

Docket Item #6
BAR CASE #2004-0004

BAR Meeting
January 28, 2004

ISSUE: Alterations to porch and door

APPLICANT: William Cromley

LOCATION: 522 North Alfred 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 replacement front door and new front porch, as submitted, and denial of the request to paint the brick front wall.

NOTE: Docket item #5 must be approved before this docket item may be considered.

DISCUSSION:

Applicant's Description of Undertaking:

“Demolish portico; build new front porch.”

Issue:

The applicant is requesting a certificate of appropriateness for a new one story porch on the front facade of the house. The proposed porch will replace the existing portico and, at 15.4' long, it will extend nearly the full width of the house. It will project out 8' front the front of the house. The raised base and steps will be brick. The steps will be located on the southern end aligned with the front door. The simple wood railing will have straight pickets. Four columns will support the hip roof. The 7" diameter round columns will be reinforced gypsum, a moldable composite material consisting of gypsum cement and glass fibers. The roof will be standing seam metal painted black. The wood elements and reinforced gypsum columns will be painted white.

The applicant proposes to replace the existing front door with a new wood door consisting of four panels with two lights at the top. It is assumed that the door will be painted, but the color is unknown.

Subsequent to submission of the application, the property owner requested that the Board also consider her request to paint the brick front wall of the house. It is assumed that the color of the front will match the other sides. The sides and rear of the house are clad in lap siding, possibly masonite, painted a light tan.

History and Analysis:

As discussed in docket item #5, 522 North Alfred Street was constructed circa 1963. In 1988 and 1990, the Board approved an addition and alterations to the property (BAR Case #88-34PG, 8/15/1988 and BAR Case #90-40PG, 11/28/1990).

The proposed alterations comply with the zoning ordinance requirements.

Staff believes the proposed porch is compatible with the house at 522 North Alfred Street and neighboring buildings. While there is a preference for the use of natural materials in the historic district, Staff believes the use of reinforced gypsum columns rather than wood columns is acceptable here as the porch is a new element on a modern building.

With respect to painting the brick facade of the house, the zoning ordinance requires that a certificate of appropriateness be obtained for painting a previously unpainted masonry surface. According to the *Design Guidelines*, “the Boards strongly discourage the painting of a previously unpainted masonry surface.” (Design Guidelines, Paint Colors - Page 1). Among the reasons for this policy is that historically most brick buildings were not painted and that brick buildings are easier to maintain and help to reinforce the architectural character of the Alexandria as a “red brick city” if left unpainted. While Staff appreciates that 522 North Alfred Street is a modern building and only has brick on the front, with painted lap siding on all other sides, Staff recommends against painting the brick.

Therefore, Staff recommends that the Board approve the porch and door as submitted but deny the request to paint the unpainted masonry facade.

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.
- 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.

Historic Alexandria:

“No comment.”