&ES)

- R4. No permanent structure may be constructed over any existing private and/or public utility easements. It is the responsibility of the applicant to identify any and all existing easements on the plan. (T&ES)
- R5. An erosion and sediment control plan must be approved by T&ES prior to any land disturbing activity greater than 2,500 square feet. (T&ES)
- R6. Compliance with the provisions of Article XIII of the City's zoning ordinance for stormwater quality control is required for any land disturbing activity greater than 2,500 square feet. (T&ES)

FINDINGS

- F1. An approved grading plan WILL be required at the time of building permit application based on the submitted plan. Questions regarding the processing of grading plans should be directed to the T&ES Site Plan Coordinator at (703) 746-4064. Memorandum to Industry No. 02-08 was issued on April 28, 2008 and can be viewed online via the following link.
<http://alexandriava.gov/uploadedFiles/tes/info/gradingPlanRequirements.pdf>
- F2. There is a public 10" sanitary sewer line and a manhole that runs across the property at 115 S. Lee St. On the submitted survey plat it is called out behind 113 S. Lee St., but labeled as an overhead wire on 115 S. Lee St. The sanitary sewer and associated easement must be shown on the proposed plan. Please refer to Recommendation # R4 above. (T&ES)

CODE REQUIREMENTS

- C-1 The applicant shall comply with the City of Alexandria's Solid Waste Control, Title 5, Chapter 1, which sets forth the requirements for the recycling of materials (Sec. 5-1-99). (T&ES)
- C-2 The applicant shall comply with the City of Alexandria's Noise Control Code, Title 11, Chapter 5, which sets the maximum permissible noise level as measured at the property line. (T&ES)
- C-3 Roof, surface and sub-surface drains be connected to the public storm sewer system, if available, by continuous underground pipe. Where storm sewer is not available applicant must provide a design to mitigate impact of stormwater drainage onto adjacent properties and to the satisfaction of the Director of Transportation & Environmental Services. (Sec.5-6-224) (T&ES)
- C-4 All secondary utilities serving this site shall be placed underground. (Sec. 5-3-3) (T&ES)
- C-6 Any work within the right-of-way requires a separate permit from T&ES. (Sec. 5-3-61) (T&ES)

V. IMAGES



Figure 1: Front Elevation of Garden



Figure 2: View of Garden - Looking East



Figure 3: Location of Pergola in Garden



Figure 4: Location of a Trellis

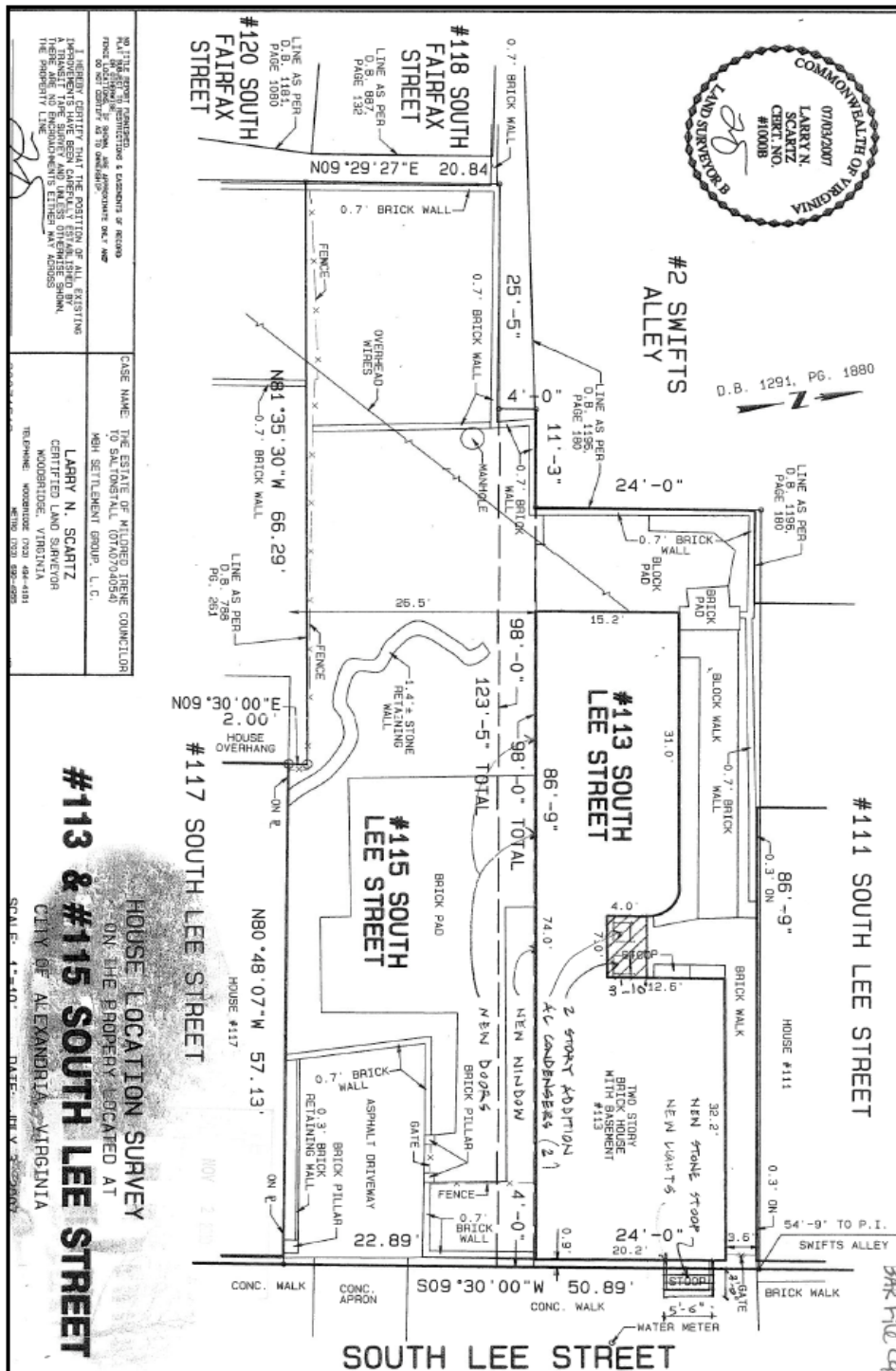


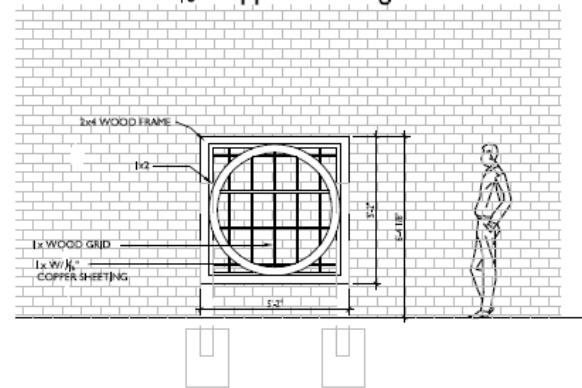
Figure 5: Existing Conditions Plat



Note:

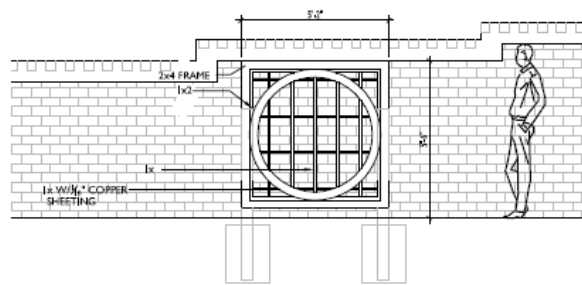
All wood components to be #1 grade cedar

All trim to be $\frac{1}{16}$ " copper sheeting



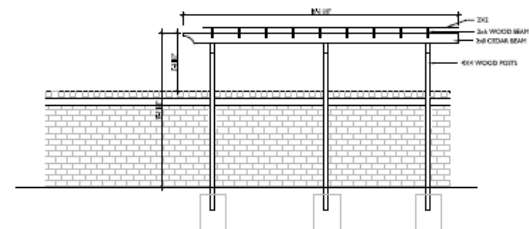
1 ENTRANCE TRELLIS
ELEVATION

SCALE: 1/4" = 1'-0"



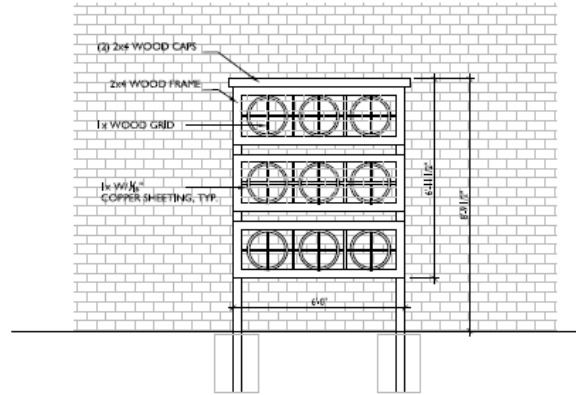
3 GARDEN TRELLIS
ELEVATION

SCALE: 1/4" = 1'-0"



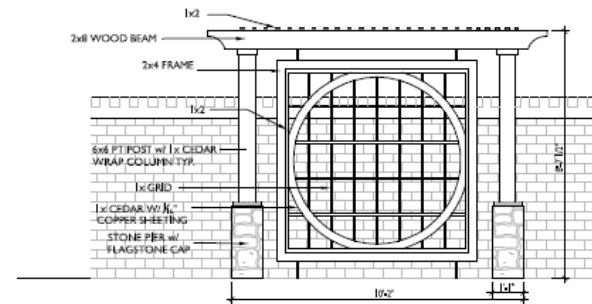
5 CORNER ARBOR
ELEVATION

SCALE: 1/4" = 1'-0"



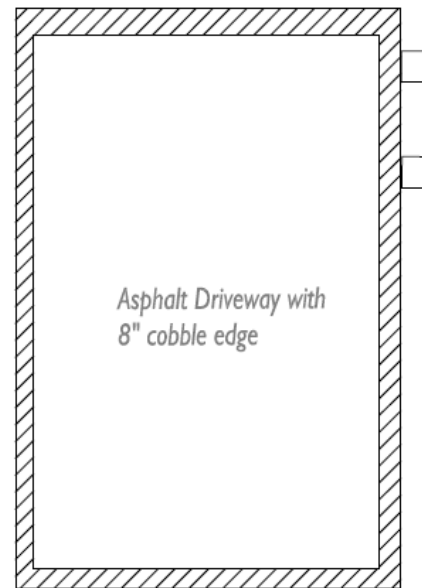
2 MAIN GARDEN TRELLIS
ELEVATION

SCALE: 1/4" = 1'-0"



4 SECRET GARDEN PERGOLA
ELEVATION

SCALE: 1/4" = 1'-0"



6 DRIVEWAY WITH COBBLE EDGE
PLAN

SCALE: 1/4" = 1'-0"

Figure 7: Proposed Trellis, Arbor, Pergola and Driveway Details