

\*\*\*\*\*DRAFT MINUTES\*\*\*\*\*

Alexandria Board of Architectural Review  
Old & Historic Alexandria District

**Wednesday, July 20, 2011**  
7:30pm, City Council Chambers, City Hall  
301 King Street, Alexandria, Virginia 22314

Members Present: Tom Hulfish, Chairman  
Wayne Neale  
Chip Carlin  
Peter Smeallie  
John von Senden

Members Absent: Oscar Fitzgerald  
Arthur Keleher

Staff Present: Planning & Zoning  
Catherine Miliaras, Historic Preservation Planner  
Courtney Lankford, Historic Preservation Planner  
Al Cox, FAIA, Historic Preservation Manager  
  
City Attorney's Office  
Joanna Anderson

The meeting was called to order at 7:33p.m. by Chairman Hulfish.

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## I. MINUTES

Consideration of the minutes of the public hearing of July 6, 2011.

**BOARD ACTION: Approved, as amended, 5-0**

Mr. Neale made one revision to his comment under Board Discussion for item number three, Case BAR2010-03431. He stated the first sentence in the last paragraph of the Board Discussion section minutes should read "...that interior fixtures be no taller than 42" *at the storefront glass.*"

On a motion by Mr. Von Senden, seconded by Mr. Neale the minutes were unanimously approved, as amended, 5-0.

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## II. CONSENT CALENDAR

Items on the Consent Calendar are those where the applicant has agreed to all conditions of approval shown in the staff reports. Without objection, the staff recommendation for these cases will be approved as a group by unanimous consent of the Board at the beginning of the meeting. When announced by the Chairman, any member of the Board or of the public may ask that one of these cases be removed for full discussion.

1. **CASE BAR2011-0178**

Request for signage at **815 B King St**, zoned KR King Street Retail.

APPLICANT: Bishop Boutique by Old Town Sign Co.

BOARD ACTION: **Approved, as submitted, 5-0**

On a motion by Mr. von Senden, seconded by Mr. Smeallie, the Consent Calendar, consisting of case BAR2011-0178, was approved, 5-0.

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**III. DISCUSSION ITEMS**

2. **CASE BAR2011-0180**

Request for demolition/encapsulation at **732 S Royal St**, zoned RM Residential.

APPLICANT: Stan & Sandra Bysshe (contract purchaser)

BOARD ACTION: **Approved, as amended, by a roll call vote, 4-1.**

This item was combined with item #3 for discussion purposes.

3. **CASE BAR2011-0181**

Request for addition at **732 S Royal St**, zoned RM Residential.

APPLICANT: Stan & Sandra Bysshe (contract purchaser)

BOARD ACTION: **Approved, as amended, by a roll call vote, 4-1.**

**CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL:**

1. The proposed windows and doors will be aluminum-clad wood and in compliance with the BAR's window and door policies.
2. 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 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.
3. That a standing seam metal roof be used instead of the proposed synthetic slate roof shingles.

## **SPEAKERS**

Dr. Stan Bysshe, applicant, agreed with the staff recommendations and spoke in support of the application.

Mr. John Hynan, representing the Historic Alexandria Foundation, stated that HAF was generally in agreement with the staff recommendations.

Byron Woods, contractor for the applicant, responded to questions from the Board.

## **BOARD DISCUSSION**

Mr. von Senden was in support of the application but commented about the proposed synthetic slate roofing material. He suggested that a standing seam metal roof would be more appropriate. Byron Woods stated that the homeowner originally wanted standing seam metal, but that they were told it would not be approved. He stated that the homeowner would agree to use a standing seam metal roof.

Mr. von Senden made a motion to approve the application with the condition that a standing seam metal roof be used in lieu of the proposed synthetic slate. The motion was seconded by Mr. Smeallie.

Mr. Neale expressed concern about water drainage and suggested a shed roof with a gable end to mitigate any potential drainage issues. Mr. von Senden thought the change would negatively affect the massing of the proposed addition.

Mr. Carlin noted that if adjacent properties had additions, the roof would need to be modified and would require a cricket. He asked the applicant to ensure that the new roof would be waterproof.

The motion passed, 4-1, with Mr. Neale in opposition.

## **REASON**

The Board found the proposed addition to be appropriate and compatible with the existing townhouse and surrounding area.

### **4. [CASE BAR2011-0182](#)**

Request for demolition/encapsulation at **329 N Saint Asaph St**, zoned RM Residential.

APPLICANT: Janice Cuny & Steve Robinson by Tom Canning

BOARD ACTION: **Approved, as amended, by a roll call vote 4-1.**

This item was combined with item #5 for discussion purposes.

### **5. [CASE BAR2011-0183](#)**

Request for alterations at **329 N Saint Asaph St**, zoned RM Residential.

APPLICANT: Janice Cuny & Steve Robinson by Tom Canning

BOARD ACTION: **Approved, as amended, by a roll call vote 4-1.**

## CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL

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.
2. That the applicant provide complete window specifications for the replacement windows and doors to verify conformance with Alexandria Replacement Window Policy at the time of building permit application.
3. That the proposed shutters be wood, sized to fit each window and operable.
4. That no gas jet lamps be used and that a more appropriate light fixture style be used with final approval by staff; and
5. That the applicant work with Staff on the final details of the enclosed porch design.

## SPEAKERS

Hope Canning, project designer, agreed with the staff recommendations and spoke in support of the application.

Billie Schaeffer, neighbor at 327 North Saint Asaph Street, spoke in opposition to the proposed alterations.

John Williams, neighbor at 327 North Saint Asaph Street, spoke in opposition to the proposed alterations.

Whitney and Jaime Steve, neighbors at 325 North Saint Asaph Street, spoke in opposition to the proposed alterations.

Dan Nelson, neighbor at 403 North Saint Asaph Street, spoke in opposition to the proposed alterations.

John Kester, neighbor at 313 North Saint Asaph Street, spoke in opposition to the proposed alterations.

Thor Ronay, neighbor at 328 North Pitt Street, spoke in opposition to the proposed alterations.

Mary Theresa Vasquez, neighbor at 317 North Saint Asaph Street, spoke in opposition to the proposed alterations.

*The above neighbors generally expressed concern that the proposed alterations would negatively affect this blockface and the restoration work done by Polly Hulfish in the 1960s.*

John Hynan, representing the Historic Alexandria Foundation, commented that this case was very different from the case before the Board in 2007 to do an addition on the rear of one of the townhouses in the 300 block of North Saint Asaph. He noted that both the applicant and the neighbor's arguments have merit but that the final decision rests with the Board.

Janice Cuny, applicant, agreed with the staff recommendations and spoke in support of the application. Ms. Cuny provided photographic evidence of the overwhelming number of houses on the block and in the surrounding area that have an entry at the side of the façade, rather than in the center. She explained that their intention was to improve the property through these alterations. Ms. Cuny stated that she shared copies of the plans with neighbors and sent additional letters beyond what was required by legal notice. She expressed frustration that some neighbors had told her that they did not object to the plans previously but then were speaking in opposition. Ms. Cuny explained that they revised the plans to address concerns from the neighbors.

Steve Robinson, applicant, spoke in support of the staff recommendations and noted that many of the topics raised at the hearing were not relevant to the application and beyond the scope of the Board's purview.

## **BOARD DISCUSSION**

Mr. Smeallie stated that there is something special about this block, Hulfish Row, and that it should be preserved, but that it should not be frozen in time. He noted that Polly Hulfish significantly changed these houses and that they were not pristine 18<sup>th</sup>- or 19<sup>th</sup>-century houses. While he did not support radical changes, he found moving the door to the side to be an improvement and did not object to the new window on the south elevation. However, he did not support enclosing the rear porch or adding a deck.

Mr. von Senden stated that this case was interesting because the period of significance was the period of renovation rather than the first period of construction. He stated that this was not Williamsburg and houses in Old Town should not be frozen in time. Mr. von Senden commented that there was no apparent reason to move the door. He had no objection to the rear porch but noted that it could use further refinement and detailing, such as aligning the sills with the adjacent existing windows. He objected to the use of the gas jet light as it was not appropriate to either date, was environmentally wasteful and did not provide any real light. He noted that construction noise was not a BAR issue.

Mr. Neale stated that all buildings get altered over time and that we should not fear altering buildings but that changes must be sensitive. He found that the proposed changes were generally sensitive and included minimal work. He agreed that the back porch needed further refinement.

Mr. Carlin acknowledged this case was an emotional one and he understood the heritage aspect. He noted that some houses were changed significantly and that some retained original materials and fixtures. He observed that many houses and rows of house were converted, altered and restored in the past and estimated that 200-300 no longer had any historic fabric left. He expressed concern that denial of the proposed changes could set a bad precedent in the historic district that might prevent any future alterations to many buildings that had already been altered. In addition, he noted the changes in this project were modest in scope and that it was typical to have a storm porch/mudroom.

Mr. von Senden made a motion to approve the application with the staff recommendations and two additional conditions: #4) that no gas jet lamps are used and that a more appropriate light fixture be used with final approval by staff and, #5), that the applicant work with staff on the final details for the enclosed porch design.

Mr. Neale seconded the motion, which was approved 4-1 by a roll call vote, with Mr. Smeallie voting in opposition.

## **REASON**

The Board found the proposed alterations to be modest in scale and appropriate to the existing house and surrounding neighborhood. While several Board members commented that any alterations should be sensitive to and compatible with existing buildings and their context, they also noted that buildings evolve and specifically stated that the historic district was not frozen in time. There was concern about the precedent that could be set by denying any changes to a building that had already been significantly altered and had very little historic fabric remaining.

### **6. CASE BAR2011-0189**

Request for new construction at **122 Prince St**, zoned RM Residential.

APPLICANT: James & Christine Garner by M. Catharine Puskar

BOARD ACTION: **Approved, as amended, subject to BZA approval of setback variance, 4-0-1** (Mr. Smeallie abstained).

## **CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL**

1. That this BAR approval is not effective until and unless the yard variances allowing the house to be placed where it is shown are approved by the BZA.
2. That 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 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.

3. That the dormer window trim details be reviewed with staff prior to approval of the building permit to be more stylistically appropriate to the Federal period.

## **SPEAKERS**

Cathy Puskar, attorney for the applicant, agreed with the staff recommendations and spoke in support of the application.

Stephanie Dimond, project architect, spoke in support of the application and responded to questions from the Board. She noted that the applicant wanted to protect the neighborhood and have the new construction fit in with surrounding properties, including maintaining the view-shed of the historic unpainted siding on the east elevation of 126 Prince Street. Ms. Dimond provided an overview of the project evolution since it began in 2001. Recent design revisions working with staff resulted in a narrower building. Ms. Dimond also showed what a house built according to the standard RM zone requirements and maximum FAR would look like, according to the Zoning Ordinance.

John Gosling, president of Old Town Civic Association, spoke in opposition. Mr. Gosling was extremely concerned that the case was being heard out of order and felt strongly that it should be heard by the Board of Zoning Appeals before being considered by the BAR. He also expressed concern that the applicants were using BAR requirements and historic district context as a hardship to justify a variance. Mr. Gosling also asked the BAR to consider whether it was appropriate to substitute a rear setback reduction for a narrower house with an open side yard.

Curtiss Martin, owner of 118 Prince Street, spoke in opposition. Mr. Martin's primary concern was the siting of the proposed house. He asked that the Board require a more detailed analysis of the siding and wall at 126 Prince Street, if the proposed house were sited to protect the view-shed of that wall. Mr. Martin also believed that the proposed house did not fit with the rhythm of the block because it had substantial open space on both sides, as a more grand historic house might have had.

John Hynan, representing the Historic Alexandria Foundation, expressed concerns about the review process. Mr. Hynan agreed with Mr. Gosling that the case was being heard out of order and that the BZA hearing should be first. He noted that HAF would not address any issues not before the BAR. Mr. Hynan stated that HAF found the size of the building and the architectural style appropriate for the block but that because it was so carefully designed in an eclectic style, that the proposed house might be confused with the historic houses. He suggested the addition of a cornerstone or plaque noting the building's date of construction to prevent such confusion.

Virginia Drewry, owner of 118 Prince Street, spoke in opposition to the proposed application. Ms. Drewry was concerned that the public was not at the BAR hearing because the case was being heard out of order. Further, she and others were under the impression that the BAR was

reviewing it in concept only. Ms. Drewry noted that the meeting was properly noticed, but that the neighbors might have been confused.

## **BOARD DISCUSSION**

In response to comments that the case was being taken out of order with respect to the BZA hearing, the Chairman noted that the BAR has heard cases in the past prior to the BZA in order to address specific circumstances. In this case, the Chairman noted that, due to the BAR's recess in the month of August, it was appropriate to hear the case prior to going before the BZA.

Mr. Smeallie was concerned about the BAR reviewing this application before the BZA hearing on this matter. He remarked that the case should first go to the BZA and was concerned that a BAR approval of the design could stifle opposition and opinions at the BZA hearing. He noted that was an extremely important site that had been under review for many years and did not understand why it could not be delayed a few more weeks. He had no objection to the proposed design. Mr. Smeallie made a motion to defer this item until after the BZA hearing and said he would abstain from voting if it was not deferred. There was no second and the motion failed.

Mr. Neale noted the unusual shape of the lot for this case and observed that it did not follow the traditional deep and narrow lot pattern of development in Old Town. Mr. Neale did not share Mr. Smeallie's anxiety about the case and stated that if it were a legal application before the BAR, then the BAR should review it. He also noted that if there were any changes in the building's location as a result of the BZA hearing, then it would need to return to the BAR for restudy. Mr. Neale supported the massing, setbacks and detailing and commented that the structure was so well detailed that it would be difficult to discern it from new buildings. He thought it was a very conservative building solution. He also noted that the building could have been slightly bigger or taller and still fit within the context of the street. He thought that the dormers needed additional refinement and suggested looking at an old Architectural Graphic Standards book for appropriate details.

Mr. Carlin complimented the architect on a very refined design. He noted that any building on this lot must be quiet, unassuming and deferential. He noted that the BAR's primary role was the ongoing stewardship of the Old and Historic Alexandria District. He noted that the location of the ell in the rear and issues of light, air and open space would be reviewed by the BZA and were not before the BAR. Mr. Carlin asked whether off-street parking would be required. Ms. Dimond responded it was not required. He also asked about how the wall on the east side, immediately adjacent to the alley, would be treated. Ms. Dimond responded that the wall would be two feet from the house and that it would replicate the existing wall on the site. He advised that it should be given a sense of age and softened, such as with plants, to appeal to the neighbors. In summary, Mr. Carlin reiterated that any design at this site must be deferential and well refined and he supported the proposed scheme.

Chairman Hulfish asked what would replace the curb cut. He noted that many granite curbs have disappeared in the district and would like to see them returned. Ms. Dimond responded that she would work with T&ES to match the adjacent cobblestones and granite curb.



Mr. von Senden noted that the site presented an interesting design challenge. He also observed that historically, a building very similar to what is proposed would likely have been built here and that it would have similarly been constructed adjacent to the alley on the east, as buildings are constructed immediately adjacent to alleys throughout Old Town. While he generally opposed historic mimicry, he found it to be appropriate in this case so that it bended with its historic neighbors. He agreed that the design of the east fence should be refined to appeal to the neighbors. He supported the idea of a cornerstone. He also expressed concern about the blind windows on the south elevation stating that they did not achieve much and should be removed.

Mr. von Senden made a motion to approve the application with the staff recommendations and also a condition to remove the blind windows. Ms. Dimond responded that she proposed them to soften the blank wall for adjoining properties. Mr. Neale also noted he did not object to the blind windows. Mr. von Senden then revised his motion to approve the application with the staff recommendations only. The motion was seconded by Mr. Neale and approved 4-0-1, with Mr. Smeallie abstaining.

#### **REASON**

The Board found the proposed height, mass, scale and architectural style to be appropriate for the historic character of the block and further believed that the general design and arrangement of the building on the east side of the site adjacent to the alley was consistent with the historic setting, streetscape, and environs and that it followed the historic development patterns in the Old and Historic Alexandria District.

The BAR took no position on the impact of the building's location on the neighbor's light and air or to specific yard setbacks, believing this to be the purview of the BZA. Should the BZA not approve the requested setback variances, the design of the dwelling will go back to the BAR for restudy.

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#### **IV. DEFERRED ITEMS**

7. **CASE BAR2011-0179**

Request for window and door replacement at **516 N Columbus St**, zoned RB Residential.

**APPLICANT:** Charles Kohler by Rod Bell

*Deferred prior to hearing at the applicants request.*

**BOARD ACTION:** The Board noted the deferral.

8. **CASE BAR2011-0098**

Request for approval of a screened porch at **108 Quay St**, zoned RM Residential.

**APPLICANT:** Kenneth Gabriel

*Deferred.*

**BOARD ACTION:** The Board noted the deferral.

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#### **IV. OTHER BUSINESS**

The Staff presentation of the King Street Web Address Survey was postponed to a future hearing.

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#### **V. ADJOURNMENT**

Chairman Hulfish adjourned the meeting at approximately 9:34pm.

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#### **VI. ADMINISTRATIVE APPROVALS**

The following items are shown for information only. Based on the Board's adopted policies, these have been approved by Staff since the previous Board meeting.

##### **CASE BAR2011-0009**

Request for egress stair replacement and light fixture at **1212 King St**, zoned KR King Street Retail.

APPLICANT: L. Lemashweski

##### **CASE BAR2011-0197**

Request for fence replacement at **606 Gibbon St**, zoned RM Residential.

APPLICANT: Susan Thompson

##### **CASE BAR2011-0199**

Request for signage at **217 King St**, zoned KR King Street Retail.

APPLICANT: Andrea's Boutique

##### **CASE BAR2011-0201**

Request for gutter/downspout replacement at **412 Queen St**, zoned RM Residential.

APPLICANT: Brian Higgins

Minutes submitted by,

Al Cox, FAIA, Historic Preservation Manager  
Boards of Architectural Review