

Docket Item #7
BAR CASE# 2005-0055

BAR Meeting
April 27, 2005

ISSUE: Addition and alterations

APPLICANT: Nensi Fiorenini & Scott Singleton

LOCATION: 421 North Fayette Street

ZONE: RB/Residential

BOARD ACTION, MARCH 23, 2005: The Board combined the discussion of docket item #'s 7 & 8. On a motion by Mr. Zuckerkandel, seconded by Ms. Sample, the Board deferred the application for restudy. The vote on the motion was 6-0.

REASON: The Board agreed with the Staff analysis and believed that the overall design should be simplified. Members believed that a large addition could be appropriate, but that consideration should be given to expressing the mass in a different manner than a vertical addition.

SPEAKERS: Ziad Demian, project architect, spoke in support
Scott Singleton, homeowner, spoke in support
Chris Patton, 414 N. Fayette Street, spoke in support

****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: Since the March 23, 2005 hearing, the applicant has revised the plans to address Staff and Board comments. The modifications include eliminating the skylight on the west (front) elevation of the existing house, shifting the corner windows on the west (front) elevation of the addition, shortening the full length windows at the front of the south elevation of the existing house and moving the south wall of the addition back 2" from the property line. In addition, the applicant has provided cut sheets to illustrate various elements of the proposed plans and a model to show the house with proposed addition in the context of the 400 block of North Fayette Street.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends deferral of the application for restudy. However, should the Board approve the proposed addition at this time, Staff recommends the following conditions be included in the approval:

- 1) The following statement must appear in the General Notes of the site plan so that on-site contractors are aware of the requirement:

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;

- 2) If Harditrim and Hardiplank siding is used, it must be smooth, not wood textured, and installed so that the nails are not visible; and
- 3) Either all the shutters on the front elevation must be wood, operable, hinged shutters or there be no shutters at all.

NOTE: Docket item #6 must be approved before this docket item can be considered.

I. ISSUE:

The applicant is requesting a Certificate of Appropriateness for an addition and alterations to the existing two story detached brick house. The existing house has 1953 gross square feet of area. The proposed addition will add approximately 1857 gross square feet. A three story frame addition will be located at the rear (east) elevation and wrap around the southeast corner of the house.

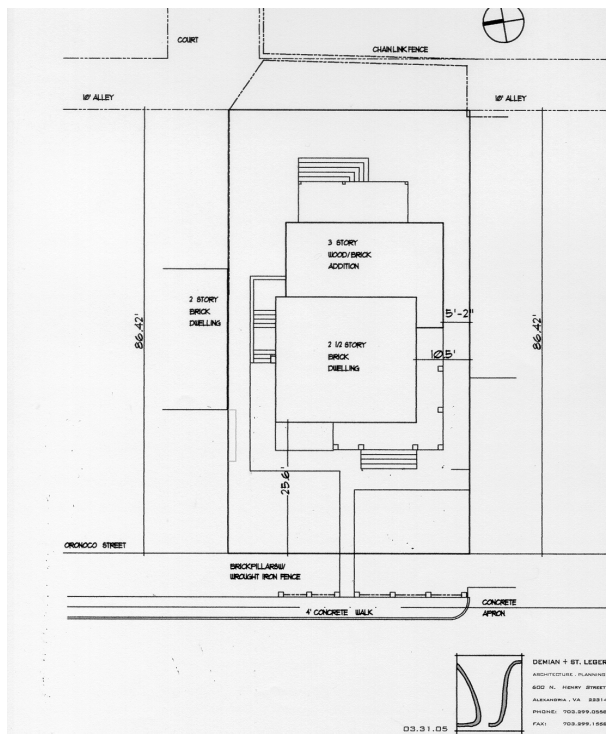


Figure 1- Site Plan

The slope of the roof will be raised to accommodate the new third story at the rear of the house. A new single story porch will extend across a portion of the front (west) elevation and turn the corner to extend across a portion of the south side elevation. These major alterations and other minor alterations are described in detail below:



Figure 2 - Front (west) elevation

Front (west) elevation:

As stated above, a new one story wrap around porch will extend across the left 2/3 of the front

and project beyond into the south side yard, replacing the existing brick stoop with metal railings. The front porch will be 21'7 1/4" long and 5'4" wide. The hip roof of the porch will be clad in standing seam metal. It will have a brick base, wood columns and wood picket railings. The porch will be approached by a set of wide steps, the material unknown, with wood picket railings.

In lieu of detail drawings, the applicant has provided several photographs showing railings on other houses in the area. These appear to have square section pickets and to be set within the top and bottom rail. It is assumed that these will serve as a basis for all the porch, stair and deck railings shown on the plans.

The fenestration of the house will be altered. On the first story, the doorway will be shifted from the center bay to the south side bay. A new wood window to match the others on the front elevation will be installed in place of the door. The window will have shutters. The new doorway will consist of paired, half glazed wood doors flanked by sidelights. On the second story, a new wood window matching the existing and with shutters will be added at the center of the elevation in a space that is currently blank.

The front slope of the existing low gable roof will be extended back at the current slope by another 14' to end at a point that is at the back of the existing house. There will be a considerably shorter rear slope, creating an asymmetrical roofline. The extended front and new rear slope will be clad in new asphalt shingles to match the existing. Currently, the peak of the roof is approximately 28' above grade. As proposed, it will be 34'3" above grade. A shed dormer will be added in the center of the front slope. The dormer will have wood siding, a metal roof and a wood window to match the existing windows. The skylight that was previously located in the front slope of the roof has been eliminated. The existing exterior chimney located on the north side of the house will remain but will be extended in brick, adding approximately 4' to meet code requirements for height above roof surface.

The rear addition extends 5'4" to the south of the existing house and thus will be visible from the front, although it is set back approximately 18' from the front face of the house. The south elevation of the addition will be two stories and will terminate in a flat deck surrounded by a wood picket railing. (The railing appears to have been inadvertently left off the west (front) elevation drawing). The wood casement window in the first and second stories, which were previously located at the south corner of the addition are now centered in the wall. The applicant has provided cut sheets for casement windows by Marvin.



Figure 3 - North side elevation

North side elevation:

The north elevation of the existing house will remain as is on the first and second stories. The extended roof slope will create a new third story to the east of the centerline. The wall of this new section will be clad in brick to match the existing and will have a wood window matching the existing. Exterior access to the basement will be moved from the rear of the building to the north side. An areaway will be created at the eastern end of the north elevation and will be surrounded by a wood railing. An existing basement window will be converted to a door.

The addition will be set back from the north wall by 2'. The addition will be clad in wood siding on the first and second stories and brick on the third story. The third story will not be as deep as the first and second stories. The top of the second story will be flat, and will be surrounded by a wood railing to serve as a deck for the third story. The third story will be capped with the short slope of the asymmetrical gable roof. There will be a window in the basement level. The first and second stories will be lit by fixed windows located in a strip at the west end of the wall abutting the rear wall of the existing house. These windows will be vertically aligned and will appear as strip, linked by wood panels below the windows and a two story trim board.



Figure 4 - Rear (east) elevation

Rear (east) elevation:

The proposed new construction will obscure all of the existing house at the rear except for a 2' wide section at the north corner. As mentioned above, the addition is offset from the north face of the house by 2' and it extends beyond the south face by 5'4". The addition will be clad in wood siding on the first and second stories and with brick on the third story. The third story will not be as wide or as deep as the addition below. The top of the second story will be flat, and will be surrounded by a wood railing to serve as a deck for the third story. The third story will be capped with the short slope of the asymmetrical gable roof. The roof will be clad in asphalt shingles to match the existing.

A wood deck with wood railings will extend out from the addition on the first story. The deck will be 3'3" above grade, 21'8 1/2" wide and 8' deep. It will be accessed by a set of broad steps located on the north end. The material of the steps is not indicated on the plans. There will be two windows at the south corner of the addition at basement level. The first and second stories of the addition are treated identically: there will be paired wood casement windows with wood panels below at the south corner and a set of wood fully glazed french doors with a fully glazed sidelight located to the north. The windows and doors in the first and second stories will be aligned vertically. The third story will have two sets of wood fully glazed french doors in the center of the east elevation. The applicant has provided a cutsheet for Marvin french doors. There will be two flush mounted skylights with integral awnings located at the north and south ends of the roof. The applicant has provided a cut sheet for the proposed Velux skylights.



Figure 5 - South side elevation

South side elevation:

The south elevation will consist of the existing house extended up to three stories at the rear with a brick clad addition with asymmetrical gable roof, the two story frame addition topped with deck and the wrap around porch extending along 2/3 of the first story.

The existing house will have a number of alterations on the south elevation. A pair of wood windows will replace an existing single window on the west end of the south elevation on the first story. These windows were previously shown as full length windows. As on the front, the porch will be supported by wood columns with a wood railing and metal clad hip roof. Unlike the front which has a solid brick foundation, the porch will have brick piers and or wood piers on

the side.

The new third story extension of the existing house will have two wood windows matching the existing. The two story frame addition will be clad in wood siding and will be identical on the first and second stories. There will be paired wood casement windows with wood panels below at the west corner. There will also be paired windows in the basement level. There will be a deck on the top of the second story which will be surrounded by a wood railing.

In the revised submission, the applicant included a cut sheet for Harditrim, a fiber cement material available in trim and fascia. A note on the specification sheet states that Harditrim is proposed as an alternate to wood siding. No further information is provided regarding where the Harditrim and Hardiplank siding is to be used. No dimension is proposed for the Hardiplank siding. As drawn, the siding appears to have an exposure of approximately 6".

All trim and siding will be painted white.

The applicant has provided cut sheets for three different light fixtures, apparently allowing Staff and Board to make the selection. Although not shown on the drawings, Code Enforcement requires that all exterior doors have an exterior light fixture. Staff does not object to any of the proposed fixtures.

All elevations of the house will be visible from the public right-of-way due to the generous side yards and the public alley at the rear.

II. HISTORY:

As explained in docket item #6, the two story, gable roof, brick house was constructed in 1955 and exhibits minimal Colonial Revival styling. Although the windows and front door have been replaced, there is no record of BAR review for this property. In 2001, the Board approved alterations at 417 North Fayette Street, a neighboring house constructed in 1940 with similar minimal Colonial Revival styling (BAR Case #2001-00144 & 145, 6/27/2001). The project added a portico at the front, porch at the north side and bay at the rear.

III. ANALYSIS:

The proposed addition and alterations comply with the zoning ordinance requirements. The property is classified as a single-family dwelling and can not have an apartment in the basement. The existing basement kitchen must be removed prior to wall check approval and no new kitchen may be installed.

Staff appreciates the revisions the applicant made in response to Board and Staff comments and believes these have improved the project. However, as the overall design has not changed significantly from the previous submission, the opinion of Staff remains unchanged from the previous Staff report. Staff believes the proposed addition is not sufficiently compatible with the houses on the blockface or with the surrounding neighborhood. None of the houses on either side of the 400 block of Fayette Street exceed two stories. All are simple vernacular examples of late Victorian or mid-20th Century Colonial Revival. The model provided by the applicant does

not dissuade Staff from the belief that the addition is incompatible. Additional site visits only serve to reinforce the impression that the very generous side yards at 421 North Fayette Street will not only provide excellent views of the new roofline and addition but also have the effect of setting off the house. Staff sees no reason to think the new roofline and third story will be obscured by adjacent houses and fears that by virtue of its setting, the new taller house will be highly visible.

As previously explained, Staff particularly objects to the extension of the gable roof to create a third story at the rear. The resulting asymmetrical roofline is peculiar and the mass at the rear of the house overwhelming. Staff recommends exploring alternatives including leaving the roofline of the existing house as it is and locating the offices elsewhere or raising the roof equally on both sides to create a steeper gable with a more harmonious appearance and utilizing dormers to add light and headroom.

With regard to the use of Harditrim and Hardiplank siding, Staff notes that the Board has reviewed a number of applications for the use of fiber cement siding and has adopted the following policy with respect to the product:

1. That fiber cement siding not be installed on an historic structure;
2. That historic materials should not be removed to install fiber cement siding;
3. That fiber cement siding replace other artificial or composite siding;
4. That the nails not show in the installation of the siding; and,
5. That smooth siding be installed.
6. That BAR Staff may administratively approve the installation of fiber cement siding on *non-historic* buildings (those constructed in 1975 or later).

Staff believes the use of Harditrim and Hardiplank siding on the addition is entirely appropriate, provided that condition #s 4 & 5 are met. It is not clear whether the fiber cement material is also being proposed for the new elements to be added to the existing 1955 house, such as the dormer window and porch. Given the mid-20th century date of the house and the fact that these elements will be new, Staff would not object to the use of Harditrim and Hardiplank for the new elements on the existing house, again provided that condition #s 4 & 5 are met.

Lastly, the plans call for new wood shutters at the two new windows on the front (west) elevation. Staff does not object to the shutters, but notes that the *Design Guidelines* call for shutters to be hinged and operable (Shutters - Page 1). It is not clear that the proposed shutters will be either. In addition, Staff is not entirely sure of the material of the existing shutters and believes they are neither hinged or operable. In the opinion of Staff, it would be preferable to eliminate all the shutters rather than to have the new shutters hinged while the existing are fixed or to have both old and new be fixed.

IV. STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends deferral of the application for restudy. However, should the Board approve the proposed addition at this time, Staff notes the comments of Alexandria Archaeology and recommends that they be included as a condition of the approval:

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

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.

In addition Staff recommends that if Harditrim and Hardiplank siding is used, that it be smooth, not wood textured, and that it be applied so that the nails are not visible. Lastly, Staff recommends that either all the shutters on the front elevation be wood, operable, hinged shutters or there be no shutters at all.

CITY DEPARTMENT COMMENTS

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

Code Enforcement:

- F-1 Proposed windows for kitchens and master bath are located within 5 feet of interior lot line and shall conform to C-1 below.
- F-2 Basement windows are located under flooring of front porch and do not meet emergency escape requirements of the USBC.
- F-3 Submitted plans appear to exceed height and area requirements of the USBC and may require a sprinkler system. Final determination of this requirement will be evaluated at time of building permit application.
- 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.

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.