

Docket Item #4
BAR CASE #2004-0199

BAR Meeting
September 22, 2004

ISSUE: Fence
APPLICANT: Robert Griffin
LOCATION: 802 Pendleton 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 approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness for a 6'4 ½" high board and batten fence. The fence will match the existing fence on the west and south sides of the property. The new section of the fence will extend from the northwest corner of the house across the Pendleton Street (north) side of the property to the northwest corner of the property, enclosing the small west side yard. There will be a gate in the fence which will have a concave curve at the top, matching the existing gate in the fence on the south side of the property.

The house at 802 Pendleton Street faces Pendleton Street and has yards to the east and west sides, but no rear yard. The area to be enclosed by the proposed fence functions as a rear yard. It is accessed from the first story by french doors, has a brick patio and is overlooked by a second story balcony. The north side of the yard along Pendleton Street where the fence is proposed currently has a section of low iron fencing. A tall hedge located in front of the iron fence partially screens the yard. The hedge will remain in front of the proposed new wood fence and the iron fence will be removed. The east side yard of 802 Pendleton Street and the front yard of 534 Columbus Street appear as one large garden. Located on a corner and surrounded by a low and open fence, this space is visually accessible to the community.

II. HISTORY:

The two story frame house at 802 Pendleton Street was constructed in 1908 as an addition to the two story, two bay brick house around the corner at 534 North Columbus Street. The brick house may be as early as 1830. A one story frame addition was appended to the two story frame section between 1921 and 1931. Both the frame and brick sections were renovated as two separate houses and expanded in 1997 (BAR Case #s 96-00262 & 00263, 11/13/1996 & 12/11/1996). Formerly owned by a single owner, the two houses were recently sold to two different owners.

III. ANALYSIS

The fence will comply with the zoning ordinance requirements if the Board of Architectural Review authorizes the modification of the height of the fence. Section 7-201(A)(1) of the zoning ordinance permits open fences which do not exceed 3.5 feet in any required front, side and rear yard. Section 7-202(C) of the zoning ordinance permits the Board of Architectural Review to waive or modify the fence regulations if the board finds the proposed fence would be architecturally appropriate and consistent with the character of the district.

In the opinion of Staff, the design of the proposed fence is appropriate for the early 20th century house at 802 Pendleton Street and for the surrounding neighborhood. The proposed fence conforms with the *Design Guidelines* in that they recommend the use of wood fences and recommend that wood fences be painted or stained (Fences - Page 2). However, the 6'4 ½" high board and batten fence is higher and more closed than is typical of front yard fences. Front yard fences in the historic districts are generally no higher than 42" and are either wood or metal picket with a substantially open appearance. However, as explained above, the house is unusual in that it has two side yards and no rear yard, with the west side yard functioning as a rear yard.

Staff believes the height and closed character of the proposed fence is not objectionable in this location as it will “read” as a rear yard fence. Mitigating the enclosure of the west side yard is the fact that the larger east side yard will remain visually open and with its attractive garden providing an amenity to the neighborhood. Lastly, the applicant proposes to retain the existing hedge in front of the proposed fence, which will soften the appearance. Considering all of the above, Staff recommends that the Board waive the height requirement and approve the proposed fence.

IV. STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS:

Staff recommends approval of the application as submitted.

CITY DEPARTMENT COMMENTS

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

Code Enforcement:

“No comments.”

Office of Historic Alexandria:

“No comment.”