

Docket Item #10  
BAR CASE # 2005-0127

BAR Meeting  
June 22, 2005

**ISSUE:** Construction of a shed roof porch and concrete deck

**APPLICANT:** Judith Schulik

**LOCATION:** 233 N. West St.

**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 approval with the following conditions:

1. Corner posts in addition to the mid-span post be part of the porch design;
2. 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; and,
3. The above statement must appear in the General Notes of all site plans so that on-site contractors are aware of the requirement

## **I. ISSUE:**

The applicant is seeking approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness for the construction of a new porch roof and concrete deck to be installed at the first floor level of the rear elevation of the house located at 233 N. West St.

The proposed roof structure is to be the full width of the house, 11'-6", and will project into the rear yard a distance of 7'6". It will be a low-pitched (3:12) shed roof form, built of 2" x 6" framing attached to the house, and carried upon a 9" LVL beam and two decorative columns. The roofing surface is to be asphalt shingles. Decorative fan brackets are proposed to flank each side of the two columns, each is which is inset 1'-6" from the side. The columns selected are typical of turned wooden columns which characterize domestic porches typical to the later part of the 19<sup>th</sup> and early years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The porch deck is proposed to be a concrete slab on raised grade, supported by a perimeter footing of concrete masonry units on a concrete footing.

## **II. HISTORY:**

The townhouse at 233 North West Street is one of 5 units probably constructed between 1896 and 1902 (Sanborn Insurance Maps), but possibly constructed a decade earlier. This house is representative of the modest residential development which characterized this area of the City in the period around the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Simple but well proportioned, with a modicum of embellishment, these house are likely the last manifestations of the long and rich tradition of Victorian row house construction in Alexandria. As a generic type, the presence of simple porches on the fronts and some form of covered service area on the rear elevations was a typical configuration. The simple and sometimes insubstantial nature of the construction of these features often lead to their early demise or frequent replacement over time. The specific history of any such feature on this house is not now known without further investigation into the fabric of the façade, but it is safe to surmise that it may have had something not dissimilar to what is being proposed.

## **III. ANALYSIS:**

In Staff opinion, the proposed porch roof and concrete deck are appropriate alterations to this modest late Victorian house, and the form, materials and details are typical of those employed in the historic period. The proposal complies generally with the *Design Guidelines* for the Historic District. The structure as designed is nearly invisible from outside the applicant's property, the rear yard of which is bounded by a 6' fence.

There are two minor points pertaining to the design itself which need to be discussed. The first is the desire of the applicant to employ turned columns and brackets in a manner which was common on front porches, but likely to have been far less so on rear, more utilitarian service porches. Were this structure more prominent and visible from public spaces, it might be useful to consider a slight simplification of the project. Given the location and relative invisibility of these features in their context, Staff recommends no change from the submittal.

The other issue has to do with the proposed column spacing, which eschews the traditional location at the corners, for the inset as noted above. The reasons for the proposal may be perfectly reasonable from the standpoint of installation, or from the need to limit the LVLV span to 8'. However, the resulting anomalous relationship of support to structure belies the model from the period and is somewhat disconcerting. Although probably not needed structurally, Staff recommends consideration of corner posts, in addition to the mid-span post, a net addition of one column.

Staff also notes the comments of Alexandria Archaeology and has included them as a condition.

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

Staff recommends approval with the following conditions:

1. Corner posts in addition to the mid-span post be part of the porch design;
2. 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; and,
3. The above statement must appear in the General Notes of all site plans so that on-site contractors are aware of the requirement

## 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.
- C-2 Roof drainage systems must be installed so as neither to impact upon, nor cause erosion/damage to adjacent property.
- 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.

### Historic Alexandria:

“No comment.”

### Alexandria Archaeology:

- F-1 The current house on this property was built around 1900. Tax records indicate the presence of a free African American household on this street face at the corner of West and Queen streets, and it is possible that archaeological resources that could provide insight into the lives of free blacks in early 19<sup>th</sup>-century Alexandria could be located on the current development lot, situated just to the south of this street corner. The entire area was part of the 19<sup>th</sup>-century African American neighborhood known as Uptown.
- 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 all site plans so that on-site contractors are aware of the requirement