

BAR Meeting
September 7, 2011

ISSUE: Permit to Demolish and Rear Addition

APPLICANT: Shane & Kristin Downey by Kyle Blaylock

LOCATION: 929 South Columbus Street

ZONE: RM/Residential

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Staff recommends approval of the Permit to Demolish and a Certificate of Appropriateness for a rear addition with the following condition:

1. The statements in 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 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.
 - b. The applicant/developer shall not allow any metal detection to be conducted on the property, unless authorized by Alexandria Archaeology.



Note: Staff coupled the reports for BAR #2011-0221 (Permit to Demolish) and BAR #2011-0223 (Certificate of Appropriateness) for clarity and brevity. This item requires a roll call vote.

I. ISSUE:

The applicant is requesting approval of a Permit to Demolish in order to demolish an existing one-story rear addition, as well as a Certificate of Appropriateness for a new, larger one-story rear addition.

Demolition

The existing rear (west) addition which the applicants propose to demolish is in poor condition, with rotted wood walls and trim, and inefficient jalousie windows. Constructed in 1957 (building permit #13091), the addition measures 8 feet by 11 feet and contains 88 square feet. An at-grade wood deck in the rear yard will also be removed in order to construct the new addition.

Addition

The applicants propose to construct a new, larger one-story rear addition that will measure 16 feet deep by 14 feet wide (224 square feet). The addition will be slightly offset from the rear elevation in order to retain access to an existing basement entrance. The addition will project beyond the south plane of the end unit townhouse by three feet. The addition will have a shed roof with two flush skylights and three tab composition shingles to match the existing roof material.

The south elevation of the rear addition will have three awning style clerestory windows, while the rear (west) elevation will have sliding French doors flanked by two lights. The aluminum clad wood windows and doors will be manufactured by Pella, and, although the drawings show interior sandwich muntins, they will be installed without muntins. The north elevation will be devoid of any openings. The addition will be clad with white Hardieplank siding.

II. HISTORY:

The end unit brick townhouse at 929 South Columbus Street was originally constructed **ca. 1942** as part of the Hunting Creek Homes subdivision, encompassing the block surrounded by South Columbus, Church, South Alfred and Green streets. The townhouse is perpendicular to a row of townhouses facing Church Street, separated by a 5 foot public sidewalk running east-west through the block. The 900 block of South Columbus Street has two grouping of largely unaltered similar brick townhouses. The property is also accessible from a public alley in the rear.

In 1956, a side porch measuring 7 feet by 13.5 feet was constructed on the south elevation at 929 South Columbus Street (building permit #13062). At some point the porch was enclosed and the area was converted into townhouse's main entrance. As noted above, the rear addition was added a year later, in 1957.

Staff located only one previous BAR approval for the subject property, for a wood fence to replace the chain link fence surrounding the rear yard (BAR Case#1988-0071, May 18, 1988).

III. ANALYSIS:

Staff has no objection to the proposed demolition of the small rear addition and supports the construction of a larger one-story rear addition.

Permit to Demolish

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 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, none of the criteria for demolition are met and the Permit to Demolish should be granted. The existing rear addition is located on a secondary elevation, does not remove any portion of the building containing character defining features of uncommon design or historic merit, and does not compromise the integrity of this mid-20th century townhouse.

Addition

The proposed addition complies with zoning ordinance requirements. The lot has been a lot of record since at least 1953 and is less than 25' wide; therefore, no side yard setbacks are required.

In the opinion of Staff, the design of the addition is generally compatible in style and massing with the historic townhouse and conforms to the *Design Guidelines* for additions. The *Guidelines* encourage “designs that are respectful of the existing structure and which seek to be background statements or which echo the design elements of the existing structure.” As the attached drawings illustrate, the proposed addition will not overwhelm the existing building and will clearly read as a separate and distinct addition due to the change in the roof structure (shed roof instead of gable roof), materials (frame with Hardiplank siding rather than brick) and fenestration (clerestory awning windows and sliding French doors instead of double-hung windows). While Staff does not believe the design of this utilitarian addition would be appropriate on a 19th century building or if it were on any side more visible from a public street, it is in the rear and the shed roof form is very similar to the existing south addition and to other rear additions on this same block.

Staff recommends approval of the Permit to Demolish and the Certificate of Appropriateness with the Alexandria Archaeology conditions noted below.

STAFF

Stephanie Sample, 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

Code Administration

C-1 Demolition and alterations to the existing structure requires construction/alteration permits. Five sets of architectural quality drawings shall accompany the permit applications that fully detail the construction/alteration framing as well as layouts and schematics of the mechanical, electrical, and plumbing systems.

C-2 Drawings submitted with the BAR application are not approved for construction

Transportation & Environmental Services

Demolition

F-1 Neither the Public Alley nor the Public Sidewalk may be obstructed at any time. (T&ES)

R-1 The building permit must be approved and issued prior to the issuance of any permit for demolition. (T&ES)

C-1 Any work within or from the right-of-way requires a separate permit from T&ES. (Sec. 5-3-61) (T&ES)

Addition

F-1 An approved grading plan may be required at the time of building permit application. Insufficient information has been provided to make that determination at this time. In summary, City Code Section 8-1-22(d) requires that a grading plan be submitted to and approved by T&ES prior to the issuance of building permits for improvements involving:
Questions regarding the processing of grading plans should be directed to the T&ES Site Plan Coordinator at (703) 838-4318. 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>

F-2 Neither the Public Alley nor the Public Sidewalk may be obstructed at any time. (T&ES)

R-1 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)

- R-2 Applicant shall be responsible for repairs to the adjacent city right-of-way if damaged during construction activity. (T&ES)
- R-3 All improvements to the city right-of-way such as curbing, sidewalk, driveway aprons, etc. must be city standard design. (T&ES)
- R-4 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)
- R-5 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)
- R-6 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)
- 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-5 Pay sanitary sewer tap fee prior to release of Grading Plan. (Sec. 5-6-25) (T&ES)
- C-6 Any work within the right-of-way requires a separate permit from T&ES. (Sec. 5-2) (T&ES)

Alexandria Archaeology

F-1 According to the 1877 G.M. Hopkins Insurance Atlas, William N. McVeigh owned the entire block that includes 929 South Columbus. Subsequent Sanborn Insurance maps indicate that the lot remained undeveloped until the 1940s when the present structure was built. Earlier

activity could have occurred on the lot in the first half of the nineteenth century or in the eighteenth century when the subject property would have been on the outskirts of the burgeoning city. There is a relatively small possibility for finding evidence of significant historic or prehistoric activity at the subject property. Nevertheless, there is no harm in remaining vigilant for any cultural resources that might be present on the property, even if this is a remote possibility.

R-1 The statements in 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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V. IMAGES

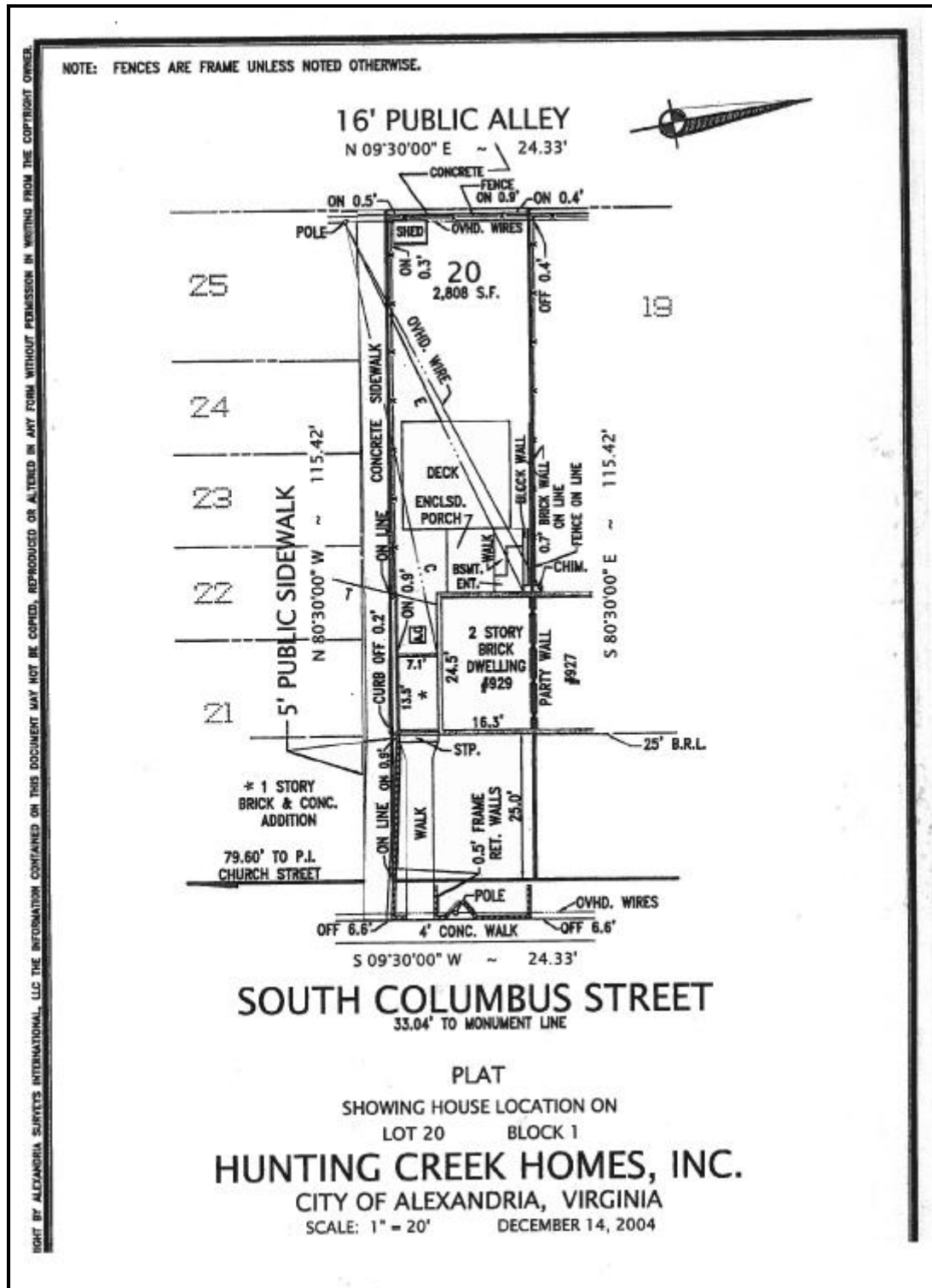


Figure 1: Plat.



Figure 2: Photo of partial front and south side elevation at the 5 foot public sidewalk



Figure 3: Photo of rear elevation and existing porch.



Figure 4: Existing rear porch.



Figure 5: Photo detail showing materials on the existing rear porch.

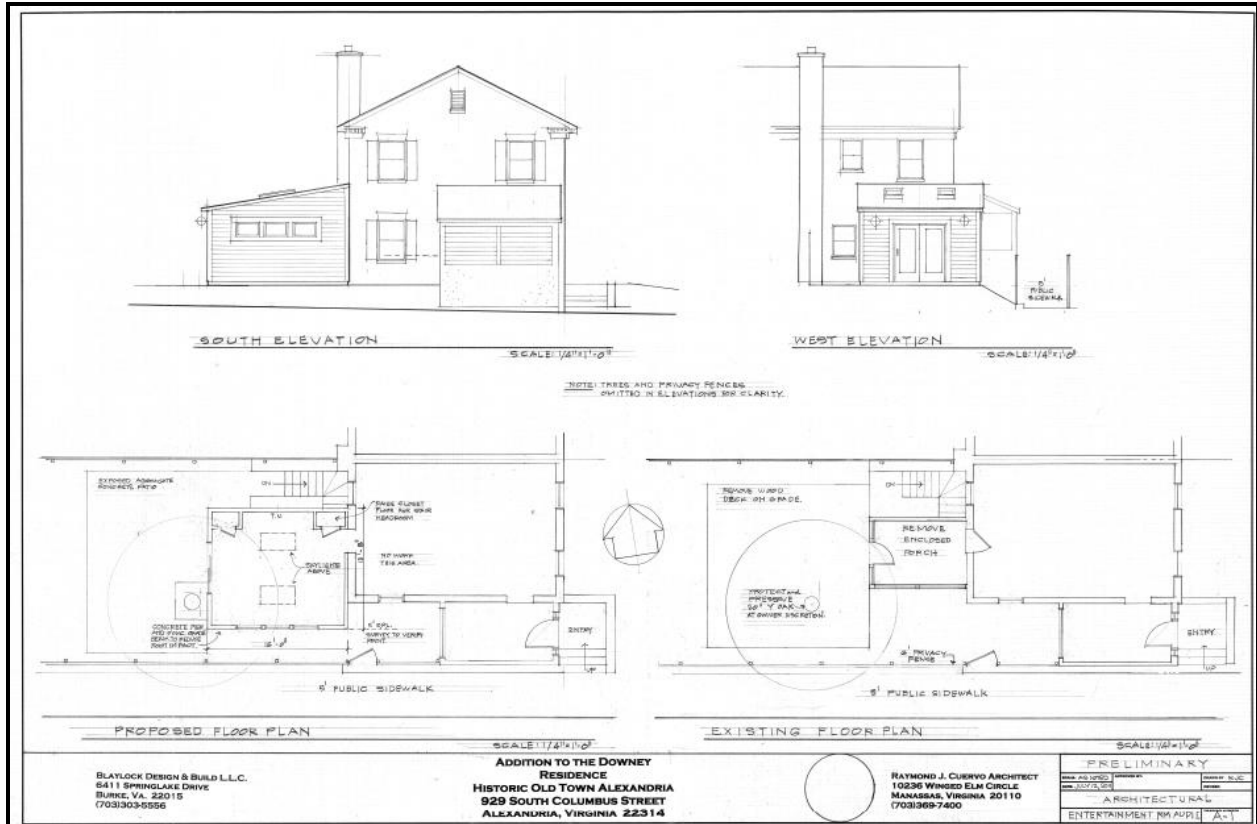


Figure 6: Existing and proposed floor plans; proposed elevations.