

Docket Item # 4
BAR CASE #2006-0091

BAR Meeting
May 10, 2006

ISSUE: Replacement windows

APPLICANT: Patrick Bodden

LOCATION: 200 North Payne Street

ZONE: RM/Residential

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Staff recommends approval of the application with the condition that the new window sash be of wood.

(Insert sketch here)

I. ISSUE:

The applicant is requesting approval of replacement window sash for the corner building located at Payne and Cameron Streets. The applicant has not definitely determined which units must be replaced, but expects the replacement to be confined to the Cameron Street side and perhaps only to the upper level. Only those units that are beyond repair will be replaced. The applicant designed and fabricated the existing windows when he renovated the building approximately 30 years ago. The double glazed windows were constructed of press board material cut out on a router, painted, and were set in redwood frames. The frames do not need to be replaced. The applicant proposes to use wood rather than press board for the replacement windows. In all other respects the replacement windows will replicate the existing which are pairs of casements with four lights per sash. In addition to the window replacement, the applicant will undertake a number of other in-kind repairs, including repairing the roof and flashing, repairing peeling paint and rotten wood and repairing a hole in the wall.

II. HISTORY:

The 1877 Hopkins Atlas indicates that the lot at the northwest corner of Payne and Cameron Street was undeveloped. This section of Alexandria was not included in the 1885 and 1891 *Sanborn Fire Insurance* maps. When it was finally mapped in 1896, a two story frame building with a single story rear addition is shown. The 1896 *Sanborn* map shows the building sharing the lot with a large shed structure at the rear. From 1907 to 1921, the building is described on the *Sanborn* maps as a confectionary. In 1931, it is simply described as a store and has a single story addition on the north side. The large shed structure at the rear has been replaced with a garage.

The present owner acquired the property circa 1975 and has provided photographs of the property from that year (these photographs are included in the Board's packet). The bracketed cornice found on the Payne Street front of the late 19th century two story block is repeated on the single story side addition. A projecting storefront bay extends across and links the two-story and one-story sections. The storefront bay is flanked by a door on either end of the front facade. The front windows are two-over-two while those on the Cameron Street side are a variety of types, including six-over-six, six-over-nine and one-over-one windows. The frame building is clad in brick-tex type asphalt siding, covering the original clapboard siding. The signage on the building in the circa 1975 photographs identifies it as "Snelling's Bicycle Repairing."

The applicant found the building to be in extremely poor condition and undertook an extensive renovation. By his estimation, his renovation "preserved some part of the building's spirit," but that "almost nothing remained of the original structure." Staff notes that the Parker-Gray Historic District was not established until 1986 and the applicant was not required to obtain BAR approval for the renovation.

The renovation left the basic massing and configuration of the building intact, although the one story addition on the north side of the building was raised to a full two stories to match the main

block. The exterior surface was covered in a stucco finished material applied over plywood. The locations of the windows and doors appear to have been more or less replicated in the remodeled building. However, the sizes and sash configuration of the windows were regularized. As discussed above, all window frames and sash were designed and fabricated by the applicant using redwood frames and press board sash with double glazing.

III. ANALYSIS:

The proposed replacement windows comply with zoning ordinance requirements.

Windows are a principal character-defining feature of a building. The *Design Guidelines* note that:

1. Changes to windows can have a dramatic impact on the historic appearance of a structure. Many buildings in the historic districts have had the windows changed in an attempt to alter the historic period of the structure or to create the appearance of modernity. (Windows - page 1)
2. New and replacement windows should be appropriate to the historic period of the architectural style of the building. For example, two-over-two and one-over-one windows are appropriate on Victorian style buildings dating from the late 19th to early 20th century. Multi-paned windows are not appropriate on structures dating from this period. (Windows - page 2)

Based on the *Guidelines* and on our knowledge of the historic buildings of the historic districts, staff would be inclined to advise that the replacement windows be double hung wood windows with a two-over-two configuration. The historic photographs provided by the applicant indicate that this was the window type used on the primary facade. The secondary facade along King Street appears to have utilized double hung windows with a multi-light configuration rather than the more “up-to-date” (and expensive) two-over-two windows.

However, staff believes that in this case, the extensive renovation circa 1975 resulted in a new creation, reflecting the design aesthetic of the last quarter of the 20th century as much as that of the late 19th century when the structure was first erected. Therefore, in this case, Staff does not believe it is desirable to seek to return the building a more historic appearance by requiring windows more typical of the original period of construction. Staff is pleased to note that while the applicant will replicate the existing window sash in appearance, he has told staff that he intends to use wood rather than press board. Wood is a more traditional material and thus more compatible with the *Design Guidelines* and the preferred window material for the historic districts. Furthermore, a high quality wood window should have a longer life than press board. With this clarification, Staff has no objection to the application as submitted.

IV. STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends approval of application with the condition that the new window sash be of wood.

CITY DEPARTMENT COMMENTS

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

Code Enforcement:

No comments.

Historic Alexandria:

Because most of this building has been reconstructed in an eclectic style, which bears no similarity to the surrounding neighborhood or the original design, the replacement of these customized windows seems acceptable. There is no mention, however, about why the windows need to be replaced. Is there some aspect of their design or function that needs improvement since he is seeking to re-install the same style of windows?