

Docket Item # 3
BAR CASE # 2007-0041

BAR Meeting
June 27, 2007

ISSUE: Addition and alterations
APPLICANT: Brendan M. Owens
LOCATION: 227 North West Street
ZONE: RB/Residential

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

1. That there be no parking space on the property;
2. That the fiber cement be used only on the addition and not on the existing house;
3. That the photo-voltaic panels be deferred for further study; and,
4. That the following statement appear in the General Notes of all site plans so that on-site contractors are aware of the requirement:

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

****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 may be considered.

I. ISSUE:

The applicant is requesting approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness for a new two story addition at the rear of the two story house and for various alterations to the existing historic house.

Rear Addition - A two story, flat roofed addition is proposed for the rear elevation. The addition will be 15'9" long by 10'3" wide. The recorded lot is 12" wide and the rear of the existing house is 11.9'. The addition will be smaller than the existing main block and will not extend beyond the rear wall of the houses on either side. The size of the addition is dictated by a number of constraints. The length of the addition is governed by the requirement to provide 800 square feet of open space (or seek a variance). The width is constrained by the applicant's desire to avoid abutting the neighbor to the north. The house to the north at 229 North West Street encroaches on the subject property by .3' at its rear south corner and has windows on the south property line. The property owner has not responded to attempts by the applicant to discuss the openings on the property line and the need for access during construction. Therefore, the applicant is proposing to construct the addition with a 6" set back from the north wall of the main block and is planning to construct the addition without accessing the property to the north. There is a 1.0' overlap in the deed description between the property at 227 North West Street and the property to the south, at 225 North West Street. Therefore, the addition has been pulled back on the south side to avoid encroaching on the overlap. At 20'8" at its highest point, the addition will be no higher than the historic main block which is 22'6".

Both the north and south sides of the addition will be blind. The rear elevation will have a pair of French doors centered in the first story and above in the second story. According to the specification sheets provided by the applicant, the doors manufactured by Kolbe& Kolbe will be wood with multiple panes. The materials submitted do not specify whether or not these will be true divided lights. The lights on either side of the first story doors will be the "Classic Wall Lantern" by Westinghouse, per the provided specification sheets.

According to the drawings, the north side and rear of the addition will be clad in wood lap siding while the south side of the addition will be clad in fiber cement. The house will be painted an olive green similar to the color of the house at the northeast corner of Queen and Pitt streets. The roof of the addition will be clad in single ply membrane and will not be visible. There will be a parapet around three sides of the roof of the addition. The parapet will be 1' at its highest point at the rear of the house. The parapet will screen the following rooftop appurtenances on the new addition: solar tubes (10" high), rainwater collector (8.5" high) and skylight (approximately 3" high). A rooftop HVAC condenser will be installed well forward on the roof of the addition and will surrounded by a screen of wood pickets.

Alterations to existing house

The existing, modern six panel front door will be replaced with a wood four panel door. The existing modern one-over-one windows will be replaced with two-over-two true divided light (cutlites) wood windows by Kolbe & Kolbe. The light beside the front door will be the "Classic

Wall Lantern” by Westinghouse, as at the rear. The electric meter currently on the front of the house to the right of the door will be moved around the corner to the side. The drawings note that the front will have wood siding. Staff assumes that the existing wood siding which appears generally in good condition will remain. The exposed south side of the house is clad in bricktex siding. It is assumed that the bricktex covers wood siding. It is not clear from the plans what the intent is here, but the applicant has confirmed to Staff that the south side of the existing house will be clad in wood siding.

In addition to these items, at the front of the existing house, the applicant is proposing to install six photo-voltaic (PV) panels on the roof. The panels will be in two rows on the north side of the roof and will be set back from the front of the house. These panels measure 3’ by 3’ and will be angled so that they will be 2’ at their highest point. They will be mounted on 6” high brackets for a total height of 2’6”.

II. HISTORY:

As discussed in docket item #2, the two bay wide, two story frame house at 227 North West Street was constructed between 1891 and 1896 as an end unit in a row of five modest rowhouses (227-235 North West Street). It has had a number of alterations, including the demolition of the original one story rear ell and replacement window sash, doors and siding.

III. ANALYSIS:

The proposed addition and alterations comply with the zoning ordinance requirements. The proposed addition will leave only 800 square feet of open space, the minimum required in this zone. Therefore, the rear yard can not be used for parking.

The proposed addition will abut and capulate the south wall of the 229 North West Street, the house to the north. There are two existing windows in that wall. The applicant is working with Code Enforcement and, if possible, the owner of the neighboring property to resolve issues related to this matter. It is not anticipated that this process will result in any alteration in the plans. However, if there is a significant alteration, the applicant must resubmit to the BAR for review and approval.

In the opinion of Staff, the proposed alterations and additions are acceptable. The addition is of a reasonable size. It does not overwhelm the existing house or adjacent properties. The design of the addition and materials used are compatible with the simple vernacular design of the 1890s house and comply with the *Design Guidelines* for residential additions. It is not clear from the submitted materials whether the rear doors will have true divided lights. While the *Guidelines* express a strong preference for true divided light windows, Staff believes the use of simulated divided lights in the doors at the rear of the addition is acceptable as the doors will be well removed from public view, being approximately 60’ back from the rear alley (Windows - Page 2). The applicant is proposing to use fiber cement on the south side of the addition. The Board has adopted the following policy with respect to the 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).

Thus, the use of fiber cement on the south side of the new addition is in conformance with the Board's policy. Finally, Staff has no objection to the rooftop appurtenances on the addition as these are all screened by either the parapet or the picket fencing.

In addition, Staff believes the proposed alterations to the existing historic house are appropriate. The replacement windows and door and the relocation of the electric meter will return the house to its historic appearance. Staff notes that the drawings are not clear with respect to the proposed treatment of the south wall of the existing house. According to the Board's policy, fiber cement should not be installed on an historic building. Therefore, the south side should be clad in wood siding rather than fiber cement. If there is wood siding under the bricktex and it is salvageable, it should be retained. Any replacement siding should be wood and match the front.

Staff does have concerns about the visibility of the photo-voltaic panels on the roof of the historic house. The applicant believes that the panels will not be visible. However, Staff has requested that a mock-up be placed on the roof to ensure that this is so. The applicant has stated that he is willing to do this. Therefore, Staff recommends that the photo voltaic panels be deferred for further investigation.

In addition, Staff notes 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. That there be no parking space on the property;
2. That the fiber cement be used only on the addition and not on the existing house;
3. That the photo-voltaic panels be deferred for further study; and,
4. That the following statement appear in the General Notes of all site plans so that on-site contractors are aware of the requirement:

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

CITY DEPARTMENT COMMENTS

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

Code Enforcement:

- F-1 The proposed project impacts on existing window openings for the adjacent property on the north interior lot line. The applicant shall meet with Code Enforcement Engineering section to resolve this conflict.
- F-2 Verification is required from the adjacent property owner affected in F-1 above that the existing windows are not Code requirements for ventilation or emergency egress.
- 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, with no openings permitted within the wall. As alternative, a 2 hour fire wall may be provided. This condition is also applicable to skylights within setback distance.
- 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:

No comments were received.

Alexandria Archaeology:

- F-1 This block was part of the African American neighborhood known as Uptown in the late 19th century. Tax records indicate the presence of a free African American household on the property in 1850. The lot therefore has the potential to yield archaeological resources that could provide insight into domestic activities of African Americans in 19th-century Alexandria.
- R-1 Call Alexandria Archaeology immediately (703-838-4399) if any buried structural remains (wall foundations, wells, privies, cisterns, 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 and records the finds.
- R-2 The above statement must appear in the General Notes of the site plan so that on-site contractors are aware of the requirement.

Transportation and Environmental Services:

- R1. At the time of application for a building permit the applicant shall provide, to the Department of Transportation and Environmental Services, the information described below on a copy of the house location plat:
- In order to determine the area of disturbance in the absence of a grading plan, the disturbed area will be determined by adding 10' to the perimeter of the building (or addition) footprint and calculating the area within the increased perimeter. In addition a 10' wide access path from the edge of the disturbed area to the street or driveway must be included in the disturbed area calculation. Dumpsters, soil stockpiles and material storage areas must all be within the limits of disturbance as well.
- The annotated house location plat must meet the following criteria:
- No reduced, enlarged or faxed copies will be accepted.
 - The footprint area of the proposed improvements must be drawn to scale.
 - The additional 10' perimeter, construction access and other areas as described above must be shown to scale.
 - The overall dimensions of the proposed improvements must be shown.
 - The actual square footage of the disturbed area must be shown.
- R2. The building permit plans shall comply with requirements of City Code Section 8-1-22 regarding the location of downspouts, foundation drains and sump pumps. Refer to Memorandum to Industry dated June 18, 2004. [Memorandum is available online at the City web site under Transportation\Engineering and Design\Memos to Industry.]. (T&ES)
- R3. Applicant shall be responsible for repairs to the adjacent city right-of-way if damaged during construction activity. (T&ES)

- R4. All improvements to the city right-of-way such as curbing, sidewalk, driveway aprons, etc. must be city standard design. (T&ES)
- R5. An erosion and sediment control plan must be approved by T&ES prior to any land disturbing activity greater than 2500 square feet. (T&ES)
- R6. No permanent structure may be constructed over any existing private and/or public utility easements. It is the responsibility of the applicant to identify any and all existing easements on the plan. (T&ES)