

Docket Item #2
BAR CASE # 2007-0088

BAR Meeting
May 23, 2007

ISSUE: After-the-fact demolition
APPLICANT: Catherine Murphy by Scott Mitchell
LOCATION: 529 North Alfred Street
ZONE: RB/Residential

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 must be approved by roll call vote.

I. ISSUE:

The applicant is requesting after-the-fact approval for demolition and encapsulation of a portion of the rear (east) wall on the one-story rear addition as part of a larger renovation project. The rear elevation previously had a single door on the right and small window on the left. The door and window were removed and portions of the rear wall were demolished while a small area was infilled in order to install a sliding door and full length window in the center of the wall. The total area affected is approximately 7' wide by 7' high.

The area of demolition and encapsulation is partially visible over the 6' high fence at the rear of the property.

II. HISTORY:

The two story frame house at 529 North Alfred Street is one of a row of 11 houses (509 through 529 North Alfred Street) which were constructed prior to 1902, the first year the area was included in Sanborn mapping, and may date to the last decade of the 19th century. Although one of the houses on the south end of the row (511 North Alfred Street) was no longer extant by 1907, the row represents one of the largest single developments of the Victorian period in the Parker-Gray District. While the front facades of many of the houses have been altered with new siding and windows, some inappropriate, the row retains a high level of integrity through its massing, marked by repetitive angled bays, retention of the original fenestration pattern and the retention of the handsome bracketed cornice.

Over the years the house at 529 North Alfred Street has undergone a number of alterations. In 1947, the front was resided in bricktex siding (Building Permit #7923, 7/18/1947) as approved by the Board of Architectural Review (8/21/1947). In 1955, the rear porch was "enclosed" by cinderblock to create a one story rear addition housing a full bathroom (Building Permit #12158, 6/15/1955). Despite these alterations, 529 North Alfred Street still retained the original wood windows and, beneath the asphalt siding, the original beveled siding.

On October 19, 2005, the property was purchased by Rosemont LLC. On February 9, 2006, the new owner submitted plans for renovation of the building in an application for a building permit. As the work shown on the plans included numerous items of exterior work, including replacement of windows, new exterior doors and demolition of the rear wall of the rear addition for a new sliding door, BAR Staff declined to approve the plans. The applicant was advised that the Board of Architectural Review would need to approve the proposed alterations. On March 2, 2006, the Rosemont LLC submitted a revised permit for interior work only with revised plans showing all exterior work removed. BAR Staff approved the plans for interior work only on March 3, 2006 (BLD2006-00655). Subsequently, on November 29, 2006, Staff was informed by a citizen that exterior work had been undertaken at the property. On November 30, 2006 after inspecting the property, Staff wrote Mr. Scott Mitchell of Rosemont LLC notifying him that the exterior work was in violation of the zoning ordinance and directing him to make application by December 15, 2005. A citation with a \$100.00 penalty for a Class 3 civil violation was attached to the letter. When the deadline passed without application, Staff again wrote Mr. Mitchell on

January 31, 2007 and issued a citation for \$150.00. In the meantime, unknown to Staff, the property was sold to the current owner, Ms. Catherine Murphy, on January 3, 2007.

On April 23, 2007, Mr. Mitchell made application for the after-the-fact demolition and alterations to the Board on behalf of the current property owner. Mr. Mitchell told Staff that the property owner was aware of the situation and had agreed that he should serve as agent for the BAR case. Mr. Mitchell also told Staff that the property owner was aware that the Board might require changes to bring the property into compliance with the Board's standards and guidelines. On April 22, 2007, Staff gave administrative approval to allow Mr. Mitchell to replace the inappropriate stockade type rear fence with an appropriate board fence. Mr. Mitchell indicated that he wanted to complete this work prior to the hearing. As of May 15, 2007, that work had not been undertaken.

On January 24, 2007, the Board approved a permit to demolish and alterations for the neighboring property at 527 North Alfred Street (BAR Case #s 2006-00265 & 00266).

III. 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 the demolition and encapsulation in this case rises to the level of the above criteria. The work affected the rear wall of a circa 1955 cinderblock addition. Therefore, Staff recommends approval of the permit to demolish.

IV. STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

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 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.