

Docket Item # 3
BAR CASE # 2006-0209

BAR Meeting
October 25, 2006

ISSUE: New residential building
APPLICANT: James A. Merklinger
LOCATION: 630 North Columbus Street
ZONE: RB/residential

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Staff recommends approval of the application with the following conditions:

1. The requirements below must be included in the General Notes of all site plans, as well as on all site plan sheets that include ground disturbing actions. Additional statements may be required to be included on the Final Site Plans by Alexandria Archaeology:

Contact Alexandria Archaeology (703-838-4399) two weeks prior to any ground disturbing activity (such as coring, grading, filling, vegetation removal, undergrounding utilities, pile driving, landscaping and other excavations as defined in Section 2-151 of The Zoning Ordinance) on this property. City archaeologists will provide on-site inspections to record significant finds. The building permit will not be released until the inspection schedule has been determined.

Call Alexandria Archaeology (703/838-4399) immediately if any buried historic structural remains (wall foundations, cisterns, wells, privies, 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 to record the finds.

2. The applicant shall not allow any metal detection on this property unless authorized by Alexandria Archaeology.

****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: Docket item #2 must be approved before this item can be considered.

I. ISSUE:

The applicant is requesting approval of a certificate of appropriateness for a new residential dwelling to be constructed at the south end of the row of three two story brick rowhouses (632-636 North Columbus Street). The house will be constructed on a lot that was platted prior to 1951 and that has remained vacant, except for a prefabricated shed which is to be demolished (Docket item #2). The exterior appearance of the proposed new house will be similar to the three rowhouses to the north in most respects, including siting, massing, size, height, roof type, materials and architectural character. However, the design does include a number of features that will distinguish the new house from the existing houses.



Figure 1 - The proposed house is located at the left end of the row

The new house will have an 8' deep front yard. There will be a rear yard comparable in depth to the others in the row with a single compact parking space, measuring 8' by 16' on the north side. The gravel parking space will be accessed from the public alley behind the house. The two story house will be 38'7" long, 17' wide, and 24'8 1/2" high from grade to the top of the roof at the front. Its front and rear walls will be even with that of the house at 632 North Columbus Street and it will match the roof height and slope of that house as well. The new house at 630 North Columbus Street will have a front porch like that of the neighboring houses and will be clad in a similar red brick. A brick sample will be available to the Board at the hearing. The windows will be Pella Architect Series wood windows. Most exterior trim will be of Azek, a cellular PVC material that has a similar appearance to wood when painted. An Azek sample will be available to the Board at the hearing. Other materials will be metal railings and precast sills. The windows and trim will be painted cream and the metal railings will be dark green.

Front (east) – The front porch will be the dominant element of the house on this elevation. The one story flat roofed porch will be the same height as the neighboring porch. It will be inset from the edge of the front of the house by 8" on each side, for a total width of 16'8". The 6'5" deep porch will be slightly less deep than the porch at 632 North Columbus Street. It will rest on brick piers and will have three 8" by 8" square columns across the front. The columns will be trimmed in Azek synthetic trim boards and will have a somewhat Craftsman style appearance. The simple cornice will match that of the neighboring porch and will also be trimmed in Azek. The steps will be clad in brick.



Figure 2 - East elevation

The porch railing and handrails on the steps will be steel railings with

straight pickets and a single cross member near the top rail. There will be painted lattice board between the brick piers at the base of the porch. The door will be on the left side of the front elevation. It will be a two panel wood door with a natural rather than painted finish. There will be a transom above the door and a Craftsman style lamp beside the door. On the right side of the elevation, there will be a pair of one-over-one windows. The windows will abut each other rather than being ganged together with a center post. The second story will have three one-over-one windows: a single window above the door and paired windows above the paired windows below in the first story. The window openings will have a soldier course above and stone/precast sills. There will be a panel of basket weave patterned brickwork above the second story. There will be a metal cap at the top of the brick clad masonry wall at the front.

South side - This wall will be on the property line and will have no penetrations. The brick clad wall will terminate in a metal cap. The coping on the south side will step down slightly approximately half way toward the back.

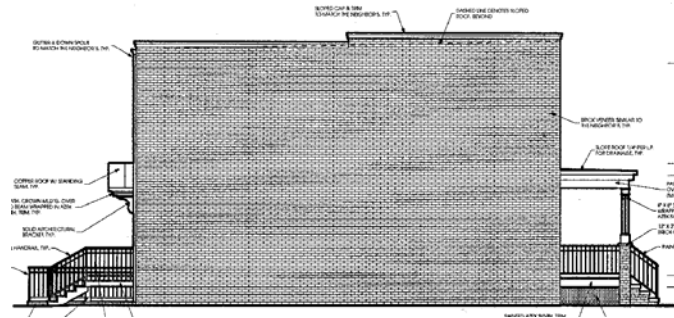


Figure 3 - South elevation

Rear (west) – The rear elevation will have an areaway way leading to the below grade basement level. The areaway will have the same railings as at the front of the house. The rear door will be the same two panel wood door as at the front and will be located on the right side of the rear elevation. It will be accessed by wide wooden steps with metal railings. Two HVAC condenser units will be located against the areaway railing in a niche created by the steps leading to the basement and to the rear door. There will be a gable roofed hood supported on curved wood brackets above the rear door. It will have Azek board and trim on the exterior and standing seam copper on the roof. A Craftsman style light fixture will be located on the underside of the hood. There will be a pair of casement windows on the left side of the first story. There will be a group of three casements in the second story. These windows will all be full view with no divisions. As on the front, the window openings will have a soldier course above and stone/precast sills. A gutter will run across the rear roof edge and a gutter will be located at the left side corner.



Figure 4- West elevation

The front and south side of the new house will be visible from North Columbus Street. There will be a 5'9" gap between the south side wall of the new house and the north wall of the enclosed porch on 628 North Columbus Street, the house to the south. The rear and south side of

the house will be visible from the public alley at the back. The existing chain link fence at the front and south side of the property where the building wall will be are to be removed. The applicant does not currently plan to install any replacement fencing

II. HISTORY:

As stated above, the subject property has been vacant for over 50 years. The row of three houses at 632 to 636 North Columbus Street was constructed between 1921 and 1931, based on the Sanborn mapping. The porch front houses to the south appear to have been constructed a decade or so earlier than those to the north. Although doors, porch railings and windows have been changed there has been relatively little alteration of the properties over the years. The Board approved a front fence at 636 North Columbus Street in 2004 (BAR Case #2004-0081, 5/26/2004).

III. ANALYSIS:

The subject property is zoned RB/residential. On September 16, 2006, the City Council approved a special use permit to allow a reduction of the required parking from two spaces to one compact space (SUP Case #2006-0063). On October 12, 2006, the Board of Zoning appeals approved a variance to allow the construction of the new single family dwelling with a reduction in the required open space from 800 square feet to 605.8 square feet (BZA Case #2006-0042).

Staff believes the proposed new house design complies with the Design Guidelines for new residential construction and is appropriate in terms of size, massing, materials and architectural character. It is respectful of the early twentieth century porch front houses that compose the blockface. While its design is closely related to the row of three existing houses to which it will be attached, it also incorporates a number of distinguishing features which will serve to establish its individuality and announce its twenty first century origins: the different but related window patterns, the Craftsman-like posts and metal porch railings, and the basket weave panel above the second story. Following an initial submission which deliberately mimicked the adjacent house, the applicant and his architect willingly worked with Staff for a looser interpretation of the historic model. While Staff regrets that the south side elevation offers little visual relief it is not of great concern. It will be visible only through the 5'9" sliver of yard alongside 628 North Columbus Street and is unlikely to be a prominent feature in the overall streetscape dominated by the procession of porch fronts. To conclude, Staff recommends approval of the design of the house as submitted.

Staff does note the comments of Alexandria Archaeology and recommends that they be included as a condition of the approval.

IV. STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends approval of the application with the following conditions:

1. The requirements below must be included in the General Notes of all site plans, as well as on all site plan sheets that include ground disturbing actions. Additional statements may be required to be included on the Final Site Plans by Alexandria Archaeology:

Contact Alexandria Archaeology (703-838-4399) two weeks prior to any ground disturbing activity (such as coring, grading, filling, vegetation removal, undergrounding utilities, pile driving, landscaping and other excavations as defined in Section 2-151 of The Zoning Ordinance) on this property. City archaeologists will provide on-site inspections to record significant finds. The building permit will not be released until the inspection schedule has been determined.

Call Alexandria Archaeology (703/838-4399) immediately if any buried historic structural remains (wall foundations, cisterns, wells, privies, 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 to record the finds.

2. The applicant shall not allow any metal detection on this property unless authorized by Alexandria Archaeology.

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.

Historic Alexandria:

The proposal seems appropriate. The design is compatible with the adjacent residences.

Alexandria Archaeology:

- F-1 Tax records indicate that a house may have been present in 1810 on the block bounded by Columbus, Pendleton, Alfred, and Wythe Streets, but the exact location is not known. However, the tax records from 1830 and 1850 do not show a structure on the square. During the Civil War, the property was the site of a large, two-story structure containing mess rooms, kitchens, and bunk rooms utilized by the Union Army as part of the Washington Street Corral. After the war, the block was sub-divided, and houses were constructed along Columbus Street during the late 19th and early 20th centuries, but it does not appear that a structure was built on this property. The lot therefore has the potential to yield archaeological resources that could provide insight into residential life in 19th-century Alexandria and into military activities during the Civil War.
- F-2 Reevaluation of this project has resulted in a reduction of the required preservation measures. See below.
- C-1 Contact Alexandria Archaeology (703-838-4399) two weeks prior to any ground disturbing activity (such as coring, grading, filling, vegetation removal, undergrounding utilities, pile driving, landscaping and other excavations as defined in Section 2-151 of The Zoning Ordinance) on this property. City archaeologists will provide on-site inspections to record significant finds. The building permit will not be released until the inspection schedule has been determined.
- C-2 Call Alexandria Archaeology (703/838-4399) immediately if any buried historic structural remains (wall foundations, cisterns, wells, privies, 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 to record the finds.
- C-3 The requirements stated in C-1 and C2 above, must be included in the General Notes of all site plans, as well as on all site plan sheets that include ground disturbing actions. Additional statements may be required to be included on the Final Site Plans by Alexandria Archaeology.
- R-1 The applicant shall not allow any metal detection on this property unless authorized by Alexandria Archaeology.