

Docket Item #8
BAR CASE #2004-0277

BAR Meeting
January 26, 2005

ISSUE: Re-approval of alterations

APPLICANT: Kevin Abbott

LOCATION: 330 North Patrick 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 that the porch enclosure be denied and that the front fence, HVAC unit, side gateway, chimney and south elevation vents and lights be approved with the following conditions:

1. That the front fence and side gateway be stained or painted after construction;
2. That the vents be painted to match the siding; and,
3. That Staff be provided an opportunity to review and approve the exterior light fixtures prior to installation.

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

UPDATE:

This project has come before the Board in 1999, 2002, and 2003 (BAR Case #99-0099 & 0054, 4/28/1999 & 10/27/1999; BAR Case #s 2001-292 & 279, 3/27/2002; BAR Case #s 2003-181 & 182, 8/27/2003). In the first case, portions of the project were approved and portions deferred for restudy. The applicant submitted again in late 2001 and after a deferral for restudy, the Board approved the project with conditions. As a year had elapsed without the project commencing, the applicant submitted for re-approval in 2003 and the project was again approved with conditions. The current project is nearly identical to that approved in 2002 and 2003 and the current drawings incorporate nearly all of the conditions from those approvals. The only modifications from the previously approved plans are the treatment of the south side of the porch enclosure and the addition of the lights and vents on the south side of the house. Since the last review, the applicant replaced the existing non-historic windows on the house with historically appropriate two-over-two wood windows.

ISSUE:

The applicant is requesting a certificate of appropriateness to enclose the front porch, replace the metal picket fence with a 42" wood picket fence, install an HVAC unit in the front yard on the north side, add an entrance gateway on the south side at the front, install a chimney and install vents and lights on the south side wall.

The front of the property is visible from Patrick Street. The rear is visible from the north-south public alley behind the property.

Porch Enclosure

The applicant is proposing to enclose the existing front porch. The porch will become an enclosed room and access to the house from the front will be eliminated. The door on the enclosed porch is for appearance only and will not be operable. The porch enclosure will retain the existing porch in its entirety, except for the railing. Walls with fixed windows on the south and east sides and covered in German siding on the north side, will be built just behind the porch columns to enclose the porch. The windows, will be Pella Architect Series, wood, true divided light, with low "E" glass. The front (east) elevation will have three windows with panels below. In the prior approvals, the Board specified that these panels should be wood boards, rather than MDO or some other manufactured material. The applicant has confirmed that they will be wood boards. At the south end of the front elevation, there will be a door with four lights at the top.

The applicant has confirmed that the door will be wood. The south elevation will have a single two-over-two window with panel below. In the two prior submissions, this elevation had a longer window and no panel below. According to the applicant, the porch roof, which is presently clad in asphalt, will be covered in standing seam metal.

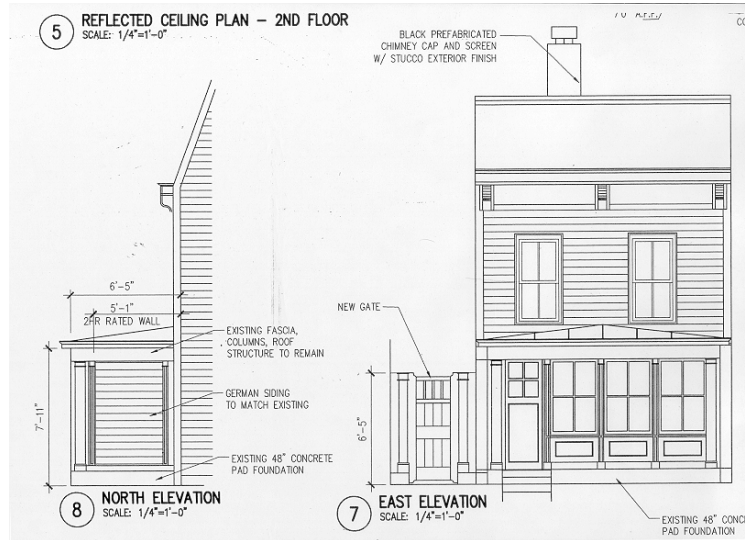


Figure 1 - Front and North Elevation

Front Fence

The applicant proposes to install a wood picket fence 42" high across the front. The plans indicate that there will be a gate.

HVAC Unit

An HVAC Unit is proposed to be installed in the front yard on the north side. The HVAC unit will be screened by plantings and the picket fence.

Gateway

The applicant is proposing to reorient the main entrance of the house from the front (east) to an existing door on the south side. The new side gateway will in effect serve as the first entry point. The gateway will be approximately 5' wide, extending between the southeast corner of the house and the wall of the house next door at 328 North Patrick Street. It will be constructed of wood and will have pilasters on either side. The 3' wide gate will have a flat top and an open section with round pickets at the top and solid boards below. The current plans omit an entablature over the gate, as requested by the Board's prior condition.

Chimney

The applicant is proposing to install a round steel chimney in the center of the roof, approximately 15' back from the front face of the house and approximately 5.5' above the roof surface. (Code requirements stipulate that the top of the chimney be at least 2' higher than the peak or highest portion of roof within 10' horizontally.) The chimney will be built-out and stuccoed, so that it will resemble a masonry chimney, as requested by the Board's prior condition.

Vents and Lights

Several new exterior lights and a dryer vent and bathroom vent will be added to the south side of the house.

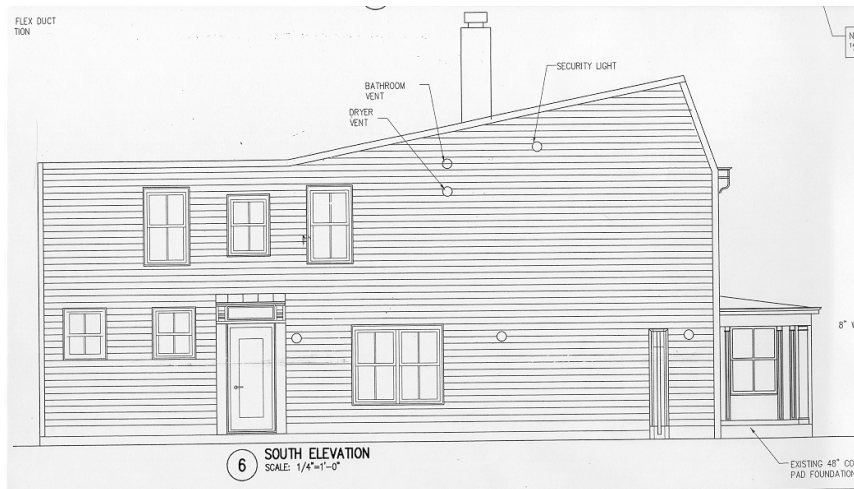


Figure 2 - South Elevation

II. HISTORY:

As noted in the discussion section for docket item #7, the two story frame house at 330 North Patrick Street appears have been built before 1877. The front porch appears to have been constructed between 1931 and 1939. As mentioned above, the Board approved the porch enclosure, front fence, HVAC unit, side gateway and chimney on two prior occasions (BAR Case # 2001-279, 3/27/2002; BAR Case # 2003-182, 8/27/2003).

III. ANALYSIS:

The proposed porch enclosure and other alterations comply with zoning ordinance requirements. Section 7-202(B)(5) of the zoning ordinance states that HVAC units are not permitted in a required front yard. However, as the prevailing front setback for the blockface is at the front property line, the front yard at 330 North Patrick Street is a non-required front yard and the HVAC unit may be located there. Additionally, Section 6-403(B)(3) of the zoning ordinance permits the BAR to waive or modify the screening requirement if the board finds such requirement to be architecturally inappropriate.

Porch Enclosure

Staff continues to oppose the porch enclosure. A review of the minutes of previous hearings indicates that the Board assumed that the applicant would, at least for the present, leave the original front wall of the house intact behind the enclosure. The present design of the enclosure, incorporating as much window area as possible, evolved in response to the Board's expressed desire to maintain a sense of openness and a view of the full front of the house. The current interior drawings show that the front of the house will be virtually eliminated on the first floor. Thus, the enclosure is, in effect, an addition to the front of the house. The addition significantly alters the historic character and appearance of what is today an intact example of a vernacular 2nd Empire house type favored in Alexandria from the late 19th century through the 20th century. This type was most often constructed with a flat front. Sometimes, single story *open* porches

were added to the front, generally in the first two decades of the 20th century. Somewhat later in the 20th century, an enclosed porch or sunroom like that proposed might have been added to an existing house, but more typically at the rear or side, rather than in the front. To summarize, Staff believes the front addition is not compatible with the period and style of the house or the history of residential construction in Alexandria's historic districts and therefore is contrary to the directive in the Design Guidelines that "[t]he design of an addition should respect the heritage of the historic building to which it is attached as well as adjacent buildings" (Residential Additions - Page 5).

Front Fence

Staff believes the proposed wood picket fence is appropriate, but notes that the *Design Guidelines* call for wood fences and gates to be painted or stained (Fences - Page 3) and therefore recommends that this be included as a condition of the approval.

HVAC Unit

Staff would prefer that the HVAC be located in a less visible location, like the rear yard or back part of the roof, but does not find the proposed location unacceptable. The zoning requirements call for HVAC equipment to be screened, but allow the Board to waive the requirement. Some degree of screening will be provided by the picket fence and plantings.

Gateway and Chimney

Staff has no objection to these alterations. The designs have been modified to comply with the Board's prior conditions. However, Staff notes that the *Design Guidelines* call for wood fences and gates to be painted or stained (Fences - Page 3) and therefore recommends that this be included as a condition of the approval.

Vents and Lights

The vents are an unfortunate necessity. Little can be done except to select those with the smallest possible exterior component and to paint that to match the siding. Staff recommends the security light be as unobtrusive a design as possible and requests an opportunity to review and approve any fixtures that will be visible from the public right of way prior to installation.

In conclusion, Staff recommends that the porch enclosure be denied, but that all other alterations be approved with a few minor conditions.

IV. STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends that the porch enclosure be denied and that the front fence, HVAC unit, side gateway, chimney and south elevation vents and lights be approved with the following conditions:

1. That the front fence and side gateway be stained or painted after construction;
2. That the vents be painted to match the siding; and,
3. That Staff be provided an opportunity to review and approve the exterior light fixtures prior to installation.

CITY DEPARTMENT COMMENTS

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

Code Enforcement:

- C-1 All exterior walls within 5 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.
- 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 New construction must comply with the current edition of the Uniform Statewide Building Code (USBC).
- C-4 Alterations to the existing structure must comply with the current edition of the Uniform Statewide Building Code (USBC).
- C-5 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-6 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-7 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.”