

Docket Item #8
BAR CASE# 2004-0144

BAR Meeting
July 28, 2004

ISSUE: Addition
APPLICANT: Vanna So
LOCATION: 1204 Princess 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 deferral of the application for restudy to reduce the size of the addition and impact on the existing building and to further differentiate the addition from the existing building.

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

I. ISSUE:

The applicant is requesting approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness for a new two story addition on the rear and east side of the existing 1 ½- story frame house. The addition will be 22' long on the west side and approximately 37' long on the east side, where it extends alongside the existing house to fill in a 7.5' gap between the house and the east side property line. The addition will be the same height as the top of the false front on the existing house. It will have a “flat” rubber roof with a minimal slope and will rest on a brick foundation to match the existing. The walls will be clad in wood siding to match the existing. The trim will be wood. The windows will be one-over-one wood windows.

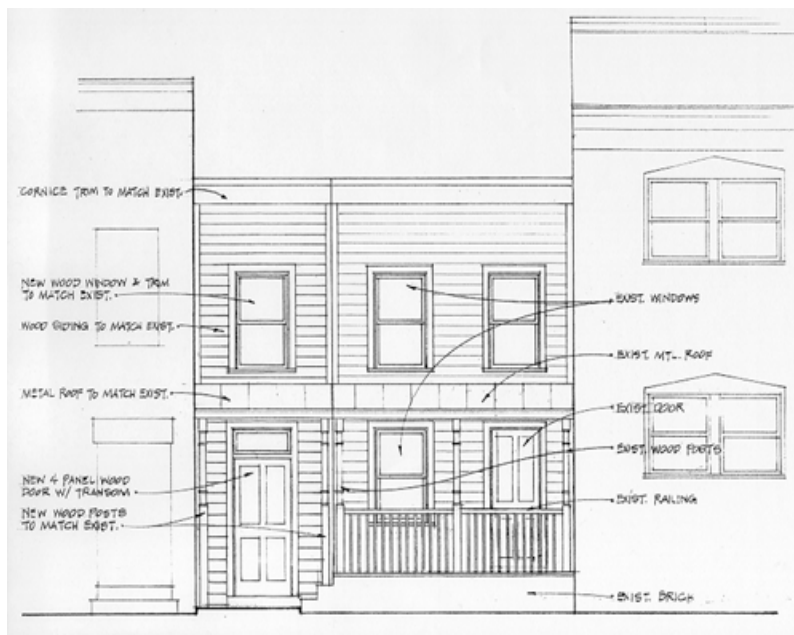


Figure 1 North elevation

The front (north) elevation of the addition will be approximately 7.5' wide, filling in the unbuilt area to the east of the house. It will be set back from the front wall of the existing house by 15.5 feet. Like the existing house, it will have a 5' deep single story porch at the front. The porch will be at grade and will have turned wood posts and a standing seam metal shed roof to match the existing porch. There will be a four panel door with full light transom on the first story and a one-over-one window above in the second story. The cornice trim on the addition will match that on the existing house.



Figure 2 South elevation

The rear (south) elevation of the addition will extend the full width of the lot, obscuring any view of the existing building from the rear. It will have a pair of fully glazed wood doors with a full light transom above on the west side of the first floor and two evenly spaced one-over-one windows on the east side. In the second floor, it will have paired one-over-one windows centered above the pair of doors and two one-over-one windows centered above those below. The elevation will terminate in a simple cornice. The east and west elevations of the addition will be without any openings. The west wall will extend 13' beyond the rear wall of the 1206 Princess Street. The east wall will extend 2.5' beyond the rear wall of 1202 Princess Street. As there will be a gap between the west wall of the proposed addition and the east wall of 1206 Princess Street, the applicant is proposing to extend the roof of the addition across this space and to affix a vertical trim board across the gap on the south elevation.

The addition will require a number of alterations to the roof of the existing house to ensure proper drainage. The west side of the gable roof will be capsulated to create a single slope from the west to the east and the back half of the east side will be capsulated by the roof of the new addition which will slope from north to south. The gutters and downspouts do not appear to be shown on the submitted drawings.

Other than being demolished and or capsulated, the existing house will not be altered.

The parking area in the rear will be removed and the back fence will be moved out to the rear property line. According to the site plan, the HVAC condensor unit will be located on the ground at the rear of the addition adjacent to the east property line. It will be screened from view by the back fence.

II. HISTORY:

As discussed in docket item #7, the 1½-story Italianate residence at 1204 Princess Street was erected in 1881 or 1882. The house is unusual in that it has a false front which conceals its modest height and a front facing gable. In 1999, the Board heard multiple cases concerning the property and ultimately approved a partial demolition and a new addition to the side and rear (BAR Case #99-0038PG and BAR Case #99-0039PG, 8/11/1999). The demolition and addition approved by the Board on August 11, 1999 is very similar to that which is now before the Board. Although, the addition was never undertaken, the existing house was renovated in 2000 and 2001.

III. ANALYSIS:

The proposed addition and alterations comply with the zoning ordinance requirements. In order to meet the 800 square foot open space required for the RB zone, the applicant must remove the parking area at the rear of the property or apply for an open space variance. The applicant has indicated that the parking area will be eliminated and the fence will be moved to the rear of the property.

In the opinion of Staff, the proposed addition overwhelms the existing historic building. The Board's *Design Guidelines* note that:

Generally, additions to residential structures should not overwhelm the existing structure or neighboring buildings. The existing form of a residential building should generally be retained in the expression of the addition. (Residential additions - Page 6)

While the existing house has a total gross area of 809 square feet, the new addition will have 1151 square feet. Thus the addition will be 30% larger than the existing house. The L-shaped addition will totally obscure the back of the house as well as approximately half of the east wall. The changes to the gable roof of the existing building will substantially alter the form of roof so that it will no longer read as a gable. And while the detailing of the front of the addition is respectful of the historic house to the extent that it mimics the materials and appearance, this will also make it difficult to distinguish between the historic house and the addition. It will most likely read as one.

Staff would prefer an addition that left the form of the existing house intact to the greatest extent possible. This would be best accomplished by an addition that began at the rear wall of the existing house. In addition, Staff believes the front elevation of the addition should be restudied to ensure that it is distinguished from the historic house while also remaining compatible with it.

Staff notes that the proposed plans are very similar to those approved by the Board of Architectural Review in 1999. However, the minutes suggest that the Board approved the plans reluctantly after a long and rather difficult case history. The approval included 11 conditions. When the applicant approached Staff about using the previously approved plans, he was informed of the issues and concerns that the Board had in 1999 and was encouraged to consider alternatives. However, he chose to proceed with the proposed plans. These plans do address the conditions from the prior approval, but do not address the overwhelming impacts to the historic

building.

IV. STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends deferral of the application for restudy to reduce the size of the addition and impact on the existing building and to further differentiate the addition from the existing building

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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. This condition is also applicable to porches with roofs and skylights within setback distance.
- 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:

“No comment.”

Alexandria Archaeology:

There is low potential for significant archaeological resources to be present on this property. No archaeological action is required.