

Docket Item #4  
BAR CASE #2004-0141

BAR Meeting  
October 27, 2004

**ISSUE:** After-the-fact fence and wall

**APPLICANT:** Deborah Frye

**LOCATION:** 716 North Patrick Street

**ZONE:** RB/Residential

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**BOARD ACTION, July 28, 2004: Approved as amended, 6-0.**

On a motion by Ms. Kelley, seconded by Mr. Zuckerkandel, the Board approved the after-the-fact alterations with the following conditions:

1. That the lattice is removed from the top of the south side brick wall;
2. That the cinderblock section on the south face of the brick wall be replaced with brick to match the rest of the wall;
3. That the applicant return to the Board with a revised design for a more compatible front fence; and,
4. That the above conditions be completed within 3 months of the date of the hearing.

The vote on the motion was 6-0.

**REASON:** The Board agreed with the Staff analysis. The Board felt that the high walls created an unpleasant atmosphere. The Board was concerned that the brick wall met building code requirements. In addition, the Board felt that the cinderblock section on the south face of the wall which is visible from Wythe Street was unacceptable.

**SPEAKERS:** Deborah Frye, property owner, spoke in support. Ms. Frye indicated a willingness to comply with the Board's requests and confirmed that Code Enforcement had inspected the wall and would need to sign off on a final inspection.

Patricia Turner, 710 North Patrick Street, spoke in opposition, stating that the wall created a prison-like atmosphere.

Robert Simmons, builder, spoke in support, stating that the wall sat on 3' wide footers.

Jannine Pennell, Code Enforcement, clarified that Code would need to sign off on the fence.

**\*\*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:** In response to the Board's request at the July 28, 2004 hearing, the applicant has submitted two alternatives to replace the existing front frame wall. In addition, the applicant has removed the lattice from the south side brick wall. The applicant has not replaced the cinderblock section of the south side brick wall with brick. According to the applicant, the neighbor will not allow access. Staff was unable to contact the neighbor and thus is unable to confirm this fact.

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:**

Staff recommends approval of the front fence with the following conditions:

- 1) If Alternative #1, the fence be a true board fence made of individual boards and be painted or stained as soon as is practicable;
- 2) If Alternative #2, the bricks match the existing brickwork on the south side wall and front piers; and,
- 3) That the existing wall be replaced within 3 months from the date of this hearing..

**I. ISSUE:**

The current application concerns a replacement fence for the frame wall located approximately two-thirds of the way back from the front (Patrick Street) side of the property. The existing frame wall is approximately 9' in height extends from the south property line to the south wall of the house. A brick driveway leads from the front of the property to this wall. A set of brick pillars with an ironwork gate is located on either side of the drive, approximately 7' from the front of the property and well in front of the subject wall. The area between the metal gate and the frame wall is used for parking. When not obscured by a vehicle, the frame wall is highly visible. It is clad in "wood composition" siding and has a cornice at the top. A Victorian style "wood-grained" door with curved panels, an oval leaded glass window and brass decorative plate reading "Welcome" is located in the wall facing Patrick Street.

At the July 28, 2004 hearing the Board requested that the applicant replace this unauthorized structure with "a more compatible front fence." The applicant has responded with two alternatives. Both alternatives involve installing a new veneer on the existing footings and framework. Both reduce the height of the wall to 7' and replace the existing wood door with a 7' high gate of metal pickets. Alternative #1 uses 5 1/2" cedar V-board installed vertically. Staff believes this to be a solid wood panel with grooves rather than an actual board fence. Alternative #2 is a common bond brick wall.

**II. HISTORY:**

The two story, detached frame house at 716 North Patrick Street appears to have been constructed circa 1900. With its front gable form and full front porch, the house is more typical of suburban development of the period than of the urban rowhouse form that was typically built in the Parker-Gray District at this time. However, when built, it was located at the outer limits of development. The area around 716 North Patrick Street was not included in Sanborn Mapping until 1912. The house appears on the 1912 map. Between 1921 and 1941, it was expanded with a small one story addition on the south side. More recently, in 1991, the Board approved a garage at the rear of the property (BAR Case #91-30, 10/23/1991). In 1995, the Board approved

a large rear addition (BAR Case #95-27PG , 9/13/1995 and BAR Case #95-28PG, 9/27/1995). The applicant has owned the property since 1990.

### **III. ANALYSIS:**

Section 7-303(B)(3) of the zoning ordinance permits any fences in a required yard to be either open or closed fences as long as they are no greater than 6 feet in height. Section 7-200(C) of the zoning ordinance permits the BAR to modify or waive the fence requirements if the Board finds that a proposed fence will be architecturally appropriate and consistent with the character of the district. Therefore, as the proposed front fence alternatives are over 6' in height, they require Board approval for the height as well as the appearance.

As noted in the previous Staff report, the Parker-Gray District has historically been characterized by modest, vernacular buildings and informal landscaping. The fences tend to be wood, board-on-board fences or lower and open picket type fences. Brick walls historically have been used only for the most high style and prominent buildings in town. The overall effect of the house with its many walls, gates, fences and railings is inappropriately busy. In that report, Staff recommended that a simpler and lower wood or metal fence would be more compatible. The replacement fence should relate to an existing element on the house, such as the various railings, or in the yard, such as a simplified version of the front metal gates, so as not to introduce further visual clutter .

While definitely an improvement over the present front wall, Staff would prefer that the new designs were more open and lower. However, Staff desires to put the matter to rest and is willing to recommend approval of whichever alternative the applicant prefers.

### **IV. STAFF RECOMMENDATION:**

Therefore, Staff recommends approval of the front fence with the following conditions::

- 1) If Alternative #1, the fence be a true board fence made of individual boards and be painted or stained as soon as is practicable;
- 2) If Alternative #2, the bricks match the existing brickwork on the south side wall and front piers; and,
- 3) That the existing wall be replaced within 3 months from the date of this hearing.

## CITY DEPARTMENT COMMENTS

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

### Code Enforcement:

C-1 New construction must comply with the current edition of the Uniform Statewide Building Code (USBC).

C-2 Construction permits are required for this project.

### Historic Alexandria:

“Style of door does not seem appropriate. Style of gate/design does not seem appropriate.”