

Docket Item #7  
BAR CASE# 2005-0054

BAR Meeting  
March 23, 2005

**ISSUE:** Demolition/encapsulation  
**APPLICANT:** Nensi Fiorenini & Scott Singleton  
**LOCATION:** 421 North Fayette Street  
**ZONE:** RB/Residential

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**\*\*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 application for restudy.

NOTE: This docket item requires a roll call vote.

**I. ISSUE:**

The applicant is requesting approval of a Permit to Demolish/Capsulate to allow the construction of a three story addition at the rear of the two story gable roofed brick house and the construction of a single story porch at the front and south side. The areas to be affected are as follows:

- Nearly the entire rear (east) elevation, which will be either removed or capsulated;
- The rear (east) slope of the roof, which will be removed and raised to accommodate third story living spaces;
- The south side elevation at the rear, which will be capsulated on both stories where the rear addition will wrap around the corner;
- The southern 2/3 of the front (west) elevation and western 2/3 of the south elevation on the first story, which will be capsulated with the construction of an open wrap around porch;
- Portions of the front (west) elevation of the house where a new window opening on the second story and a new window and door arrangement on the first story will entail both demolition and capsulation;
- A portion of the front (west) slope of the roof which will be removed for a new dormer window and skylight; and,
- An area at the western end of the south side elevation where a single standard window will be replaced with a pair of full length windows.

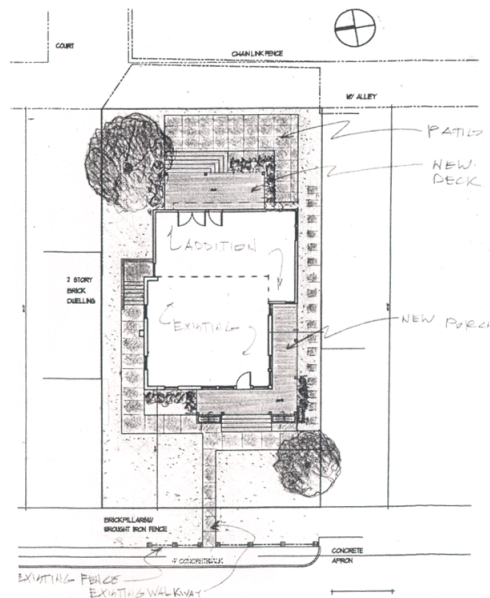
All elevations of the house are visible from the public right-of-way due to the generous side yards and the alley at the rear. Although the north-south alley has numerous encroachments, it is a public alley that should be accessible the full length of the block.



**Figure 1 - Front elevation**



**Figure 2 - Rear elevation**



**Figure 3 -Site Plan showing existing and addition**

## **II. HISTORY:**

The two story, gable roof, brick house was constructed in 1955 for Joseph O. Kahoe, Jr (Building Permit #6324). The builder was Amos R. Allen. The detached house is centered within a generous lot in the 400 block of North Fayette Street. The blockface is characterized by a concentration of detached mid-20th century brick houses. The only architectural embellishments on 421 North Fayette Street are its simple door surround and shutters. The house could perhaps be described as “stripped” Colonial Revival, based largely on its gable roof form and brick exterior.

The only alterations it appears to have had in the past 50 years is replacement of the front door and the windows. The existing Craftsman style door is an obvious recent replacement. The original drawings show six-over-six wood windows. The existing windows are one-over-one. Staff was unable to examine them closely, but believes they are fairly recent. They are described as wood on the current drawings. There is no record of Board of Architectural Review for these or any other alterations.

## **III. ANALYSIS:**

In considering a Permit to Demolish/Capsulate, the Board must consider the following criteria set forth in the Zoning Ordinance, Sec. 10-205(B):

- (1) Is the building or structure of such architectural or historical interest that its moving, removing, capsulating or razing would be to the detriment of the public interest?
- (2) Is the building or structure of such interest that it could be made into a historic house?
- (3) Is the building or structure of such old and unusual or uncommon design, texture and material that it could not be reproduced or be reproduced only with great difficulty?
- (4) Would retention of the building or structure help preserve and protect an historic place or area

of historic interest in the city?

(5) Would retention of the building or structure promote the general welfare by maintaining and increasing real estate values, generating business, creating new positions, attracting tourists, students, writers, historians, artists and artisans, attracting new residents, encouraging study and interest in American history, stimulating interest and study in architecture and design, educating citizens in American culture and heritage, and making the city a more attractive and desirable place in which to live?

(6) Would retention of the building or structure help maintain the scale and character of the neighborhood

In the opinion of Staff, the proposed demolition meets criteria #6 above. While the house was constructed relatively recently and is not necessarily noteworthy in terms of its architecture, its scale and character are quite compatible with its neighbors and 421 North Fayette Street contributes to the distinctive modest, mid-20th century character of the block.

The *Design Guidelines* section on demolition expresses a distinct preference for a conservative approach to demolition:

The Boards are extremely conscious of the need to preserve the existing building resources of the historic districts. At the same time, the Boards are also sympathetic to the needs of building owners to make contemporary [21<sup>st</sup>] century use of a property. It is the policy of the Boards that the absolute minimum demolition of an existing structure should take place. For example, in the case of an addition to the rear of a property, the Boards prefer that the amount demolition be limited to that necessary to accommodate access to the addition rather than wholesale demolition and replacement of the rear facade (Demolition of Existing Structures - Page 1).

The proposed demolition touches every facade and nearly obliterates the entire rear of the house. In the process, the scale and character of the original house is lost.

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

Therefore, Staff recommends deferral of the Permit to Demolish/Capsulate for restudy.

## CITY DEPARTMENT COMMENTS

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

### Code Enforcement:

C-1 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.

### Historic Alexandria:

This certainly changes the look of the streetscape although the porch is somewhat similar to one on the block. A very large addition in comparison to the original building. The front door transforms this from plain vernacular to something more.

### Alexandria Archaeology:

F-1 Historical documents indicate that the block bounded by Fayette, Princess, Henry and Oronoco Streets was the site of the Union Army government bakery during the Civil War. The bakery complex included a large structure for baking, along with storehouses, quarters, a dining house, and a guard house. Although there is no evidence that any of these structures were present on the lot at 421 N. Fayette Street, archaeological resources relating to the bakery and other Civil War military activities could remain buried on the property.

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 above statement must appear in the General Notes of the site plan so that on-site contractors are aware of the requirement.