

Docket Item #3
BAR CASE #2004-0280
BAR Meeting
February 23, 2005

ISSUE: New residential building
APPLICANT: Anna Maria & Michael Dechert
LOCATION: 804 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 deferral of the proposed new single family house to reduce the overall height and the apparent mass along the west side. However, if the Board decides to approve the project, Staff notes the comments of Alexandria Archeology and recommends that they be included as a condition of the approval:

The following statements must appear in the General Notes of the site plan so that on-site contractors are aware of the requirements:

Call Alexandria Archaeology immediately (703-838-4399) if any buried structural remains (wall foundations, wells, privies, cisterns, etc.) or concentrations of artifacts are discovered during development. Work must cease in the area of the discovery until a City archaeologist comes to the site and records the finds.

The applicant should not allow any metal detection to be conducted on the property, unless authorized by Alexandria Archaeology.

NOTE:

Docket item #2 must be approved before this docket item may be considered.

UPDATE:

Plans for a new house on this property were approved by the Board on September 23, 1998 (BAR Case #98-0144) and again on March 22, 2000 (BAR Case #2000-0033). The property recently sold and the new owner is presenting an entirely new design for a house at this location.

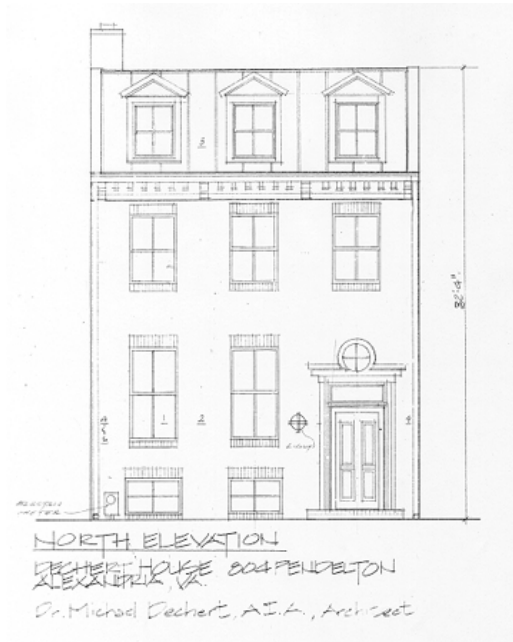
I. ISSUE:

The applicant is requesting approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness for a new single family house to be constructed on the 23.42' wide by 100' long lot at 804 Pendleton Street. The lot is the only undeveloped parcel on the blockface. To the left of the lot is the two story frame house at 802 Pendleton Street. Although rather diminutive in size, 802 Pendleton Street has an usually wide street elevation of 5 bays. To the right of the lot is a pair of very small two story frame houses, each only two bays wide.

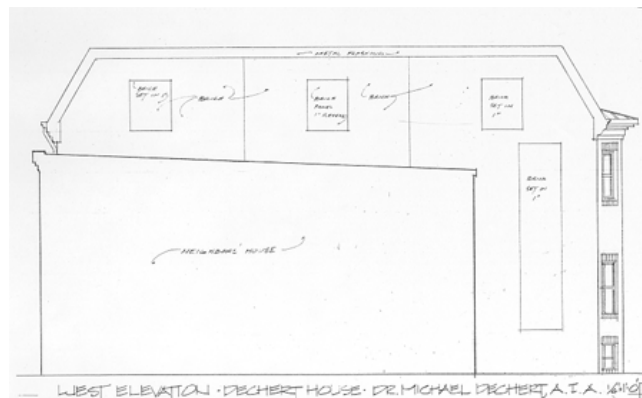
The proposed new house will be visible from Pendleton Street and the public alleys to the west and south of the property. In addition, the house will likely be visible in through-block views from Columbus and Alfred Streets.

The proposed house will extend across the entire width of the lot at the front and will be 32.33' high. It will be three stories with a raised basement and will be three bays wide. The house will have a "C"-shaped footprint with two blocks, each 23.42' wide by 18' deep, at either end, a 16' by 16' courtyard in the center and a hyphen, 7.42' wide by 16' long, linking the two blocks. The courtyard will be open on the east side. The hyphen will be on the west side of the lot. Thus, the east side of the house will be broken down into two masses while the west side will be a single 52' long wall with no penetrations. The house will be clad in brick with a standing seam metal roof on the front and rear elevations, wood trim, wood windows, wood doors and round metal

down spouts and half round metal gutters. (A brick sample will be available for the Board's inspection at the hearing). The front windows will have true divided lights, while the rear and side windows will have "applied grids." The window sills and lintels will be brick soldier courses.



The front (north) elevation will appear as a two story house with a full height mansard roof and raised basement. The front door will be on the right side of the elevation at street level. The four panel door will be set within a heavy door surround with a rectangular transom and an oculus window above. A globe shaped light fixture will be located to the left of the door. A single step brick stoop will lead to the door. There will be two four light windows to the left of the door lighting the basement level, which will be just under 4' above grade in height. The first story will have two two-over-two windows to the left of the door. These windows will be approximately 6.5' in height. The window heights will diminish in the succeeding floors. The second story will have three evenly spaced two-over-two windows. There will be a bracketed wood cornice at the base of the metal roof. No detail drawings were provided for the cornice. The third or attic story will have three evenly spaced gabled dormers with two-over-two windows.



The 52' long west elevation will be partially obscured by the adjacent houses at 806 and 808 Pendleton Street. The attic level and the rear 12' of the proposed house will extend beyond the neighboring houses at 806 and 808 Pendleton Street and will be visible in oblique views from Pendleton Street and the alley. It may also be partially visible from Alfred Street. The roofline will have a flat profile with sloping mansards at the front and back. The sides of the attic story dormers will be visible at either end, although they are not depicted in the elevation drawing. According to the applicant, the side walls of the dormers will be clad in metal to match the roof. The exposed attic story of the west elevation will have three rectangular inset brick panels, each measuring 5' high by 4' long located at regular intervals. Another panel will be located in the exposed section of the wall toward the rear of the house. This panel will span the first and second stories and will be 4' wide by 18.5' long. The side of the two story rear bay will be visible beyond the west elevation.



As described above, the east elevation is divided into a front and rear block with central courtyard and hyphen beyond. The east elevation will be visible in oblique views from Pendleton Street and may be visible in through-block views from Columbus Street. The front block will have a double sided mansard or flat hipped roof profile. There will be two windows filled with fire rated glass block at the basement level and two rectangular inset brick panels on the first and second stories. The side of the attic story dormer will be visible beyond. An end wall chimney will be located at the center of the front block. The material of the chimney is not indicated on the plans, but the applicant has stated that it will be brick. The rear block will be identical to the front, but will not have a chimney. The side of the two story bay at the back of the house will be visible beyond. The hyphen linking the two blocks will be recessed from the east wall of the two blocks by 16', creating a courtyard area 16' wide and 16' deep. The courtyard will be raised 2' above ground level and will be paved in brick. There will be a 3.5' high wood railing with simple pickets along the east side of the courtyard. Multi-light french doors will be located in the center of the hyphen on the first and second stories. The door in the first story will lead to the courtyard. The door in the second story will have simple picket railing across it. According to the applicant, the railing will be metal. The hyphen will have a shed roof clad in standing seam metal with a wood cornice with dentil blocks. There will be a rectangular skylight in the center of the hyphen roof. The interior walls (south and north) facing on the courtyard are not expected to be visible from the public right-of-way. However, the applicant has provided an elevation for the north facing courtyard wall. This wall will have a two-over-two window and multi-pane door on the first level and two two-over-two windows on the second level. There will be a skylight in the roof.



The south (rear) elevation will be visible from the alleys to the south and west and may be visible in through block views. The south elevation will appear as a two story house with a full height mansard roof and raised basement. There will be a two story, angled bay on the right side of the elevation. To the right of the bay will be a multi-pane door in the first story. Steps will lead from the door to the rear yard. According to the applicant, the steps will be metal. The bay will have four light windows in each face on the basement level and narrow two-over-two windows on the first and second stories. The bay will have a wood cornice and metal roof. The left side of the south elevation will have a four-light window in the basement and a multi-pane french door above in the first story. The door will have a simple metal railing across it. The second story will have a two-over-two window. The metal clad roof of the attic story will terminate in a wood cornice with dentil blocks. Two gable roofed dormers with two-over-two windows will light the attic story. An areaway for mechanical equipment and a stair to the basement are to be located on the left (west) side of the south facade at ground level. The HVAC equipment is to be located in this areaway.

The curb cut and concrete apron that currently exists at the front of 804 Pendleton Street will be removed and the sidewalk will be continued across the face of the property. The existing chain link fence will be removed. There will be two parking spaces provided in the rear of the lot in the vicinity of the shed which is to be demolished. The applicant expects to return to the Board at another time with a request for fencing and a vehicular gate.

Staff notes that the plat shows numerous existing structures, including fences, a trellis and the house at 806 Pendleton Street that encroach on the property. The applicant is encouraged to discuss how each of these encroachments will be handled with the respective property owners well in advance of construction. Staff is aware that the owner of 806 Pendleton Street and the applicant have begun discussions regarding drainage issues and how the buildings will be joined. As shown, the west wall of the proposed building will adjoin 806 Pendleton Street along its east wall. This condition is traditional throughout the densely built historic areas of Alexandria and is recommended from a maintenance standpoint.

II. HISTORY:

The lot was subdivided in the early twentieth century but never developed, except for the construction of a metal clad frame shed at the rear of the lot between 1921 and 1931. The Board first approved the prior owner's proposal to build a house on this lot at the hearing of September 23, 1998 (BAR Case #98-0144). The proposed dwelling was re-approved by the Board at the hearing of March 22, 2000 (BAR Case #2000-0033).

On September 22, 2004, the Board approved the installation of a 7' high board fence at 802 Pendleton Street (BAR Case #2004-0199).

III. ANALYSIS:

The proposed house complies with the zoning ordinance requirements.

The applicant consulted with Planning and Zoning Staff early in the design process and several times thereafter. The design has improved from the original submission, reflecting more of the vernacular Victorian character of the neighborhood and its small scale. However, Staff believes further revisions are still required to ensure that the mass and scale of the new building will be compatible with the surrounding neighborhood, which is generally characterized by very small scale buildings. The *Design Guidelines for New Residential Construction* state that building height and massing should reflect that prevailing along the blockface (page 4). The raised basement and tall attic or third story with dormers add to the overall bulk of the building. Staff notes that the attic story is to be used for storage and mechanicals only. While the mass of the east side will be broken down by the inclusion of the courtyard, the 32.33' tall and 52' long west side will loom over 806 and 808 Pendleton Street.



The immediately adjacent properties at 802, 806 and 808 Pendleton Street, which create the setting for the proposed building, are diminutive even by Parker-Gray standards. All are built on the ground with no foundation visible. None of the buildings are likely to be much over 20' in height. Similarly, the houses around the corner on the east side of the 500 block of Alfred Street are exceptionally narrow and not particularly tall. There are houses on raised basements in the vicinity, such as the houses around the corner at 524, 526 and 528 North Columbus Street (built

in 1979). Similarly, there are houses of comparable height to the proposed house in the Parker-Gray District, though anything of similar height is likely to be modern rather than historic. However, most houses in the district are only two stories. Some have raised basements and some have a third story that is habitable. Very few have both. While Staff recognizes that variety exists throughout the historic district and that variety is one of the many elements that contribute to the unique architectural character of the district, the Parker-Gray District is composed of predominantly small scale buildings. It would be unfortunate to permit a new building that is out of scale with its neighbors simply to create variety or because there are other instances of such disparity.



While the proposed building does not appear out of scale in the streetscape elevation provided, Staff is not certain that the elevation is based on accurate dimensions. The plans on file for the house previously proposed for this lot give a height of 19.5' for the existing house at 806 Pendleton Street. Plans on file for the 1996 renovation of 802 Pendleton Street show it to be just under 21' in height. If these dimensions are correct, the proposed new house will be at least 11' and possibly 13' higher than the adjacent houses. Perhaps a more accurate depiction of the relationship between the proposed new building and the existing buildings is provided by the west elevation drawing which shows the new building looming over its neighbor at 806 Pendleton Street, here shown at 22' high rather than 19.5'.

Staff recommends that the applicant explore ways to reduce the actual height of the building and appearance of mass on the west side. Possible revisions might include:

- Reducing the height of the exposed basement;
- Reducing the mass of the attic story by sloping or stepping the roof down towards the rear of the house;
- Reducing the mass of the attic story by using gabled roof forms over the front and rear blocks; and,
- Reducing the mass of the attic story by eliminating the dormers.

Staff has no other major concerns regarding the proposed plans. The location of the front door, at ground level, rather than at the first floor level, is unusual, but Staff is not opposed to this feature. The heavy door surround with transom and oculus window help to mitigate the lowered

position. The unusual design of the door surround should help the building to read as a creation of the 21st century. The door on the right side of the rear elevation appears squeezed by the two story bay. However, given that this feature will be minimally visible, if at all, from the alleys behind the house, this awkwardness is of little concern. Staff would prefer wood, stone or cast stone sills and lintels to the proposed soldier course sills and lintels, but will not object to their use here. The side and rear windows are described as having applied grids. The *Design Guidelines* recommend the use of true divided light windows, but allows the use of windows with fixed muntins on rear elevations with minimal visibility from the public right-of-way. If applied muntins are used, they should be fixed and raised. Flat muntins and snap in muntins are discouraged (Windows - page 2). No details were given for the proposed skylights. Staff notes that the *Design Guidelines* recommend that skylights have integral shades to prevent light seepage at nighttime (Skylights - page 2).

The applicant's attention is directed to the comments of Code Enforcement concerning the requirement for the installation of an automatic fire sprinkler system in accordance with the USBC, due to the height of the building. If the Board decides to approve the project, Staff notes the comments of Alexandria Archeology and recommends that they be included as a condition of the approval.

IV. STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends deferral of the proposed new single family house to reduce the overall height and the apparent mass along the west side. If the Board decides to approve the project, Staff notes the comments of Alexandria Archeology and recommends that they be included as a condition of the approval.

CITY DEPARTMENT COMMENTS

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

Code Enforcement:

- F-1 The proposed project exceeds the allowable height permitted by the USBC. The height increase shall require the installation of an automatic fire sprinkler system in accordance with the USBC.

- 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. This condition is also applicable to 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.

Office of Historic Alexandria:

“No comment.”

Alexandria Archaeology:

- F-1 Tax records indicate the presence of a free African American household in the vicinity of this property in 1830. The property therefore has the potential to yield archaeological resources that could provide insight into domestic life, perhaps relating to African Americans, during the 19th century.

- R-1 Call Alexandria Archaeology immediately (703-838-4399) if any buried structural remains (wall foundations, wells, privies, cisterns, etc.) or concentrations of artifacts are discovered during development. Work must cease in the area of the discovery until a City archaeologist comes to the site and records the finds.

- R-2 The applicant should not allow any metal detection to be conducted on the property, unless authorized by Alexandria Archaeology.

- R-3 The above statements must appear in the General Notes of the site plan so that on-site contractors are aware of the requirements.