

Docket Item #2
BAR CASE# 2006-0003

BAR Meeting
January 25, 2006

ISSUE: Alterations to previously approved plans

APPLICANT: William Cromley

LOCATION: 1210 Queen Street

ZONE: CRMU-M/Commercial Mixed Use

****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 of the application with the following conditions:

1. That the front steps be planted in sedum; and,
2. That the kitchen vent fans on the west wall of the third story addition be painted to match the wall.

I. ISSUE:

The applicant is requesting approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness for alterations to the previously approved plans for the renovation and third story addition at 1210 Queen Street. The alterations are described below:

Front (North) Elevation:

Front steps and areaway - The existing side oriented concrete front steps are not original. The previously approved plans replaced the existing steps with a pair of gently curved steps on either side of the central landing. This stairway was to have metal railings and cast stone treads. The current plan replaces the existing non-original steps with a new design consisting of a single set of steps leading directly to the front entrance. The stairway will be 7'10" wide and will project approximately 3'10" from the face of the building. It will have a brick vault and sidewalls in tan brick to match the walls of the building. The caps on the walls and the steps will be of cast stone to match the window sills on the building. There will be simple, low metal railings on the sidewalls of the stairway.

As in the previously approved plans, the front door is not functional. The main entrance will be relocated to the east side of the building. To signal that the front stairway is not functional, discourage loitering and identify the building as a "Green Building," the four steps will actually be hollowed out to create a series of planters. The planters will have a lip or rim so that they will appear as conventional steps from the side view. They will be planted with low growth sedums (a drought resistant succulent) like those that will be used on the green roof at the top of the third story addition.

As in the previous plan, the areaway on either side of the front steps will be enclosed with a simple metal railing. However, in the current plans the area enclosed is not as extensive. The areaway railings will be 3.5' high, extend out approximately 3'10" from the building face and approximately 7' to either side of the stairway.

Front light fixtures - The plans had not previously shown light fixtures at the (non-functional) front entrance. However, electrical boxes were discovered in this location and the applicant now proposes to install a fixture on either side of the entrance. The fixtures will be the same cast iron globe fixtures ("Portland" model W450 by Rejuvenation Lighting) as previously approved for the side entrance.

East Side Elevation:

The only change proposed for this elevation is the addition of a short section of round downspout exiting the wall toward the front of the building just above ground level. The remainder of the

downspout is internal.

Rear (South) Elevation:

Downspouts - The plans now show three copper leaders and round downspouts at the corners and center of this elevation. No downspouts were previously shown, but they will be necessary to drain the roof deck on top of the second story.

Exterior egress stair - An improved understanding of fire code requirements resulted in an alteration to the exterior egress stairs. The stairs had previously been clad in diamond patterned metal roof shingles on the second and third levels on all three sides but now will be clad only on the east side. (The drawings incorrectly show one section of cladding remaining on the rear elevation.)

West Side Elevation:

Exterior egress stair - The fire egress stairs, which had previously been clad in diamond patterned metal roof shingles, are now open to comply with fire code requirements.

Kitchen fans - The plans now show six kitchen extraction fans for the units located in the basement, first and second stories grouped together toward the center of the west wall of the new third story addition. The round metal fan hoods are each 2' in diameter. The section of wall where they are to be located will be recessed by approximately 7" so that the fans will only project approximately 9" from the face of the wall. The pilasters to either side of the wall section will project an additional 3" from the face of the wall. Thus the fans at their greatest point will project approximately 6" beyond the pilasters. Two additional kitchen vents for the third floor units will be located on the lower portion of the wall of the new third story addition. These will be hidden from view by the parapet along the third story roof deck.

The front (north) and east sides of the building are highly visible from Queen and Fayette Streets, while the west and rear (south) sides are visible in more limited views from Payne and Cameron Streets.

II. HISTORY:

The two story brick building at 1210 Queen Street was built in 1909-1910. The building was constructed as a warehouse for William Peck, a prominent neighborhood businessman and developer, and was designed by H. A. Riggs. Nearly 100 years later, the large, rectangular building with a distinctive tan brick facade, arched windows and doorways and decorative brickwork remains a notable presence in this district of largely small scale frame residences. Although not an obvious example of an architectural style, this utilitarian building is handsome, well proportioned and exhibits brick work of the level typically seen on some of the Alexandria's more high style residential buildings of the era. Despite the various minor alterations and deficient maintenance over the years, the building retains a high level of architectural integrity.

The Board recently approved a Permit to Demolish, Conceptual Plans and a Certificate of Appropriateness for alterations and a new third story to permit the renovation of the building as an 8-unit residential condominium (BAR Case #s 2005-00104 & 2005-00105, 5/25/2005 and

2005-00172, 7/27/2005). On June 21, 2005, the Board upheld an appeal of the Board's approval of the Permit to Demolish (BAR Case #2005-00104).

III. ANALYSIS:

The proposed alterations to the previously approved plans comply with zoning ordinance requirements.

Staff has no objection to the proposed alterations. The alterations are minor in nature and a number are required by code. Staff believes the simplified front stairway and reduced areaway railing results in a cleaner more historically appropriate appearance. While the planting of the stairs is unusual Staff does not believe it is unacceptable. It provides a clever solution to the desire to maintain the elements of the original front entrance while discouraging their use. The use of sedums for the planting is ideal as they will maintain a low height, are drought resistant and extremely hardy and are invasive, thereby excluding weeds. The low profile of the plant will ensure that the steps will read as a rectangular form. The hardiness of the plant will ensure that they will retain an attractive and well-kept appearance with little or no maintenance. The applicant intends to require that the front steps/planters be planted in sedums in perpetuity as a condition in the condominium documents. The exterior egress stairs at the rear of the building will be only minimally visible. The reduction of the areas of metal cladding may reduce the visual bulk of exterior egress stairs. The addition of the kitchen vent fans to the west wall of the third story addition is unfortunate, but is unlikely to be very noticeable from the public right of way. The fans have been grouped at the center of the long wall, approximately 50' back from the sidewalk and are in a recessed area to further limit their appearance. Staff does recommend that they be painted to match the wall to ensure that they are as unobtrusive as possible.

IV. STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Therefore, Staff recommends approval of the application with the following conditions:

1. That the front steps be planted in sedum; and,
2. That the kitchen vent fans on the west wall be painted to match the wall.

CITY DEPARTMENT COMMENTS

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

Code Enforcement:

- C-1 New construction must comply with the current edition of the Uniform Statewide Building Code (USBC).
- C-2 Alterations to the existing structure must comply with the current edition of the Uniform Statewide Building Code (USBC).
- C-3 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:

“Redesign of the front stoop according to the examples provided seems appropriate.”