

Docket Item # 8  
BAR CASE #2006-0204

BAR Meeting  
September 27, 2006

**ISSUE:** Demolition/capsulation

**APPLICANT:** Elizabeth Neiner

**LOCATION:** 908 Princess Street

**ZONE:** RB/Residential

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**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:** Staff recommends approval of the application as submitted.

**\*\*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.

(Insert sketch here)

NOTE: This docket item requires a roll call vote.

**ISSUE:**

The applicant is requesting a Permit to Demolish and Capsulate to remove the existing roof for the construction of a second floor addition and to cover the existing cinder-block exterior with bricks, on the five-bay automobile garage structure adjacent to 908 Princess Street.

The existing five bay-parking garage structure is located behind the property of which it is legally attached, 908 Princess Street, and Meade Memorial Episcopal Church. Views of the garage are limited to the wide public alley that is accessed from Princess Street. The properties located on Princess Street, included 908 and 910 Princess, and Meade Memorial Episcopal Church located on North Alfred Street, shield the garage from views from Princess Street and North Alfred Street. The church has a separate one-bay garage located in the alley that shields a portion of the structure from public view. An existing wood fence with gate also screens some views of the garage structure.



Currently, the cinder-block garage structure is non-descript in appearance and lacks any distinguishing architectural character. The roof of the garage is metal with wood joists. The western elevation has been painted while the other elevations appear to be unpainted. The garage openings have basic paneled garage doors.

The new addition will be 7.9' wide and 13.5' deep and will be located mostly on the north side of the structure.

**HISTORY:**

In researching the garage structure, staff has determined that carriage houses and other subordinate out-building structures were located in this area, once known as Dulaney Court, as early as 1902, as shown on the 1902 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map. The 1896 map does not indicate any structures in this area at that time—908 Princess Street was not built until sometime between 1896 and 1902. Other Sanborn maps, including 1907, 1912, and 1921 show carriage houses located in this vicinity but not on this exact same footprint. The 1965 and 1989 Sanborn map shows a ten-bay, one-story structure on the current footprint. However, approximately half of this structure was demolished since 1989. In staff's opinion, the current configuration of the garage structure is not historic nor possessing of any historic integrity.

Staff could not locate any building permits for the current five-bay garage structure. The only

permits found related to new roofing from 1983.

**ANALYSIS:**

In considering a Permit to Demolish or 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?

Staff does not believe any of the above criteria are met. The cinder-block garage is not historic and appears to have been consistently reconfigured and altered over the years. Therefore, Staff recommends approval of the application as submitted.

CITY DEPARTMENT COMMENTS

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

Code Enforcement:

- 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 of the wall. As alternative, a 2 hour fire wall may be provided. This condition is also applicable to skylights within setback distance. Openings in exterior walls between 3 and 5 feet shall not exceed 25% of the area of the entire wall surface (This shall include bay windows). Openings shall not be permitted in exterior walls within 3 feet of an interior lot line.
- 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.

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Office of Historic Alexandria:  
Project seems appropriate.