

Docket Item #10
BAR CASE #2003-0302

BAR Meeting
December 17, 2003

ISSUE: Re-approval of rear addition & alterations

APPLICANT: Robert S. Larson

LOCATION: 1119 ½ Queen Street

ZONE: CL/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. The front window sash and trim should be repaired and retained if at all possible. If they can not be repaired, they should be replaced by true divided light wood windows that match the dimensions of the existing sash and trim as closely as possible;
2. The front door should be repaired and retained; and,
3. The following statement must appear in the General Notes of the site plan 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 #9 must be approved before this docket item can be considered.

DISCUSSION:

Applicant s Description of the Undertaking:

Add a 2 story rear addition with new siding, windows & doors.

Update:

The proposed addition and alterations are the same as those proposed last year (BAR Case #2002-145) and approved by the Board on June 26, 2002, except for the following changes:

- 1) Replacement of the existing front door;
- 2) Replacement of front stoop;
- 3) Replacement of the existing front windows with new simulated divided light wood windows;
- 4) Replacement of the existing east side windows with simulated divided light wood windows;
- 5) Change of second story rear windows in the new addition from casement to double hung;
- 6) Additional basement to extend under the existing main block; and,
- 7) Installation of light wells and windows on the east and north (rear) elevations of the new basement.

This last alteration is not expected to be visible from the public right-of-way.

Issue:

The applicant is requesting approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness for an addition which will basically follow the same footprint as the existing one story addition which it will replace, but will rise two stories and will include a basement. In addition, with respect to the existing house, the applicant is proposing a shed roofed dormer at the rear of the roof of the two story section of the house, the installation of three new window openings in the east elevation of the main block, the replacement of the existing front windows and door, and the construction of a full basement. The proposed changes are described in detail below:

Historic House

The existing front siding and trim and the standing seam metal roof will be retained and painted. The proposed color scheme for both the existing main block and proposed addition is beige with white trim and red roof. The applicant now proposes to replace the existing two-over-two wood windows on the front elevation with new Kolbe and Kolbe simulated divided light wood windows and to replace the wood trim around the windows with new wood trim to match. Similarly, rather than retaining the existing front door, the applicant now proposes to replace it with a new wood door to match. (This change is not reflected on the plans, but was communicated to Staff subsequent to the submission of the application.) The applicant also proposes to replace the existing front stoop, The existing stoop consists of a concrete pad with approximately 2' high concrete cheek walls. The new stoop will be similar, but with lower cheek walls and will be constructed of brick. A coach lamp type exterior light (Kichler-9707 OB) will be located adjacent to the front door.

The side and rear elevations, which are currently clad in brick-tex will be resided with wood siding to match that on the front. The existing window in the west gable will be replaced with a four-light casement window, matching the existing double hung window in size and number of lights. Three new four-light casement windows will be added to the east side, in the gable and in the first and second stories at the south end. The existing six-over-six windows in the main block and in the two story addition which is to be retained will be replaced with a new two-over-two simulated divided light wood window and wood trim. A window well and window will be installed below grade on the back of the east side to light the new basement. The proposed new addition will abut the north wall of the existing two story house. The roof of the addition will tie into the rear slope of the existing gable roof near the lower edge. A shed roof dormer is proposed for the rear slope of the existing roof. The dormer will be clad in wood siding to match that elsewhere and will have a metal roof. It will have a group of three four-light casement windows. All new windows will be wood with simulated divided lights. A portion of the rear roof of the existing house will be replaced with standing seam metal to match the existing. All gutters and downspouts on both the existing house and new addition will be standard white aluminum.

Addition

The proposed two story addition will have a gable roof with a pitch similar to that seen on the west elevation of the existing house. A two foot deep projection at the north (rear) end of the new addition will have a more steeply pitched gable, echoing the roofline seen on the east elevation of the earliest portion of the house. The addition will be clad in the same materials and painted the same colors as the main block of the house. The west elevation will be blind. The east elevation will have paired, wood double hung windows with a two-over-two configuration in the first story. Two paired wood casement windows with four-lights will be centered above these in the second story. The north (rear) elevation will have a small inset porch on the east side, first story, echoing that on the existing one story rear addition. The porch will be supported by a square wood post with applied trim. Within the porch, a fully glazed wood door with transom above will lead to the new kitchen. According to the applicant, this exit will be lit by a down light, and thus the fixture is not visible in the drawings. The north elevation will have a pair of wood double hung windows with a two-over-two configuration in the first story and, centered in the gable in the second story, a group of three of the same windows. All new windows will be

wood with simulated divided lights. A window well at the base of the north elevation will light the family room in the basement level below.

The HVAC units for the house will be located on the east side of the house, just behind the main block. With vacant lots on either side and an alley behind, 1119 ½ Queen Street is highly visible from all angles. After construction, the applicant intends to replace the existing fence with a new wood fence in the same location. The fence, which will require administrative approval from BAR Staff, will screen views to the HVAC units and to the lower level of the house at the back.

History and Analysis

The freestanding, two-story, frame, vernacular Italianate dwelling is an excellent example of its type and maintains a high level of integrity. Map research suggests that the house was constructed prior to 1877 and between 1896 and 1902 attained its present configuration with a large, two-story and smaller, one story addition extending out from the main block toward the rear of the lot. By 1931, a small porch off the west side of the one story kitchen addition had been partially enclosed to create a mud room. Today the house at 1119 ½ Queen Street is highly visible due to the adjacent vacant lots. However, throughout most of its existence, it had neighbors to the east and west.

On June 26, 2002, the Board of Architectural Review approved a Permit to Demolish/Capsulate and a Certificate of Appropriateness for a new two story rear addition and alterations (BAR Case #s 2002-144 & 145). That approval included the following conditions:

1. That Staff approve the following:
 - a. The exterior lights;
 - b. The design of the post at the rear of the house;
 - c. The detailing of the windows; and,
 - d. The gutters and downspouts.
2. The chimney is to be rebuilt exactly as it currently appears with corbeling and that the brick for reconstruction be reused from the existing chimney or the chimney that is to be demolished at the rear of the house; and,
3. A true standing seam crimped metal roof is to be installed.

The work was not undertaken and the BAR approvals expired. The current application is identical to that previously approved, except for the items noted above in the Update section. Staff believes the current plans and submitted materials adequately address the above conditions.

On December 11, 2003, the Board of Zoning Appeals re-approved the variance previously approved on June 13, 2002 (BZA Case #s 2003-00063 and 2002-00041). The applicant required a variance from the west side setback requirements. The zoning ordinance states that a CL zone lot is subject to two 8 foot side set back requirements. The existing building is nonconforming with regard to the CL zone side yard regulation along the west side property line and the proposed addition will continue this condition.

Staff notes that the proposed building will be within two square feet of the allowable Floor Area

Ratio and will leave exactly the required amount of open space. In such cases, BAR Staff typically notes that there is virtually no room left for error and that if the dimensions of the building exceed what is shown on the plans at the wall check, steps must be taken to reduce the size of the building, to bring it into compliance.

In the 2002 Staff report for this project, Staff recommended approval, noting that the applicant had succeeded with a respectful addition and renovation of the existing house. For the most part, Staff believes the current alterations to those previously approved plans are minor and in keeping with the *Design Guidelines*. However, Staff notes that the alterations to the plans for the existing house no longer preserve as much of the existing fabric as in the 2002 proposal. The current application calls for replacement of the front door and all existing windows on the front and east side, along with the associated window trim. Staff believes these features to be historic if not original.

Taking into account the unusually early date of construction, fine architectural quality and high level of integrity of 1119 ½ Queen Street relative to the Parker-Gray District, Staff strongly believes every effort should be made to retain the original features of the house. The *Design Guidelines* note that a central tenet of the philosophy of historic preservation is that original historic materials should be retained and repaired rather than replaced (Windows - Page 2). Similarly, the *Guidelines* note that, it is the general policy of the Boards not to approve wholesale replacement of existing historic windows (Windows - Page 2). The previously approved plans called for retention of the front door and all but the two gable windows in the historic house. At the very least, Staff recommends that the front of the house be restored with the original fabric: window sash and trim, door and surround, along with the existing siding. The recommendation that these elements be retained is not simply a matter of blind adherence to preservation principle; these elements give the house a unique sense of history and a texture that will be lost if replaced by replications.

If the Board should determine that replacement of the front windows is acceptable, Staff recommends that the replacement windows be true divided light, rather than simulated. True divided light windows more closely duplicate the construction and appearance of the historic windows than simulated divided light windows. According to the *Guidelines*, simulated divided light windows are appropriate only for windows which have minimal visibility from the public right-of-way (Windows - Page 2).

Staff notes the comments of Alexandria Archaeology and recommends that they be included in the approval.

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 be taken to prevent the spread of rodents from the construction site to the surrounding community and sewers.
- C-2 Roof drainage systems must be installed so as neither to impact upon, nor cause erosion/damage to adjacent property.
- C-3 A soils report must be submitted with the building permit application.
- C-4 New construction must comply with the current edition of the Uniform Statewide Building Code (USBC).
- C-5 Alterations to the existing structure must comply with the current edition of the Uniform Statewide Building Code (USBC).
- C-6 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-7 Below grade habitable spaces and bedrooms shall comply with the USBC and all applicable provisions for emergency escape and rescue openings [R310]. Escape and rescue openings shall not be obstructed by exterior decks or other structures which would prevent safe and timely egress from the structure.

Office of Historic Alexandria:

- F-1 No Comment.

Alexandria Archeology:

- F-1 Historic maps indicate that a structure was present on this property by the late 19th century. The lot therefore has the potential to yield archaeological resources that could provide insight into domestic activities 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 above statements must appear in the General Notes of the site plan so that on-site contractors are aware of the requirement.