

Docket Item # 4
BAR CASE # 2007-0214

BAR Meeting
October 24, 2007

ISSUE: Alterations to previously approved plans

APPLICANT: Glen Stone

LOCATION: 813 Oronoco Street

ZONE: RB/residential

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

1. That the rear slope of the gable roof be replaced with standing seam metal roofing to match the front;
2. That the back fence, if installed, be a stained or painted flat board fence no higher than 6' and located entirely on the subject property in accordance with a certified survey plat;
3. That the east side windows that currently have flat or sandwich muntins be changed to wood windows with simulated divided lights; and,
4. That the above work be completed prior to transfer of ownership of the property.

****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 is requesting approval of an alteration to the rear elevation of the previously approved plans for the two story frame house. The project entailed alterations to the existing house and a new rear addition. The project is nearing completion and the property is for sale. For that reason, the report also discusses a number of other alterations from the previously approved plans that have been completed or are planned by the applicant. These are discussed here to ensure that there is no confusion about what has been approved for this project as it moves forward.

Rear elevation – The treatment of the rear elevation of the new addition has changed from that previously approved due to Code Enforcement concerns about the adequacy of the structural bracing at the corners. The previously approved plans had a series of four long windows on the second story and a French door flanked by long windows on the first story. The plans now call for a French door centered in each story. The doors will be fully glazed wood doors by Bilt-Best or equivalent, as per the prior approval. The upper door will have a simple iron guardrail with straight pickets. As previously approved, there will be a lamp above the lower door. The approved lamp was a brass carriage style lamp by Brookside.

Additional issues

Front windows – The windows installed are longer than those shown on the approved plans. According to the applicant, he misunderstood what had been approved. He points out that the windows that he installed fit the rough openings and that no openings were enlarged; that the true divided light, single glazed wood windows installed are of a high quality; and that they are of a similar proportion to the other windows on the street.

Shutters – The original plans showed wood shutters at the front windows. The applicant wishes to omit the shutters as he feels they will crowd the façade.

HVAC and screening - The original approval was for the HVAC unit to be placed on the ground. The applicant now wishes to place the unit on the roof, behind the gable. The unit will be 24” high, 43” long and 31.5” wide. It will be screened by wood fencing painted to match the house color, 48” long and 24” tall.

Roof – The gable roof was to be clad in standing seam metal per the original approval. Only the front slope has been clad in metal. The rear slope is in asphalt shingles. The rear of the roof is visible from the public alley at the back of the property. The applicant has stated that he will redo the rear slope in standing seam metal to match the front.

Back fence- The back fence has been removed. The applicant has indicated that the fence will be replaced with a new wood fence.

East side windows – The windows on the east side of the main block are not simulated divided light windows as had been approved in the original case, but have sandwich muntins. These windows are visible from the public right-of-way. The applicant has agreed to replace these windows with simulated divided light wood windows as previously approved.

The semi-detached house is visible from Oronoco Street and the public alley at the rear.

II. HISTORY:

An 1863 bird's eye view of Alexandria shows a row of gable roofed houses extending east from the northeast corner of Alfred and Oronoco Streets. It is not clear whether 813 Oronoco Street is among those shown. The building does appear to be present on the 1877 Hopkins Atlas. Based on the footprints shown on that map, some, but not all, of the eleven frame structures extant on the blockface today were present in 1877. The area is not shown in the Sanborn Fire Insurance maps until 1902. All eleven extant structures were present by 1902. Based on the map evidence and an inspection of the exterior and interior, Staff believes the house at 813 Oronoco Street was built before the row of four immediately to the west (815-821 Oronoco Street).

As early as 1877, 813 Oronoco Street had a rear ell. In 1902 it had two single story frame additions. The two story cinderblock addition with metal sash windows was added circa 1955 (Building Permit #11999, April 5, 1955). A one story cinderblock addition, described in the building permit as a "storage shed" was added circa 1960 (Building Permit #7315, 9/8/1960). This addition was approved by the Board of Architectural Review on 10/12/1960, with the condition that it be painted white. The frame additions at the end of the storage shed addition were added after 1960. The house has had other alterations over the years, including the installation of replacement windows and door on the main block. However, it retained the massing and much of the character of the early gable-roofed structure. It is located in a handsome row of mid- to late 19th century frame Italianate style houses.

In 2004, for the previous owner, the Board approved the demolition of the post 1960s frame appendages and the capsulation of the 1960 one-story cinderblock addition for a new second story addition. Other alterations to the existing building that were intended to return it to a more historically authentic appropriate appearance were approved at this time (BAR Case #2004-0200 & 0201, 10/27/2004). Subsequently, the one-story cinderblock section that was to remain as the base for the second story addition was demolished and rebuilt as a new two story frame addition. The project halted in mid-2005 and remained inactive for some time. The current owner purchased the property on 1/24/2007 and intended to complete the work in conformance with the previously approved plans with some modifications. The Board already approved an alteration to the previously approved plans on 4/25/2007 (BAR Case #2005-0067). This alteration was for a new window opening and sash on the east wall of the main block at the first story level.

III. ANALYSIS:

The property in subject is zoned RB, residential. The proposed window alterations comply with Zoning Ordinance requirements.

Staff believes the proposed alterations are acceptable and in conformance with the *Design Guidelines*.

Front windows – Staff has no objection to the installed windows. They are of a superior quality and look appropriate within the façade of this simple, mid- to late 19th century house.

Shutters – Staff has no objection to the omission of the previously approved shutters. Shutters may be added at a later date if desired.

HVAC Screening – Staff has no objection to the proposed location of the HVAC or to the screening.

Rear elevation – The proposed alteration to the rear addition simplifies the elevation of this new addition. Staff believes is appropriate.

Roof – It is the Board’s policy that replacement roofing must be appropriate to the building’s period of construction (Roofing Materials – page 1). Standing seam metal is appropriate for this mid- to late 19th century residence. The Board’s original approval intended that standing seam metal be used for both the front and back slope of the roof. The rear slope is readily visible from the public alley at the rear of the property. Thus, the rear slope, which is currently clad in asphalt shingles, must be redone in standing seam metal.

Back Fence – If installed, the back fence must be a flat board (rather than stockade) fence no higher than 6’ and located entirely on the subject property in accordance with a certified survey plat. The *Design Guidelines* call for wood fences to be painted or stained (Fences – pages 2 & 3).

East side windows – The windows were approved to be wood simulated divided light windows. They are visible from the front walk. The existing sandwich muntin windows are not a window type recommended by the *Design Guidelines* (Windows – 2). They must be removed and replaced with the approved windows.

Staff is very concerned that the work be accomplished prior to the sale of the property in order to avoid future problems and therefore recommends that the Board require the completion of the outstanding items prior to transfer of ownership of the property.

IV. STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends approval of the application with the following conditions:

1. That the rear slope of the gable roof be replaced with standing seam metal roofing to match the front;
2. That the back fence, if installed, be a stained or painted flat board fence no higher than 6’ and located entirely on the subject property in accordance with a certified survey plat;
3. That the east side windows that currently have flat or sandwich muntins be changed to wood windows with simulated divided lights; and,
4. That the above work be completed prior to transfer of ownership of the property.

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 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-4 Guardrail structural design and construction must comply with USBC.

Historic Alexandria:

R- Approval as submitted.