

Docket Item # 4
BAR CASE # 2006-0266

BAR Meeting
December 13, 2006

ISSUE: Alterations
APPLICANT: Ann O. Kavaljian by Revell Michael
LOCATION: 527 North Alfred Street
ZONE: RB/Residential

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Staff recommends deferral of the application for restudy.

****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 #3 must be approved before this item may be considered.

I. ISSUE:

The applicant is requesting approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness for alterations to the existing two story frame rowhouse at 527 North Alfred Street. On the front (west) façade, the applicant proposes to continue the brick facing down to the foundation, eliminating the band of wood siding that remains at the base of the bay window. The brick siding is either a thin veneer of bricks or, more likely, a cement coating finished to appear as bricks, similar to formstone. The applicant proposes to paint the entire façade after the additional brick siding has been added. The existing two-over-two and one-over-one true-divided-light windows will be replaced with new Lincoln wood windows. The new windows will match the materials, dimensions and configuration of the existing windows, but will be simulated-divided-light rather than true-divided-light, with 1 -1/4" wide wood muntins on the exterior and applied pine stops on the interior. The drawing notes state that the existing wood six panel door will be replaced with a new door "to match" and the drawing shows a six panel wood door. The applicant has since told Staff that she is not seeking approval of a replacement door at this time. Staff advised the applicant that a four panel wood door would be a more appropriate replacement door than the six panel that is shown, if the applicant does decide to replace the door. Staff notes that code requires a light fixture at an exterior door. No information was provided for the front door fixture.

On the rear (east) facade, the applicant proposes to replace the existing door and window on the first story and large window opening on the second story of the ell with a pair of French doors in each story. No further information was provided so Staff does not know whether the doors are wood or some other material. The first story door will have a canister light above it and the second story door will have simple steel railing which will project 4" from the building face. The existing beaded masonite siding on the rear ell (east and north sides) is proposed to be replaced with beaded fiber cement siding in a similar width. A new aluminum gutter will be installed at the back roofline with two new downspouts on either side. The small section of the rear (east) façade of the main block will also have beaded fiber cement siding replacing the masonite siding. Although the drawings do not show the north side of the ell, Staff assumes that the masonite siding on this section will be replaced with fiber cement and that, similarly, the rear (east) wall of the main block is proposed to be clad in fiber cement. Although the drawings do not address the multi-light, true-divided light windows on the rear wall of the main block, it is assumed that they are proposed to be replaced with simulated-divided-light wood windows with a six-over-six configuration.

The house is visible from North Alfred Street and the north-south public alley off of Pendleton Street.

II. HISTORY:

As discussed in docket item #3 the two story frame house at 527 North Alfred Street is one of a row of 11 houses (509 through 529 North Alfred Street) which were constructed prior to 1902

and may date to the last decade of the 19th century. Staff was unable to locate any records for BAR review of prior cases at 527 North Alfred Street.

III. ANALYSIS:

The proposed alterations comply with the zoning ordinance requirements. As noted in docket item #3, the applicant has applied to BZA for an open space variance to allow for a small rear addition to the house at 527 North Alfred Street. The BZA case is docketed for January 11, 2007.

Staff commends the owner for renovating this house, located in a significant row in the Parker Gray District and is generally in agreement with the direction of the proposed work. However, Staff believes that additional information is required to fully document how the project will be accomplished. In particular, cut sheets for the proposed doors, windows and light fixtures are required. In addition to this, Staff has a number of questions and concerns.

First, Staff believes the faux brick siding should not be extended. The brick siding is inappropriate, creating a false appearance for this frame house which was originally clad in wood siding along with the 10 others in the row. There is no record of the brick siding at 527 North Alfred having been approved by the Board. Staff notes that the applicant has not yet determined whether it is possible to replicate the brick veneer. The material and/or process may not be available today. Lastly, the *Design Guidelines* clearly state that “brick should not be installed over wood siding” and “whenever possible synthetic materials should be removed and the original type of siding re-applied (Siding – Pages 2 & 3). The majority of the houses in the row are clad in some version of wood siding similar to the original. It is hoped that in the future, the few clad in non-original materials, will be restored to their original condition. Of course, Staff would prefer that the wood siding on the front of 527 North Alfred Street be restored now, but if the applicant is unwilling, the next best course of action is to maintain the present situation. The applicant is requesting approval to paint the façade. Staff believes this is appropriate and will help to bring some unity to the front.

The existing windows appear to be original. The preferred preservation treatment is to retain and repair historic windows if at all possible. As these windows are in very poor condition, Staff does not object to their replacement. The *Design Guidelines* recommend that replacement windows be single glazed and have true-divided-lights (Windows – Page 2). In the opinion of Staff, the front windows, which are readily accessible and visible from the sidewalk, should be replaced with true-divided-light wood windows. Staff would not object to the use of simulated-divided-light wood windows on the rear of the house.

Staff does not object to the alteration of the openings on the rear (east) wall of the rear ell as the current fenestration pattern and window sash and door on the rear of the ell do not appear to be original. Staff believes the French doors should be wood. Staff does not object to the replacement of the masonite siding at the back of the house (north and east sides). It is not

original and the wide, beaded appearance is inappropriate for this Victorian house. However, Staff does not believe the proposed fiber cement siding is appropriate here.

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).

Criteria #1 is not met as the rear ell is an original part of the historic house. The applicant has not removed the masonite and any other layers to determine if wood siding remains. However, we know that the original siding was wood, probably very similar to the narrow, beveled wood siding that was just replaced on 529 North Alfred Street. Although unauthorized, that replacement was done in wood siding to match the original. Staff recommends further investigation to determine whether the original siding is present, if it can be retained and, if not, what type and dimension of wood siding should be used on these walls.

Staff does not object to the replacement of the severely deteriorated six-over-six windows on the rear of the main block and, provided that they are wood, believes that either true-divided-lights or simulated divided lights in a six-over-six configuration would be acceptable in this location as these windows are well removed from public access. If the replacement windows are simulated divided light, the muntin bars should be no greater than 7/8" in width.

The applicant has stated that she anticipates replacing the rear fence in the future. Staff has recommended that the applicant seek approval of the fence and gate along with the rest of the project and has explained that a stockade type fence is not appropriate. The applicant has also stated that a rooftop HVAC unit will be installed. The location of the HVAC condenser unit is not shown. This unit must be screened or a waiver of screening must be sought.

Due to the large number of outstanding issues, Staff recommends deferral for restudy with the applicant to provide cutsheets and/or further information for the windows, doors, siding, light, fence and HVAC condenser unit location. The rear elevation should be clad in wood siding, with the type and dimensions determined by further investigation. In addition, Staff recommends that the front windows have true-divided lights.

IV. STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends deferral of the application for restudy.

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 comments.