

Docket Item #5
BAR CASE# 2005-00077

BAR Meeting
July 27, 2005

ISSUE: Demolition
APPLICANT: Charles Reeder
LOCATION: 227 North West Street
ZONE: RB/Residential

BOARD ACTION, June 22, 2005: Deferred due to lack of public notice

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends approval of the Permit to Demolish as submitted.

NOTE: This docket item requires a roll call vote.

I. ISSUE:

The applicant is requesting approval of a Permit to Demolish to allow for the construction of a two story addition at the rear and a single story open porch at the front. The proposed addition will capsule the entire rear facade of the existing house. The submitted materials do not indicate the extent of demolition that will also take place on the rear elevation. The proposed front porch will abut the front facade, capsulating small areas of the facade at the roof and base of the porch.

The property is visible from the two north-south public alleys at the rear as well as from West Street.

II. HISTORY:

The two bay wide, two story frame house at 227 North West Street was constructed between 1891 and 1896 as an end unit in a row of five modest rowhouses (227-235 North West Street). When constructed, the houses each had a one story rear ell. Over the years, they have been subjected to a number of exterior alterations and several now have second story additions at the rear. At some point after 1985, the rear ell was removed from 227 North West Street. The house is clad in non-historic asphalt siding and has modern replacement windows and doors. However, it retains its original fenestration pattern and Italianate cornice at the front. Staff was unable to locate any record of BAR review for the property.

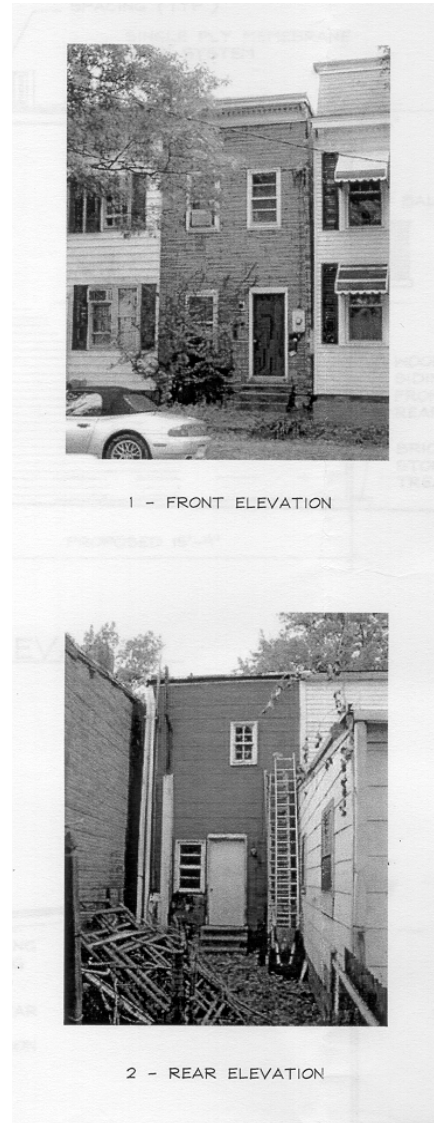


Figure 1 - Existing house

The Board has approved similar projects in the same block. In 2004, the Board approved demolition/capsulation and a second story rear addition at 231 North West Street (BAR Case #2004-00239 & 2004-00240, 11/10/2004). In 2003, the Board approved demolition/capsulation, alterations and a full two story rear addition at 209 North West Street (BAR Case #2003-0135 & 0136, 7/23/2003). In 1997, the Board approved demolition/capsulation and a second story rear addition and alterations at 233 North West Street (BAR Case #97-00002, 1/22/1997).

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 does not meet any of the above Criteria. The proposed demolition/capsulation is almost entirely confined to the rear. Although the entire rear facade will be impacted, the narrow width of the house (approximately 12') means that a narrower addition, which would allow some of the rear of the original house to remain visible, is not practical. In addition, the rear has already been altered by the removal of the original one story ell. With respect to the capsulation at the front, the proposed porch will capsulate only a small portion of the front of the house and it is a reversible alteration.

IV. STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Therefore, Staff recommends approval of the Permit to Demolish as submitted.

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:

“No comment.”

Alexandria Archeology:

F-1 This block was part of the African American neighborhood known as Uptown in the late 19th century. Tax records indicate the presence of a free African American household on the property in 1850. The lot therefore has the potential to yield archaeological resources that could provide insight into domestic activities of African Americans in 19th-century Alexandria.

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.