

Docket Item #8
BAR CASE #2003-0300

BAR Meeting
December 17, 2003

ISSUE: Alterations
APPLICANT: James Symons
LOCATION: 1303 Cameron Street
ZONE: CD/Commercial

****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 following conditions:

1. That the color of the four bays and the doors within them match;
2. That the Brakes and Shocks sign, located within the bay which will be opened up, *not* be moved to another location on the building; and,
3. That the new doors be kept free of stickers and signage.

NOTE: Docket item #7 must be approved before this docket item may be considered.

DISCUSSION:

Applicant s Description of Undertaking:

Replace one existing garage door with a new door the same size. Replace one existing garage door with a larger door. Open up doorway to original height.

Issue:

The applicant is requesting a Certificate of Appropriateness to replace an existing garage door with a new door of the same size and to replace the adjacent existing garage door with a larger one. The new doors will be located in the center two bays of the four bay garage. The larger door will be in the easternmost center bay and will fill the original opening. The smaller door is 10' wide by 8' high. The larger door is 10' by 14' high. The doors will be white finished aluminum with two rows of four lights each. The lights will be located at the top of the smaller door and at the center of the taller door. The existing doors are wood paneled doors with a row of lights at the top.

History and Analysis:

As discussed in docket item #7, the four bay automotive repair garage appears to have been constructed after 1941. Its only architectural feature is the series of four 10' wide by 14' high service bays in the front facade, each which has been closed in, partially or in full, with concrete blocks.

The proposed garage door alterations comply with the zoning ordinance requirements.

In the opinion of Staff, the proposed alterations are acceptable with certain conditions. While Staff would prefer wood rather than aluminum replacement doors, Staff believes they are acceptable here. According to the *Design Guidelines*, Flush or paneled metal or open metal grate garage doors may be appropriate for 20th century retail, commercial and industrial buildings (Exterior Doors - Page 3). The building at 1303 Cameron Street is a utilitarian building dating to the mid 20th century. Furthermore, according to the applicant, commercial garage doors of this size are not available in wood. However, Staff is concerned that appearance of the garage, which was once unified in its paint scheme and sign program, is deteriorating. Staff believes that the current scheme, painting the infilled bays and the various doors in them the same color, is helpful in unifying the appearance of the facade. The new white doors will contrast with the current dark colored bays, giving the doors unwarranted visual prominence and

accentuating the lack of symmetry in the alterations to the bays. Thus, Staff recommends that the bays be painted white or, preferably, that the doors have a dark finish and the bays be painted to match. Secondly, Staff recommends that the Brakes and Shocks sign, located within the bay which will be opened up, *not* be moved to another location on the building. Staff is not certain that the four small signs located at the top of the bays were ever approved by the Board. (In 1989, the Board did approve a large flat wall sign, now removed, and a projecting sign, still extant (BAR Case #89-25, 8/14/89)). Finally, Staff notes that the plethora of signs and stickers in the glazed portions of the existing doors gives the building an unkempt appearance and defeats the purpose of the glazing. Thus, Staff recommends that the new doors be kept free of stickers and signage.

Staff notes that the applicant is the property owner, not the owner of the automotive repair business at 1303 Cameron Street. Staff would like to encourage the business owner to replace the existing projecting sign, as it is in a deteriorated condition and barely functional, and would be happy to assist with the application and BAR review process.

CITY DEPARTMENT COMMENTS

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

Code Enforcement:

C-1 A construction permit is required for the proposed project.

Historic Alexandria:

It appears [that the] original doors were wood. I prefer wood to aluminum.