

Docket Item #s 5 & 6
BAR CASE #2003-0228 & 0219

BAR Meeting
September 24, 2003

ISSUE: Rooftop HVAC units & Waiver of Rooftop Screening

APPLICANT: Robert Larson

LOCATION: 317 North Payne Street

ZONE: RB/Residential

****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 the Code Enforcement Bureau (including signs). The applicant is responsible for obtaining all necessary construction permits after receiving Board of Architectural Review approval. Contact Code Enforcement, Room 4200, City Hall, 703-838-4360 for further information.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends approval of the application with the condition that the new and relocated mechanical units be painted brick red to match the wall beyond.

DISCUSSION:

Applicant s Description of the Undertaking:

Adding new roof top mechanical unit. Asking for a waiver of screening roof top mechanical units.

Issue:

As part of the new addition and renovation project now underway at Mt. Jezreel Baptist Church, the Building Code requires that the church add ventilating capacity. The new rooftop unit located on the rear, one story section of the church building will fulfill this requirement. The 3' high by 2'6" wide by 6'2" long unit will be located approximately 20' back from the west (rear) edge of the roof, on the south side. The existing mechanical unit, will be relocated, moving several feet south to a spot at the center of the roof. The existing unit is has the same dimensions as the new unit. A third unit, considerably smaller than the first two, at 3' high, 1'1" wide and 3' long, will be located on the ground, where the one story rear section meets the two story section, on the south side of the property. The existing rooftop unit is currently somewhat visible from the alley at the rear. It is expected that the new and relocated rooftop units will also have limited visibility from the rear. The small unit on the ground could only be visible from the southern alley and is not likely to be noticeable at that remove.

An east-west public alley that runs along the north side of the church property. Another east-west public alley is located to the south of the church, between 311 and 309 North Payne Streets, affording views of the south side of the building.

History and Analysis:

The Mt. Jezreel Baptist Church at 317 North Payne Street is a brick, two-and-a-half story, vaguely Gothic style church constructed in 1890 with a two story addition at the rear (east) and south side constructed sometime between 1941 and 1958, according to information on the Sanborn fire insurance maps. An even more recent, one story addition projects from the rear (east)side of the c.1950 two story addition.

The Board approved a Permit to Demolish and Certificate of Appropriateness for the proposed one story addition on the south side of the building on March 28, 2001 (BAR Case #s 2001-043 & 044). In the Summer of 2002, the Board reapproved the prior approvals as well as several minor alterations to the previously approved plans (BAR Case #s 2002-147 & 185, 6/26/2002 & 7/24/2002). The work on the addition just recently began.

The proposed HVAC equipment and waiver of rooftop screening requirement comply with the zoning ordinance requirements. Section 6-403(B)(1) of the zoning ordinance states that all necessary rooftop mechanical equipment shall be concealed by or constructed of exterior architectural materials or features of the same quality used on the exterior walls of the building.

However, Section 6-403(B)(3) of the zoning ordinance permits the BAR to waive or modify the screening requirement if the board finds such requirement to be architecturally inappropriate.

Staff recommends approval of the additional mechanical unit and relocation of the existing unit. The units will have limited visibility. In addition, Staff recommends that the Board approve the waiver of rooftop screening. In the opinion of Staff, the addition of screening, such as a brick wall, would only add to the bulk of the rooftop equipment. Instead, Staff recommends that the applicant paint the new and relocated units a brick red to match the wall beyond. The applicant has agreed to this condition.

CITY DEPARTMENT COMMENTS

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

Code Enforcement:

No comments.

Office of Historic Alexandria:

No comment.