

Docket Item # 2
BAR CASE # 2006-0264

BAR Meeting
December 13, 2006

ISSUE: Alterations
APPLICANT: Shannon McGahey
LOCATION: 634 North Columbus Street
ZONE: RB/Residential

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Staff recommends approval of the proposed porch renovation with the following conditions:

1. That the windows be wood windows;
2. That the door be a wood door;
3. That the siding be wood or fiber cement; and,
4. That Staff approve the windows, door and siding selection prior to installation.

****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)

I. ISSUE:

The applicant proposes to renovate the existing enclosed, two story, rear porch by replacing the siding, windows, door, deck and stairs. The applicant proposes to replace the aluminum siding with the Ridgewood insulated vinyl wall system. The product comes in panels molded to appear as lapped siding and embossed to “resemble natural wood siding.” The new windows will be Anderson 200 series, dual pane, vinyl windows. The Anderson 200 series windows come with either in-the-glass muntins or snap-in muntins. The drawings show the proposed double hung windows to have a six-over-six configuration. The fenestration pattern will be altered somewhat from the existing. There are presently four windows on the first and on the second stories. The drawings show that there will be three windows in the first story and two windows in the second story. There will be a new door in the same location as the existing. The proposed new door is a steel and fiberglass door. The drawing shows the door with multiple lights. The proposed new deck and stairs will be wood with straight pickets, a flat top rail and ball finials on the posts at the top of the deck.

The rear porch is visible from Wythe Street and the public alley behind the house.

II. HISTORY:

The row of three, two story, brick rowhouses at 632-636 North Columbus Street were constructed between 1921 and 1931. The houses were constructed with frame, two story porches. The porches were at least partially open when constructed and for a number of years afterward, according to the Sanborn Fire Insurance mapping. However, all were fully enclosed and weatherized some time ago. A 1963 building permit for 634 North Columbus Street requests approval of plans to “re-cover outside walls of existing enclosed rear two story porch with aluminum siding.” The plans also called for covering the inside walls and ceilings and installing a new door and windows. The sketch attached to the permit appears to show the rear porch as it now exists (Building Permit #19598, 6/27/1963). There is no record of any BAR approvals for work on any of the three houses in the row. However, the enclosure of the rear porches is assumed to pre-date the establishment of the Parker-Gray District.

The Board recently approved the construction of a new house to abut the row of three on the south end at 630 North Columbus Street (BAR Case #2006-209, 10/25/2006). The rear of this house will be brick. The windows and doors will be wood. In 1992, the Board approved a new enclosed side porch at 628 North Columbus Street. That porch is clad in wood siding with wood windows (BAR Case #92-13PG, 5/27/1992 and #92-23PG, 8/26/1992).

III. ANALYSIS:

The proposed alterations comply with the zoning ordinance requirements.

Staff has no objection to the proposed design of the renovated porch, but does not believe the proposed materials are appropriate. The applicant has stated that she is simply seeking to match the enclosed porches on either side of her. However, those projects were not approved by the Board and do not conform to the *Design Guidelines*. The *Design Guidelines* discourage the use of vinyl siding, vinyl windows and non wood doors (Siding – Page 2, Windows – Page 2, Exterior Doors – Pages 2 &3). The proposed vinyl windows are doubly unacceptable, as they are only available with muntin types that are discouraged in the historic districts (in-the-glass and

snap-in). The proposed Ridgewood insulated vinyl wall system is even more problematic than other synthetic sidings in that it consists of molded panels rather than separate lapped pieces and has a faux wood grained finish. Staff has the following recommendations to improve the project:

Windows – The window sash and frames should be wood, to conform with the Guidelines and Board decisions on other similar properties in the area, such as at the new house approved for 630 North Columbus Street at the October hearing. From a design and compatibility standpoint, Staff does not believe that it is necessary that the windows be multi-light. The applicant may want to consider one-over-one windows as these will be less expensive than the six-over-six. However, if the applicant wishes to have six-over-six windows, they should be either true-divided-light or simulated-divided-light.

Door – The door should be wood as was approved for the new house approved for 630 North Columbus Street. If the applicant decides to use one-over-one windows, a simpler door design might be more compatible and could be less expensive.

Siding – Staff would prefer that the applicant use wood siding. However, fiber cement siding would also be acceptable. The Board has adopted the following policy regarding the use of fiber cement siding:

1. That fiber cement siding not be installed on an historic structure;
2. That historic materials should not be removed to install fiber cement siding;
3. That fiber cement siding replace other artificial or composite siding;
4. That the nails not show in the installation of the siding; and,
5. That smooth siding be installed.
6. That BAR Staff may administratively approve the installation of fiber cement siding on *non-historic* buildings (those constructed in 1975 or later).

Although the porch is original to the historic house, it has been altered by being fully enclosed and the existing siding is artificial. Therefore, Staff believes the use of fiber cement siding complies with the Board's policy. The fiber cement siding should be of an appropriate width, have a smooth finish and be installed so that the nails do not show.

IV. STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends approval of the proposed porch renovation with the following conditions:

1. That the windows be wood;
2. That the door be a wood door;
3. That the siding be wood or fiber cement; and,
4. That Staff approve the windows, door and siding selection prior to installation.

CITY DEPARTMENT COMMENTS

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

Code Enforcement:

- C-1 Alterations to the existing structure must comply with the current edition of the Uniform Statewide Building Code (USBC).
- C-2 Additions and alterations to the existing structure and/or installation and/or altering of equipment therein requires a building permit (USBC 108.1). Five sets of plans, bearing the signature and seal of a design professional registered in the Commonwealth of Virginia, must accompany the written application (USBC 109.1).
- C-3 A Construction permit will be required for the proposed project.
- C-4 New construction must comply with the current edition of the Uniform Statewide Building Code (USBC)

Historic Alexandria:

No comment.