

Docket Item #5
BAR CASE #2003-0296

BAR Meeting
December 17, 2003

ISSUE: Rear addition

APPLICANT: Jessica Wallace & William Davis

LOCATION: 312 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 deferral of the HVAC unit and approval of the rear addition with the following conditions:

1. That the rear stoop have a fire resistance rating of 1 hour;
2. That the hood over the rear door be eliminated;
3. That the addition either be sided in wood or fiber cement siding;
4. That if fiber cement siding is used, it be smooth (not simulated wood grain) and be installed so that the nails do not show; and
5. That the following statement must appear in the General Notes of all site plans so that on-site contractors are aware of the requirement:
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.

NOTE: Docket item #4 must be approved before this docket item may be considered.

DISCUSSION:

Applicant s Description of Undertaking:

We would like to build a 2-story addition to the rear end of our home. The addition will give us a much needed family room and another bedroom.

Issue:

The applicant is requesting approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness for a new two story addition replacing the existing rear ell. The new addition will 27'3" long by 12'8 ½" wide, extending nearly the full width of the main block. The new addition will have a gable roof with the gable perpendicular to the street. The addition will be approximately 23' at its highest point, less than 2' higher than the old addition at its highest point. With the new addition, the total gross square footage of the house will increase by 448 square feet. The new construction will be slightly smaller than that portion of the historic house which will remain. The addition will be clad in vinyl siding with a 5" exposure to match the existing. The windows will be wood double hung windows with simulated divided lights. The roof will be asphalt shingle. The siding and trim will match the existing in color.

The north and south walls of the addition will be without openings of any kind, as required by building code. The rear (west) elevation will have three bays with a door in the northern bay and two windows in the southern bays of the first story and two windows in the outer bays of the second story. In the first story, the six-over-six windows will have three-light transoms above. The half glazed door will have multiple lights over two panels. The drawings show what appear to be wooden steps and railings leading to the door and a bracketed hood above the door. As explained below, the hood must be eliminated to ensure the required open space. The steps and railings must have at least 1 hour fire resistance rating per building code requirements. Thus the appearance of the rear stoop will probably be different from that shown in the drawings. Staff

notes that building code typically requires an exterior light fixture at each exit; none is shown on the drawings.

According to the applicant, the project will include new HVAC equipment which will be located within the new addition and will not entail a unit on the roof or ground. It will, however, require that a grill be located on either the north or south side of the house. Depending on location and size, this through-wall unit may not be visible from the public right-of-way. However, Staff notes that, per building code requirements, all exterior walls within 3' from an interior property line shall have a fire resistance rating of 1 hour, from both sides, *with no openings permitted within the wall*. The proposed grill would appear to be contrary to this requirement.

The lower portion of the rear of the house will not be visible due to the 6' fence at the rear of the property.

History and Analysis:

As discussed in docket item #4, The free-standing two story frame house at 312 North Payne Street was constructed between 1877 and 1902. The vernacular Italianate house at 312 North Payne has been altered over the years and currently has vinyl siding and vinyl windows. 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 addition at 314 North Payne Street in 1994 (BAR Case #94-11 & 12PG, 6/22/1994).

The proposed rear addition will comply with the zoning ordinance requirements if the canopy above the rear addition stairs is removed. Open stairs are counted towards open space. However, if covered, the amount of area covered by the canopy will result in open space below the required 800 square feet. In addition, to meet both open space and parking requirements, the applicant must provide a clearly defined parking area of 8' by 16'. Staff notes that as the proposed addition, along with the adjustment in parking area, leaves exactly the required amount of open space, there is no tolerance for construction error.

In the opinion of Staff, the proposed addition is acceptable. Staff is troubled by the fact that the new addition will be nearly the same size as the remaining historic house. However, at 692.6 square feet, the new addition is modest in size and the expanded house will be smaller than its neighbor to the south and minimally larger than the neighbor to the north. In addition the relationship between the historic house and addition is not one that the public will perceive as neither can be seen together. Staff believes the design of the addition is appropriate with one exception: the use of vinyl siding.

The fact that the vinyl siding will remain on the main block does not justify its use on the addition. The *Design Guidelines* discourage the use of vinyl siding and suggest that wherever possible synthetic materials should be removed and the original type of siding be reapplied (Siding - Page 2). Staff believes the addition should be sided with either wood or fiber cement siding. The Board has reviewed a number of applications for the use of fiber cement siding and has adopted the following policy with respect to the product.

1. That fiber cement siding not be installed on an historic structure;
2. That historic materials should not be removed to install fiber cement siding;
3. That fiber cement siding replace other artificial or composite siding;
4. That the nails not show in the installation of the siding; and,
5. That smooth (non simulated wood grain) siding be installed.
6. That BAR Staff may administratively approve the installation of fiber cement siding on *non-historic* buildings (those constructed in 1975 or later).

Thus, fiber cement may be used on the addition if it is smooth (not simulated wood grain) and the nails do not show in the installation. Staff believes the use of simulated divided lights is acceptable here as the windows are well removed from the public right-of-way. In addition, while Staff would normally prefer a masonry rather than a framed and sided chimney, as is proposed for the new addition. However, the chimney will be located halfway back on the roof of the addition and is not likely to be very visible.

Staff notes that, in accordance with zoning requirements, the hood over the rear door must be eliminated and, in accordance with building code requirements, the stoop must have a fire resistance rating of 1 hour and recommends that these be conditions of the approval. With respect to the proposed through-wall HVAC system, insufficient information was provided to determine whether it will be permitted by code or whether it will be architecturally compatible. Should building code requirements prohibit the through-wall system, there are other considerations. Locating the new HVAC equipment on the ground may reduce the open space, which is currently proposed to be the minimum required. Locating the new HVAC equipment on the roof will require either screening or a Waiver of Rooftop Screening, both necessitating Board approval. Thus, Staff recommends that the HVAC equipment be deferred for restudy.

Lastly, Staff notes the comments of Alexandria Archeology and recommends that they be included as conditions to the approval.

CITY DEPARTMENT COMMENTS

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

Code Enforcement:

- C-1 All exterior walls within 3 feet from an interior property line shall have a fire resistance rating of 1 hour, from both sides, with no openings permitted within the wall. As alternative, a 2 hour fire wall may be provided. This condition is also applicable to porches with roofs and skylights within setback distance.
- C-2 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.
- C-3 Roof drainage systems must be installed so as neither to impact upon, nor cause erosion/damage to adjacent property.
- C-4 A soils report must be submitted with the building permit application.
- C-5 New construction must comply with the current edition of the Uniform Statewide Building Code (USBC).
- C-6 Alterations to the existing structure must comply with the current edition of the Uniform Statewide Building Code (USBC).
- C-7 Construction permits are required for this project. Plans shall accompany the permit application that fully detail the construction as well as layouts and schematics of the mechanical, electrical, and plumbing systems.
- C-8 Permission from adjacent property owners is required if access to the adjacent properties is required to complete the proposed construction. Otherwise, a plan shall be submitted to demonstrate the construction techniques utilized to keep construction solely on the referenced property.
- C-9 A wall location plat prepared by a land surveyor is required to be submitted to this office prior to requesting any framing inspection.

Historic Alexandria:

No comment.

Alexandria Archaeology:

- F-1 This house is on a lot which was once part of a 19th-century Free Black Neighborhood. Therefore there is the potential for this property to yield archaeological resources that

could provide insight into domestic life in 19th-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.