

Docket Item #7  
BAR CASE #2003-0218

BAR Meeting  
May 26, 2004

**ISSUE:** Rear addition  
**APPLICANT:** Sheila Farrell  
**LOCATION:** 409 North Henry Street  
**ZONE:** CL/Commercial

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**BOARD ACTION, February 25, 2004: Deferred for restudy, 7-0.**

The Board combined the discussion of docket item #s 2 & 3. On a motion by Mr. Meick, seconded by Mr. Zuckerkandel, the Board deferred for restudy the Permit to Demolish and the Certificate of Appropriateness for the addition. The vote on the motion was 7-0.

**REASON:** The Board agreed with the Staff recommendations but felt that there were too many unresolved issues to approve the project. In addition to the Staff recommendations, the Board had the following concerns and recommendations:

1. That the design has no basis in the historical architectural idiom of the Parker-Gray District;
2. That the first and second stories of the rear elevation do not relate well to each other;
3. That the design should be simplified and made more symmetrical;
4. That the first story could be improved by the addition of a second window, perhaps ganged together with the first;
5. That the fanlight above the sliding door is not typical of the district and should be omitted;
6. That a rectangular transom would be appropriate above the sliding door;
7. That the roof drainage system should be redesigned to avoid encroachment on the property to the north;
8. That a shed or flat roof which slopes to the south could address the drainage issue and create a flounder form addition, which is more historically typical of the district;
9. That the exterior light fixtures should be smaller than shown on the elevation and that the first story light be located to the side of the door rather than above it, if possible;
10. That the windows could be simplified by removing the muntins;
11. That vertical trim boards should separate the addition from the new construction on the side walls;
12. That care should be taken to ensure that the interior plans and exterior elevations correspond;

13. That the applicant may want to consider seeking the assistance of a design professional.

**SPEAKERS:** Brad Novak, property owner, spoke in support of the project and indicated that he was willing to consider any changes the Board might suggest.  
Brian Carr, contractor, spoke in support.

**\*\*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 for an addition and alterations with the following conditions:

1. That the addition be reduced in height by 2';
2. That the small windows at the upper north end of the east and west elevations be eliminated;
3. That the muntins be eliminated from the windows and doors on the addition;
4. That the sliding doors, windows, railing and trim be wood (no vinyl or aluminum cladding);
5. That the exterior light fixtures be approved by Staff prior to installation;
6. That the applicant remove all aluminum siding, coordinate investigative demolition with Staff to determine the type and dimensions of the original wood siding and select the appropriate replacement wood siding, with the approval of Staff;
7. That the AC unit location and screening be approved by Staff prior to installation;
8. That the following statement 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 #6 must be approved before this docket item can be considered.

**UPDATE:**

In response to the comments of the Board at the public hearing of February 25, 2004, the applicant retained an architect and revised the design of the addition to a flounder, rather than an end gable, form.

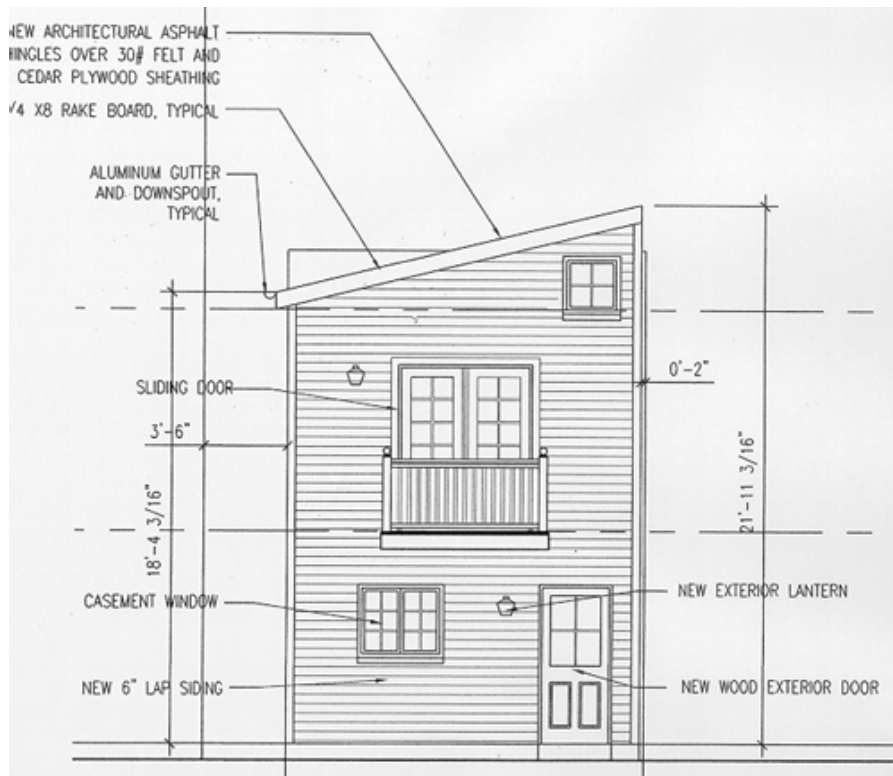
**I. ISSUE:**

The applicant is requesting approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness for a two story, flounder form, frame addition to extend from the rear of the existing two story, flat roofed, frame house at 409 North Henry Street. The roof of the flounder will slope from north to south, eliminating prior concerns about how to deal with drainage on the north side of the building, which is on the property line. At its highest point on the north edge, the roof will be 22'6" above grade. This is nearly three feet higher than the existing house at the front. At the south edge, the roof will be 19' high. The addition will be 14' 4" wide; the same width as the existing rear wall minus the 2" on the north side where the existing house encroaches on the neighboring property. The addition will extend back 12' from the existing house, which is 42'6" long.

The addition will be clad in wood lap siding with a 6" reveal. The drawings show trim boards at the corners and at the junction between the new construction and existing house and a 5/4" x 8" rakeboard at the edge of the roof. Brian Carr, the applicant's contractor has confirmed to Staff that these features will be of wood. The roof will be clad in asphalt shingles. There will be an

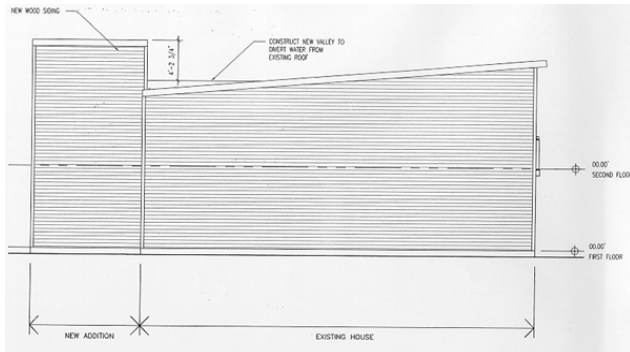
aluminum gutter and downspout on the south side with the downspout located approximately at the joint between the existing house and new addition. The drawings provide little or no information regarding the door and window types. Mr. Carr has confirmed to Staff that the windows and doors will be wood with simulated divided lights. Staff assumes that the door and window trim will be wood as well. All windows are now drawn with a traditional sill. The drawings do not provide any other details with respect to the window or door trim.

The rear or east elevation will have a door and window on the first story. The window will be a multi-light casement. Its location, dictated by the location of the kitchen sink, is slightly to the south of the centerline of the east elevation. The door, located at the north end of the east elevation will be wood and will have four lights above two panels. There will be an exterior light fixture to the side of the door. No details were provided for the light fixture. The second story will have a pair of multi-light sliding doors. A railing with straight pickets and straight posts surmounted by a ball finial will be flush against the sliding doors. Mr. Carr has confirmed to Staff that the railing is wood. A light fixture will be located to the south of the sliding doors. Again, no details were provided for the light fixture. Above the sliding doors, at the extreme north end of the facade, will be a small four light window.

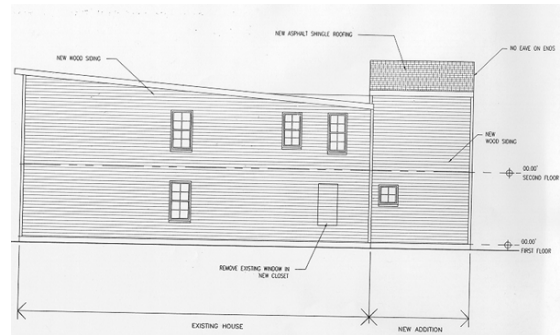


**Figure 1 - Rear Elevation**

The north elevation of the addition will be blind. The south elevation will have a small four light window on the first story. The west elevation of the new addition will project several feet above the roof of the existing house. There will be a small four light window at the high (north) end of this elevation.



**Figure 2 - North elevation**



**Figure 3 - South elevation**

There will be several alterations to the exterior of the existing house. A valley will be added at the rear of the existing roof on the north side to direct water to the south side. An existing window on the south side first story at the rear will be removed to accommodate a new closet and the opening will be infilled and covered in siding. Lastly, the exterior of the existing house which is currently clad in aluminum siding will be clad with new wood siding. No details are provided about the type of wood siding, but it is shown as matching the 6" siding of the new addition. It is assumed that the aluminum siding will be removed prior to the installation of the new siding.

Although not shown on the plans, the applicant previously told Staff that the air conditioning unit will be located at the rear of the new addition on the ground. If this at-grade unit is visible from the public right of way, it should be screened in accordance with the *Design Guidelines* (HVAC Equipment - Pages 2 & 3).

The addition will be visible in views through the block as well as from the public alley behind the property. The detached house has a large parking lot adjoining it to the north and a 3.5' gap between it and the building to the south.

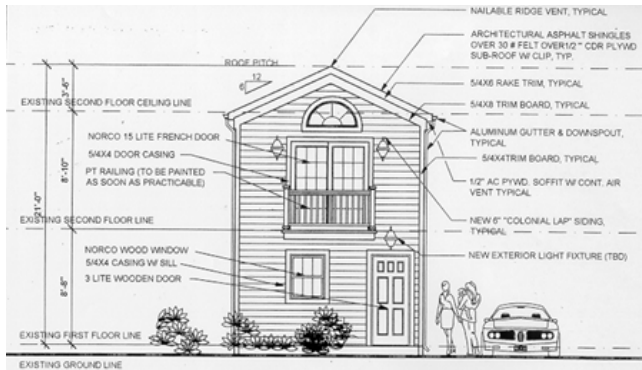
## **II. HISTORY:**

As discussed in docket item #6, the two story frame house was constructed circa 1903 (Building Permit #37, 4/21/1903). The building attained its present size circa 1931 when the original one story rear ell was extended and raised by a story. While the building retains its original massing when viewed from the front, there is little original exterior fabric extant. The walls are clad in aluminum siding. The one-over-one wood windows appear to be modern, probably dating to the renovation in 2000. The front door is a modern wood six panel door. If there was once a cornice or any other trim, it has been removed or concealed by the siding.

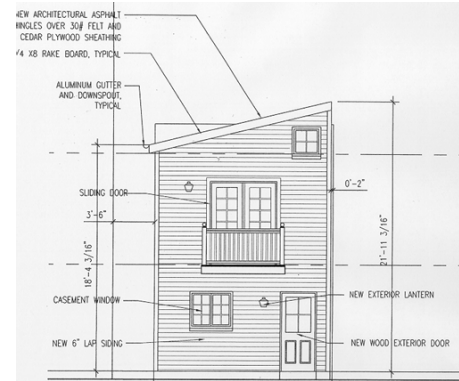
On November 13, 2003, the Board of Zoning Appeals approved a variance to construct a 12' by 14.3' two-story rear addition in the required side (north and south) yards. The proposal included reconfiguring the existing asphalt parking area at the back of the property to provide 849.6 square feet of open space and two off-street parking spaces to meet the open space and parking requirements for a residential building in a CL zone. The CL zone requires a single-family dwelling to provide two minimum side yard setbacks of 8' or one-third the building height, whichever is greater. The existing structure, located on the north property line and 3.5 feet from the south property line is non-complying and the proposed addition will extend these conditions. The Board granted a variance from section 12-1-2(A) of the zoning ordinance relating to physical enlargement of a noncomplying structure. Therefore, the proposed addition meets the requirements of the zoning ordinance.

### III. ANALYSIS:

Staff is pleased to note that the applicant addressed several of the Board's comments from the February 25, 2004 hearing in the revised design for the addition to 409 North Henry Street:



**Figure 4 - Previous submission**



**Figure 5 - Current Submission**

1. The addition is now a flounder. The flounder is a more traditional form than the previously proposed gable end addition and addresses the drainage concerns with respect to the property to the north.
2. The fanlight over the second story sliding doors has been omitted.
3. The exterior light fixtures are smaller and the light for the first story door is now located beside, rather than above, the door.
4. Vertical trim boards have been added to demarcate the new addition from the existing house.
5. The interior plans and exterior elevations now correspond.

However, Staff does continue to have concerns about the proposed design. While Staff believes the flounder form is a good solution for this property, the flounder shown in the revised plans seems excessively tall in relation to the historic house. Although the addition may not be visible above the historic house from directly across Henry Street, it will be visible from the north side in the winter when the leaves are off the trees fronting the parking lot to the north of the house. Staff notes that the previous gable end addition was not as tall as the currently proposed addition. The current plans show the ceiling height in the second floor of the addition starting at 9' on the

south side and rising to 12'3" on the north side. Staff believes the overall height of the addition could be reduced by 2' without sacrificing comfort. While the room would be 7' high at the south end, more than 3/4 of the room would be over 8' high and it would be over 10' at the north end.. The excessive height of the second story seems to be dictated by the desire to add the small attic type windows on the east and west sides of the addition. Staff discussed alternative means of lighting this area, such as with skylights or a band of windows on the south side, with the applicant and his architect, but they were not used.

At the previous hearing, the Board expressed concern over the arrangement of the window and door openings on the rear (east) elevation, suggesting this elevation should be simplified and made more symmetrical. Staff reiterated this concern in a subsequent meeting with the applicant and his architect. While the design has been revised, Staff believes the elevation remains awkward and haphazard. One can only assume that the applicant feels the programmatic needs of the interior do not allow for any further modifications in this area. Similarly, the revised design does not reflect the Board's recommendation that the muntins be eliminated from the windows and doors to further simplify the design. Staff again recommends that the muntins be eliminated.

Finally, Staff has concerns about the lack of specificity of the drawings. Although the contractor has confirmed that they will be wood, materials are not noted on the drawings for the sliding doors, windows, railing and trim. Therefore, Staff recommends including a condition in the approval that these features be wood.

Staff has no significant objection to the proposed alterations to the existing house. The window at the rear of the house on the south side of the first story which is to be infilled is not readily visible. Therefore, Staff believes its loss is acceptable. Staff does believe that further consideration should be given to the type of siding used on the historic house. While the proposed 6" lap wood siding is acceptable for the new addition, it is not clear that it is historically appropriate siding for the historic building. If the 6" refers to the exposed portion of the siding, it would certainly be wider than would have been typical for a late 19<sup>th</sup> century house. Staff would like the applicant to undertake selective demolition in several locations on the exterior of the historic house to determine if the original siding remains and, if so, what profile and dimension it has. Furthermore, in some cases the original siding, often buried under several layers of replacement siding, remains in fair condition and can be retained.

#### **IV. STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS:**

Staff believes the flounder form of the addition is an improvement over the prior design and recommends approval of the plans for the addition and alterations with the following conditions:

1. That the addition be reduced in height by 2';
2. That the small windows at the upper north end of the east and west elevations be eliminated;
3. That the muntins be eliminated from the windows and doors on the addition;
4. That the sliding doors, windows, railing and trim be wood (no aluminum or vinyl cladding);

5. That the exterior light fixtures be approved by Staff prior to installation;
6. That the applicant remove all aluminum siding, coordinate investigative demolition with Staff to determine the type and dimensions of the original wood siding and select the appropriate replacement wood siding, with the approval of Staff;
7. That the AC unit location and screening be approved by Staff prior to installation;
8. That the following statement 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.



## CITY DEPARTMENT COMMENTS

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

### Code Enforcement:

- C-1 All exterior walls within 3 feet from an interior property line shall have a fire resistance rating of 1 hour, from both sides, with no openings permitted within the wall. As alternative, a 2 hour fire wall may be provided.
  
- C-2 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-3 Roof drainage systems must be installed so as neither to impact upon, nor cause erosion/damage to adjacent property.
  
- C-4 A soils report must be submitted with the building permit application.
  
- C-5 New construction must comply with the current edition of the Uniform Statewide Building Code (USBC).
  
- C-6 Alterations to the existing structure must comply with the current edition of the Uniform Statewide Building Code (USBC).
  
- C-7 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-8 Permission from adjacent property owners is required if access to the adjacent properties is required to complete the proposed construction. Otherwise, a plan shall be submitted to demonstrate the construction techniques utilized to keep construction solely on the referenced property.
  
- C-9 A wall location plat prepared by a land surveyor is required to be submitted to this office prior to requesting any framing inspection.

### Historic Alexandria:

It is difficult to judge if the open space requirement is met. There is no calculation included.

### Alexandria Archaeology:

- F-1 The Sanborn Insurance Map indicates that a house was present on this lot by 1891. The property therefore has the potential to yield archaeological resources which could provide insight into domestic activities in 19<sup>th</sup>-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 statement must appear in the General Notes of the site plan so that on-site contractors are aware of the requirement.