

Docket Item #5
BAR CASE #2004-0083

BAR Meeting
May 26, 2004

ISSUE: After-the-fact approval of a shed

APPLICANT: Guy Brackett

LOCATION: 319 North West 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 application as submitted.

I. ISSUE:

The applicant is requesting a certificate of appropriateness for the existing frame gable-roofed storage shed. The shed measures 8' by 8' and is 8' high at the peak of the gable. The shed walls are clad in T-111 and painted grey. The roof is clad in asphalt shingles. Double doors are located in the gable end facing the house. The gable end facing the rear alley and the sides are blank. The doors have Victorian type cutout ornamentation and Victorian type gingerbread trim is located in the gable facing the house. The trim is painted white.

The shed is located 12' in from the end of the back yard a several away from the north and south property lines. The shed is minimally visible from the front of the property, through the narrow "horse alley" on the north side. The rear of the shed is readily visible from the public alley behind the property. There is no rear fence.

Staff observed the shed in early Spring. Research revealed no prior approval for the shed. Therefore, Staff requested that the property owner apply to the Parker-Gray Board of Architectural Review for a certificate of appropriateness.

II. HISTORY:

According to Sanborn fire insurance maps, the two story frame end unit rowhouse at 319 North West Street was erected prior to 1902, the first year that the Sanborn Company mapped the 300 block of North West Street. Judging from the form and decorative treatment of the existing row of dwellings, the house was likely erected during the last decades of the 19th century.

The house has been subjected to significant exterior alterations over the years, including re-cladding with various non-historic materials and replacement of original windows. In 2000, the Board approved partial demolition and alterations and a rear addition (BAR Case #s2000-278 & 279, 12/13/2000 and 1/3/2001). Subsequently, the Board approved changes to the previously approved fenestration (BAR Case #2001-006, 2/14/2001) and denied the request to approve after-the-fact the installation of fiber cement siding (BAR Case #2001-0047, 3/28/2001). The applicant purchased the property in late 2003, subsequent to the above renovation.

III. ANALYSIS:

The proposed shed complies with open space, side and rear yard setback requirements for the RB zone.

Staff believes the existing shed is acceptable. The *Design Guidelines* state that, "pre-fabricated late 20th century storage sheds and greenhouses are generally not appropriate in the historic district." (Accessory Structures - Page 3) The shed at 319 North West Street is just such a shed. Although it attempts to look "historic" with the gable roof and pseudo-Victorian details, its character is distinctly pre-fabricated 20th (and now 21st) century suburban. In addition, the walls are clad in T-111, a non-historic material generally considered inappropriate for use in the historic districts.

Normally Staff would be unable to recommend approval of the shed. However, the property is located at the end of a dead end alley and the shed is just barely visible from the street. In addition, the rear and side facades which are visible from the alley are relatively innocuous, without any openings or detailing.

IV. STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends approval of the existing shed.

CITY DEPARTMENT COMMENTS

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

Code Enforcement:

“No comments.”

Historic Alexandria:

“It might be nicer, less of a statement, without the trim?”