

Docket Item #6
BAR CASE #2004-0144

BAR Meeting
August 25, 2004

ISSUE: Addition
APPLICANT: Vanna So
LOCATION: 1204 Princess Street
ZONE: RB/Residential

BOARD ACTION, July 28, 2004: Deferred for restudy, 6-0.

The Board combined the discussion of item #s 7 & 8. On a motion by Mr. Zuckerkandel, seconded by Ms. Kelley, the Board voted to defer the applications for restudy.

REASON: The Board was concerned by the perceived and actual size of the addition in relation to the existing house, the length of the addition at the rear in relation to the neighboring houses, the long blank side walls at the rear and the way the new roof will resolve into the east side of the existing gable roof. Board members made the following recommendations:

- Pushing the addition on the east side further toward the front, while still allowing the form of the original building to be seen from the front;
- Reducing the length of the addition at the back;
- Reducing the height of the addition;
- Adding interest to the rear elevation of the addition by modulating the planes.
- Retaining at least one parking space.

In addition, Mr. Cromley objected to the existing front porch pickets and requested that they be changed to straight pickets, as in the 1999 approval, and reduced in height.

SPEAKERS: Robert Byrnes, project architect, in support.

Mark Webster, 1208 Princess Street, in opposition. Mr. Webster was concerned by the length of the addition at the rear and the loss of parking.

Larissa Bounds, 1206 Princess Street, in opposition. Ms. Bounds expressed concerns about the drainage, length of the addition and loss of parking.

****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.

UPDATE: The revised design addresses many of the Board and Staff comments from the July 28, 2004 hearing. The addition has been reduced in length and apparent height, is more distinct from the existing building in design and has a more modulated rear elevation.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

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

NOTE: Docket item #5 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 18' long on the west side and approximately 40' 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 roof of the addition will be a gable at the front, perpendicular to the roof of the existing house and clad in the matching asphalt shingles, and will become a “flat” rubber roof with a minimal slope on the back side of the gable ridge. The addition 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.

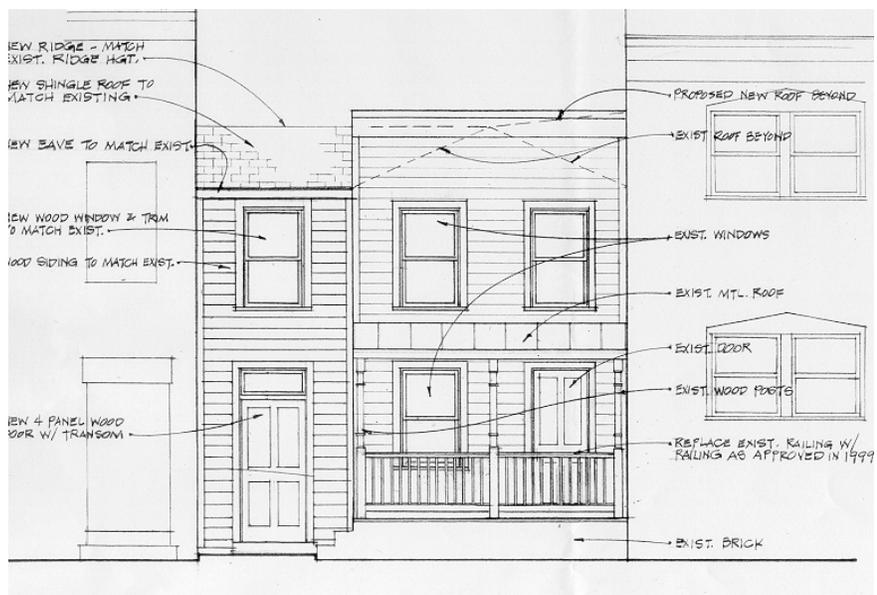


Figure 1 Front Elevation (Revised Plans)



Figure 2 - Front Elevation (Previous Plans)

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 approximately 8'. The porch and parapet shown in the previous design for this elevation have been eliminated. The resulting simplified north elevation consists of a four panel wood door with full light ransom on the first story and a one-over-one window above in the second story. Rather than the false front of the previous design, a simple fascia board marks the eave line and the edge of the gable roof.



Figure 3 - Rear Elevation (Revised Plans)



Figure 4 - Rear Elevation (Previous Plans)

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. The western side of the second floor will be recessed 3'4" from the first story south elevation and will have paired one-over-one windows centered above the pair of doors. The eastern side will have two one-over-one windows centered above those below. The east and west elevations of the addition will have no openings. The west wall will extend approximately 9' beyond the rear wall of the one story rear section of 1205 Princess Street. The east wall will be approximately 1.5' shorter than the rear wall of the one story addition at 1202 Princess Street. As there will be a gap between the west wall of the proposed addition and the east wall of 1205 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.

The revised plans call for the front porch railings on the existing house to be changed to "railing as approved in 1999." The plans approved on August 11, 1999 show a railing with "3/4" wood spindles." The railing in the plans is 3' in height and mounted approximately 5" above the floor of the porch. It is unclear how the existing railing differs from that approved in 1999.

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 #5, 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, in a number of respects the revised plans are an improvement over the previous plans. The applicant has been quite responsive to the Board's comments. The impact of the rear addition on the adjacent houses have been reduced and the rear elevation is more interesting with the introduction of the recessed section on the second story. In addition, Staff believes the front elevation of the addition has been improved. It appears lower, due to the elimination of the parapet. The elimination of the parapet and the porch from the front elevation of the addition also serve to distinguish the new construction from the old. Lastly, Staff notes that the size of the addition has been reduced somewhat from 1151 square feet to 1028 square feet.

However, Staff continues to believe that 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 5)

The existing house has a total gross area of 809 square feet. At 1028 square feet, the new addition is 27% larger than the existing house. But more importantly in Staff's opinion, the L-shaped addition will swallow the historic house, totally obscuring the back of the house and approximately two thirds of the east wall. The revised plans have actually increased the amount of the east wall that is obscured. Staff does however note that the Board recommended that the applicant consider sliding the addition forward in this way. Staff believes the changes to the gable roof of the existing building will substantially alter the form of the roof so that it will no longer read as a gable. Staff would prefer an addition that left the unique form of the existing

house intact to the greatest extent possible. This would be best accomplished by an addition that began at or near the rear wall of the existing house.

IV. STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

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

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.