

Docket Item # 3
BAR CASE #2004-0281

BAR Meeting
January 26, 2005

ISSUE: After-the-fact alterations

APPLICANT: Henry M. Holliday

LOCATION: 917 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 approval of the after-the-fact window replacement.

I. ISSUE:

The applicant is requesting a certificate of appropriateness after-the-fact for 25 replacement windows (22 windows and 3 transoms over doors) on the main portion of the church. In December 2004, the existing double hung, multi-pane, clear glass and wood windows were replaced with fixed stained glass windows and clear exterior storm windows. There were four stained glass windows on the front facade of Third Baptist Church prior to the recent work. These remain in place and are in fact more visible due to the removal of the discolored plastic panels which had been installed over top of them. The four pre-existing stained glass windows are the round window in the front gable, which is composed of four quadrants each with a different color of glass, and the three windows in the front on the first level, which are pictorial stained glass with Christian motifs. The multi-pane, clear glass and wood windows which were removed may not have been original. A 1958 permit for repairs includes the installation of 25 new windows (Building Permit #14106, June 18, 1958).

The window replacement was undertaken without prior approval of the Board of Architectural Review. According to Mr. Holliday, the applicant and chair of the Trustee Board, the church believed the window replacement had been included in the work that was approved by the Board in 2003 (BAR Case #2003-0263, 11/12/2003). That case was handled by the contractor and architect, rather than by Church members or officials.. A review of the 2003 case indicates that the notes on the plans showed the windows as “remaining” and that window replacement was not discussed in the BAR application, Staff report or Board hearing.

II. HISTORY:

By 1877, the “Colored” Third Baptist Church stood at the northeast corner of Princess and North Patrick, as shown in the Hopkins Atlas of that year. The present brick building with square corner bell tower and simplified Romanesque detailing appears to have been constructed between 1891 and 1896. A single-story addition was constructed at the rear of the sanctuary circa 1947 (Building Permit #7796, 7/4/1947). More recently, a two story Gothic style addition was constructed across the rear of the building, incorporating the earlier single-story addition and extending out on the east side of the building (BAR Case #90-5PG, 5/9/1990). In 2001, the Board approved paving the gravel parking lot on the east side of the building (BAR Case #2001-280, 11/28/2001). As mentioned above, in 2003, the Board approved alterations to the exterior of the building relating to an upgrade of the HVAC system, which was part of a larger interior rehabilitation (BAR Case #2003-0263, 11/12/2003).

III. ANALYSIS:

The proposed alterations comply with the zoning ordinance requirements.

The replacement of the windows presents a difficult preservation problem. The multi-light, double-hung wood windows which were removed may not have been original but are assumed to be patterned on the original windows. The *Design Guidelines* note the importance of windows as a character-

defining feature of a building and go on to recommend retention of historic windows whenever possible and, when not, replacement with windows which match the historic as closely as possible (Windows - Pages 1 & 2).

The new windows are quite different from the originals. They are fixed rather than double hung sash. They have flat metal comes rather than projecting wood muntins and sash. They are composed of dark colored glass rather than clear panes in a regular pattern. Fortunately, the window openings were not altered and the new windows are fixed within the existing wood outer frames. Unfortunately, the tower windows openings have only been partially filled with new stained glass windows, leaving the aluminum siding in the upper portion. These openings had once held wooden louvers and were replaced with multi-light, clear windows and aluminum infill in 1970 (Building Permit #27514, 8/6/1970).

Thus, the appearance of the church has been significantly altered with the change to stained glass windows. On the other hand, the stained glass windows do not look inappropriate in the late Victorian Romanesque style building and the windows they replaced do not appear to have been the original windows. The new windows do seem to draw from the colors and design motifs of the three small pre-existing stained glass windows and conform in their design to the shape of the openings. Furthermore, it is important to note that churches have historically undergone successive alterations, additions and renovations in response to church needs and available funds. In particular, clear glass windows have been replaced with stained glass windows, through bequests of individual members or as part of larger building campaigns. Thus, the recent replacement windows can be seen as a continuation of this tradition.

Therefore, Staff believes the replacement windows are acceptable given that there appears to have been a genuine misunderstanding on the part of the church in believing the replacement to have been approved and given that replacement of clear windows with stained glass has a strong historical precedent in the history of church buildings and, lastly, given that the windows are appropriate to the architectural character of the church. Staff does regret that the tower windows openings remain partially infilled. At some future date, the church should consider restoring the openings and replacing the windows with ones which fill the entire opening or restoring the wooden louvers. In addition, Staff recommends that the church take steps to ensure that all future exterior work is approved by the Board in the planning stages, prior to the commencement of work. This might be as simple as informing all parties who make decisions concerning the physical plant of the church of the requirement for BAR review of exterior alterations and revising any existing written guidance on procedures or duties of pertinent individuals or church bodies to include information regarding BAR review. Lastly, Staff notes that the applicant has applied for a construction permit for the window replacement, as required by Code Enforcement.

IV. STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends approval of the after-the-fact window replacement.

CITY DEPARTMENT COMMENTS

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

Code Enforcement:

- C-1 A construction permit is required for the proposed project.
- C-2 New construction must comply with the current edition of the Uniform Statewide Building Code (USBC).
- C-3 Alterations to the existing structure must comply with the current edition of the Uniform Statewide Building Code (USBC).

Historic Alexandria:

“No comment.”