

Docket Item #4  
BAR CASE #2003-0295

BAR Meeting  
December 17, 2003

**ISSUE:** Demolition/capsulation  
**APPLICANT:** Jessica Wallace & William Davis  
**LOCATION:** 312 North Payne Street  
**ZONE:** RB/residential

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**\*\*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 Permit to Demolish/Capsulate.

NOTE: This docket item requires a roll call vote.

DISCUSSION:

Applicant s Description of Undertaking:

We would like to remove two walls- the west facing wall and the leaning section of the south facing wall. We would like to build an addition to the back and create a sturdier structure overall.

Issue:

The applicant is requesting a Permit to Demolish/Capsulate in order to construct a two story addition at the rear and side of the existing house, which consists of a two story main block and two story ell. The rear (west) wall, south wall and roof structure of the existing ell will be demolished. Only the north wall of the ell will remain intact. The narrow (approximately 3' wide) portion of the rear (west) wall of the main block which is now exposed will be capsulated by the new, wider addition. A portion of the rear (west) end of the roof of the main block will be capsulated by the gable roof of the new addition.

History and Analysis:

The free-standing two story frame house at 312 North Payne Street is not present on the 1877 Hopkins Atlas, but does appear on the 1902 Sanborn map, when the 300 block of North Payne was first included in Sanborn Fire Insurance mapping. The 1902 map shows the house with a footprint which appears to be identical to the present main block and ell, except that there is also a one story addition located at the rear of the two story ell. This addition was removed at an unknown date. The 1902 footprint of 312 North Payne is identical to that of 314 North Payne Street, suggesting the two houses may have been constructed at the same time and with similar plans. The vernacular Italianate house at 312 North Payne has been altered over the years and currently has vinyl siding and vinyl windows. A 1961 building permit lists repairs to the rear ell, including replacing siding, windows, roof, floor joists and footings (Permit #1716?, 5/11/1961). A 1980 permit for siding and interior alterations may indicate the date of the installation of the existing vinyl siding (Permit #36714, 11/18/1980). In 1995, the Board approved a rooftop HVAC unit at 312 North Payne Street (BAR Case #95-016PG, 6/14/1995). In 1998, the Board approved an after-the-fact fence at the rear of 312 North Payne Street (BAR Case #98-0231PG, 1/27/1999). The stockade fence was approved with the condition that it be painted and that the top of the fence be capped with boards. Those conditions were met.

In a case similar to the present, the Board approved the removal of the two story rear ell and single story addition and the construction of a new, larger two story addition at 314 North Payne Street in 1994 (BAR Case #94-11 & 12PG, 6/22/1994). The project was undertaken by the City of Alexandria Office of Housing. According to the Staff report, the Office of Housing and project architect argued that the additions were structurally compromised and that in order to effectively upgrade the living space for the property owner... the two rear additions must be

demolished and completely rebuilt. In 1994, the Board also approved a fence and alterations to the house at 310 North Payne Street (BAR Case #94-31PG, 11/21/1994)

In considering a Permit to Demolish, the Board must consider the following criteria set forth in the Zoning Ordinance, Sec. 10-205(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 and protect an historic place or area of historic interest in the?
- (5) 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?
- (6) Would retention of the building or structure help maintain the scale and character of the neighborhood?

On the one hand, Staff is reluctant to approve the proposed demolition/capsulation as it will virtually erase the rear ell, believed to be original to the house, and the historic footprint of the house. On the other hand, Staff does not believe there is a strong case for any of the above criteria. The rear ell and footprint of the house can only be appreciated from the rear alley and then with some difficulty as the house is sandwiched between two longer houses. The extent of loss of existing fabric that the proposed plans call for is troubling. However, the house, and in particular the rear ell, does appear to have undergone fairly substantial alterations with the removal of the single story rear section and the renovations of 1961 and 1980. Therefore, Staff recommends approval of the demolition/capsulation as submitted.

## CITY DEPARTMENT COMMENTS

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

### Code Enforcement:

C-1 Prior to the issuance of a demolition permit or land disturbance permit, a rodent abatement plan shall be submitted to Code Enforcement that will outline the steps that will taken to prevent the spread of rodents from the construction site to the surrounding community and sewers.

### Historic Alexandria:

No comment.

### Alexandria Archaeology:

F-1 This house is on a lot which was once part of a 19<sup>th</sup>-century Free Black Neighborhood. Therefore there is the potential for this property to yield archaeological resources that could provide insight into domestic life in 19<sup>th</sup>-century Alexandria.

R-1 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.

R-2 The statement in the paragraph above (R-1) must appear in the General Notes of all site plans so that on-site contractors are aware of the requirement.