

Docket Item #6
BAR CASE #2003-0297

BAR Meeting
December 17, 2003

ISSUE: After-the-fact alterations

APPLICANT: Mark P. Casey

LOCATION: 412 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 alterations with the following conditions:

1. That the four new vinyl clad windows on the front and south facades be replaced with wood, one-over-one windows or, alternatively, all five front windows be replaced with wood windows and the two new vinyl windows on the less prominent south facade be left in place;
2. That the window trim on the front be replaced to match the remaining trim above;
3. That the new door be a four panel wood door;
4. That the existing transom and door surround be left in place;
5. That the storm door either be altered or replaced to be simple and open; and,
6. That the railing on the porch be painted to match the trim as soon as is practicable.

DISCUSSION:

Applicant s Description of Undertaking:

Replacement of existing vinyl windows in front of home (2) - facing N. Payne St., with vinyl clad Anderson. Replacement of existing vinyl windows in the side of home (2) - facing Princess St., with vinyl clad Anderson. Replacement of existing entrance door and transom with 3/0 x 6/8 door with transom.

Issue:

The applicant is requesting a Certificate of Appropriateness for after-the-fact window replacement. On the first story front (east) and south sides, existing one-over-one vinyl windows were replaced by unevenly divided double hung vinyl clad wood windows. The wood trim around these windows was removed. In addition, the applicant is requesting approval for a new six-panel wood entry door and transom. The existing transom and door trim appears to be original, while the door itself appears to be a modern replacement. The application is silent on the existing storm door. The white finish storm door has both bars and scroll work designs. Lastly, Staff notes that the side porch railing has been replaced with stock, pressure treated railing.

Mark and Beth Casey purchased the property at 412 North Payne Street in December 2000. In 2001, the applicant received a permit to renovate the kitchen and bathroom (BLD2001-00274, 1/23/2001). In 2002, the applicant received a permit to demolish and remodel three upstairs bedrooms (BLD2002-00384, 1/22/2002). BAR Staff approved these permits with the understanding that the work was confined to the interior. On June 17, 2002, BAR Staff administratively approved as historically appropriate replacement the installation of a 6' high board-on-board fence, to replace the chain link fence at the rear of the property. The new fence was to be located entirely within the property lines of 412 North Payne Street.

In August 18, 2003, BAR Staff received a complaint that the applicant was doing interior work without a permit and intended to replace windows. On August 19, 2003, Code Enforcement Staff visited the property and found no one present, but did report that no window replacement had taken place. BAR Staff also made a site visit to confirm that the windows had not been

replaced. On August 26, 2003, the applicant filed for a permit to renovate the first floor living room, dining room and hallway. The permit, *for interior work only* was issued on September 4, 2003 (BLD2003-01923). The contractor for the project was Eggleston Carpentry. Eggleston is the same contractor who demolished the addition at 403 North West Street without a permit or BAR approval (BAR Case #2003-0253 & 254, 11/12/2003). On October 17, 2003, Staff observed that the four first story windows had been replaced. A letter and a citation for zoning violation for alterations without BAR approval carrying a fine of \$50.00 was sent to the applicant on October 21, 2003. On November 14, 2003, the applicant made application to the BAR for review of the after-the-fact alterations.

History and Analysis:

The two story, three bay frame house with half mansard at 412 North Payne Street was constructed circa 1909 for William H. Peck (Permit #241, 4/1/1909). The house is a vernacular structure with Italianate stylistic details, including the window trim, bracketed cornice and door hood. Its form with flat roof and half mansard is typical of Alexandria houses in the late 19th and early 20th century. Peck is also believed to have constructed the paired houses at 402 & 404 North Payne Street and 406 & 408 North Payne Street circa 1908 (Permit #215, 8/10/1908). The five houses are very similar in appearance, but only 412 North Payne Street retains the original Italianate door hood. A grocer and wood and coal dealer with a business located at the southeast corner of Queen and Payne Streets, Peck had numerous houses constructed in the vicinity in the years between 1902 and 1909. The existing one story rear addition and porch appears to have been added in two stages, attaining the current footprint in 1927 (Permit #935, 9/19/1927).

In 1985, in an early Parker-Gray case, the Board of Architectural Review approved vinyl siding and vinyl replacement windows at 412 North Payne Street (BAR Case #85-46PG, 4/8/1985). The Staff report recommended denial of the application, noting that the building was in original condition, but also noting that, because the district had been established so recently, specific standards for this area have not been adequately developed. The photographs accompanying the 1985 application show that the house had one-over-one windows on the front and mostly two-over-two windows on the side and rear.

In the years since that decision, specific standards have been developed and are explained in detail in the Board's *Design Guidelines*. The most recent set of *Guidelines* was adopted in 1993. According to the *Design Guidelines*, windows are a principal character defining feature of a building and replacement windows should be appropriate to the historic period of the architectural style of the building (Windows - Page 1 & 2). Thus, in the opinion of Staff, the replacement windows are inappropriate and must be replaced. The house at 412 North Payne Street is an early 20th century vernacular Italianate building. The proposed windows are not only vinyl clad (a non-historic material) but also oddly proportioned with a smaller top and longer bottom sash. The original windows as well as the previous vinyl replacement windows were evenly divided between the upper and lower sash.

The fact that the new windows replaced vinyl windows is not relevant. Had the Board been given an opportunity to comment prior to the replacement, consistent with its present practice and the *Design Guidelines*, the Board most probably would have recommended that the new

windows be wood. Therefore, Staff recommends that the four new vinyl clad windows (two on the front and two on the south facade) be replaced with wood, one-over-one windows. Alternatively, if the applicant is concerned about uniformity of appearance, all five front windows could be replaced with wood windows and the new vinyl windows could be left in place on the less prominent south facade. The Board took this approach, concentrating on the front facade, with after-the-fact window replacement cases at 307 North Fayette Street (BAR Case #2002-016, 2/27/2002) and 310 North Patrick Street (BAR Case #2003-0044, 3/26/2003). The first case was appealed to City Council, which upheld the Board's decision on May 28, 2002. Council gave the owner 18 months to comply with the Board's recommendation. The unauthorized vinyl windows are now being replaced with the two-over-two wood windows, as required by the Board and Council. The window trim which was removed from the front first story windows was either original or an accurate copy of the original trim and must be replaced in-kind.

With respect to the front door, Staff recommends that the replacement door be a wood four panel door, rather than six panel as proposed. The *Design Guidelines* note that doors and their surrounds are as much a character defining feature of architectural styles as are windows and caution that doors and surrounds should be appropriate to the style of the building (Exterior Doors - Page 1). The six panel configuration is typical of the Colonial and Federal periods. This house, constructed in the first decade of the 20th century in a vernacular Italianate style, could have had a number of different door configurations, but almost certainly would not have had a six panel door. Thus, Staff recommends a four panel door as being most close in design to the door type requested by the applicant, but more architecturally appropriate for the house. Staff recommends that the existing transom and door surround remain, as they do appear to be original to the house and in good condition. The application does not address the existing storm door and it is not clear when it was installed. The storm door is clearly inappropriate to the period of the house and will obscure views to the wood paneled door beyond. According to the *Design Guidelines*:

Storm doors should be very simple and open. Extraneous and distracting decoration such as cast aluminum or plastic foliage on storm doors is strongly discouraged (Exterior Doors - Page3).

The existing storm door has both bars and decorative scrollwork. If possible, the existing door should be altered to a simple, fully glazed door. If that is not possible, Staff recommends that it be replaced with an appropriate door, as described in the *Design Guidelines*. In a similar case in 2001, the Board required that inappropriate storm doors at 220, 224, & 228 North Payne be altered or replaced and this has been done (BAR2002-0044, 4/10/2002).

Lastly, Staff recommends that, as soon as is practicable, the wood railing on the porch be painted to match the rest of the trim.

CITY DEPARTMENT COMMENTS

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

Code Enforcement:

C-1 Construction permits are required for the proposed project.

Historic Alexandria:

No comment.