

Docket Item # 5
BAR CASE # 2007-0136

BAR Meeting
December 12, 2007

ISSUE: Addition and Alterations
APPLICANT: Saharat Prompol
LOCATION: 419 North West Street
ZONE: RB/Residential

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Staff recommends approval with the following conditions:

1. That the following statement appears 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;
2. That Staff review and approve final design details and drawings prior to the filing of a building permit;
3. That Staff review and approve the proposed brick prior to construction; and
4. That the applicant work with Staff to determine that age of the existing windows on the main house, and if determined to be not historic or original, that the windows may be replaced with one-over-one windows to match the windows used on the addition.

BOARD ACTION, OCTOBER 24, 2007:

The Board coupled docket item #'s 2 & 3 for discussion. On a motion by Mr. Meick, seconded by Mr. Moffat, the Board voted to defer the application for restudy.

REASON: The Board agreed with the staff analysis that the design warranted further restudy to continue to address issues of mass, scale and architectural compatibility. The Board felt that it would be necessary to further reduce the size of the proposed addition to achieve compatibility with the existing house and neighboring buildings.

SPEAKERS: Saharat Prompol, applicant, spoke in support.

Ziad Demian, project architect, spoke in support.
Heath Wells, 1301 Queen Street, spoke in opposition.

BOARD ACTION, SEPTEMBER 26, 2007: The Board combined discussion of item # 6 & 7. On a motion by Mr. Meick, seconded by Mr. Lloyd, the Board voted to defer the application for restudy.

REASON: The Board agreed with the staff analysis that the design should be restudied to address issues of mass, scale and architectural compatibility. The Board felt that it would be necessary to reduce the size of the proposed addition to achieve compatibility with the existing house and neighboring buildings.

SPEAKERS: Ziad Demian, project architect, spoke in support.
Saharat Prompol, applicant, spoke in support.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Staff recommends deferral of the application for restudy to address issues of mass, scale and architectural compatibility. However, should the Board approve the addition and alterations, Staff recommends the following conditions:

1. 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; and,

2. That Staff review and approve the proposed brick prior to construction.

****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)

Update: The applicant has made additional modifications to the plans for alterations and an addition in response to the comments of the Board at the October 24 and September 26, 2007 hearings. The latest alterations are as follows:

1. The size of the addition has been reduced again from 2,765 sf to 2,264 sf—a total reduction of 501 sf. The original size of the addition was 2,958 sf, (a total reduction of 694 sf from the original proposal).
2. The addition has been reduced to two stories in height rather than the prior three stories.
3. The addition has maintained a flat roof from the last iteration and the height has been reduced from 28'9" to approximately 23'.
4. The height of the stair tower has been reduced slightly from 27'3" to 26'7".
5. The height of the new parapet on the existing house has been raised to 3', for a total height of 25'.
6. Replacement of the existing six-over-six double-hung windows, with new one-over-one double-hung windows.

NOTE: Docket item # 4 must be approved before this docket item may be considered.

I. ISSUE:

The applicant is requesting approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness for a new two story rear addition and alterations to the existing two story house. (Images of the project may be found at the end of this Staff report.)

Alterations

The main block of the existing house will be altered in three respects. First, the applicant proposes to add a brick parapet along the edge of the roof at the front (west) and north and south sides. The new brick will match the existing brick. The existing house is approximately 22' high at the front. With the parapet, the height will be raised to 25'. The parapet is intended to hide the HVAC units to be placed on the roof and to reduce the difference in height between the main block at the front and the proposed new addition behind it. Secondly, the applicant proposes to add a one story front porch. The porch will be offset from the north corner by approximately 2' and will extend to the south corner, where it will turn the corner and continue along the south side above the first story windows as an unsupported overhang projecting 2' from the face of the building. The porch will have a brick foundation, metal roof and simple wood posts and railing. The porch posts will be square section as will the pickets of the railing. The design of the roof for the new porch remains flat in this iteration rather than hipped. The final alteration to the existing block is that the applicant proposes to replace the existing six-over-six, double-hung windows with one-over-one windows. This proposes alteration has not been a part of the two prior schemes reviewed by the Board.

Addition

The majority of the proposed new addition will be in the form of a rectangular block located directly behind the existing main block. This block is approximately 21' x 18'4". A smaller rectangular block functioning as a stair tower will be located on the north side adjacent to both the existing main block and the new addition, projecting beyond their plane toward the north by 4'6". (This represents a reduction in width of 2' as the stair

tower extended to the north property line in the initial design.) The stair tower will be 16'2" long along the north property line. A connecting piece will separate the existing and the main block of the addition. This component also has a side porch that opens on the south elevation. The addition has a varied roofline composed of flat roofs at various heights. The current design proposes a roof height of 23' for the main block of the new addition. The stair tower on the north side is proposed to be 26'7", approximately 5' above the existing roof height and 1'7" above the proposed 3' parapet addition to the historic main block. The addition as currently proposed will increase the net floor area of the house from 1031 square feet to 2,264 sf. Originally, the net floor area proposed had been 2,958 square feet.

The addition will be clad in painted wood siding, wood panels and red brick. The roof will be metal. The windows and doors will be wood, manufactured by Marvin. The trim will be wood. The siding, panels, doors and windows and trim will be painted white.

Addition – west elevation

The main block of the addition will not project above the existing house as previously shown. However, the stair tower to the north will be approximately 1'7" taller than the existing house, with the addition of the 3' parapet. The narrow end of this two story rectangular block faces the west. It will be clad in wood siding and will have a long narrow window divided into two sections separated by a wood panel. On the south side, the addition has been pulled in even with the existing house and thus will not be as visible. The overhang, trellis and entrance steps to the addition will be visible on the south side.

Addition – south elevation

The addition will be composed of two primary sections on the south side and has been reduced to two stories, and maintains a flat roof (the prior iteration was three stories and contained decking on this elevation). In the forefront and toward the rear or east will be a two story brick block having a single, 5' by 5' square window in the first story at the east end. In the current design, this block is even with the plane of the existing house. In the first iteration, it had projected beyond it by 2'. The roof remains flat and the third floor roof deck has been eliminated. The connecting section between the existing house and the rear brick block will be taller, but also two stories, and contain more glazing. This section will be clad in wood siding and will have vertical trim strips defining the bays and horizontal strips defining the stories. A new entrance to the house will be located on the south side, accessed by a new brick terrace with wood railing and trellis over the entrance area. The door will be paired French doors with a full length window located to the right of the French doors, functioning as a sidelight. Paired long windows with wood panels below will be located in the second story directly above the entrance. There will be additional window groupings above, giving the appearance of a clerestory, with a single window above the second story paired windows, and four single windows located over the main brick block. The stair tower, located on the north side, will be visible above the existing main block and the new two story block. It will have a flat roof, no openings and will be clad in wood siding.

Addition – east elevation

The east (rear) elevation will also be composed of two major blocks, including the taller stair tower component. The main two-story block will have a brick pier at the left side where it wraps around from the south side. Beyond this, it will have a narrow strip of wood siding and then a large expanse of glazing. There will be French doors and a large full length window on the first story. The second story will have the same, only the positions of the door and window will be the reverse of those below. The second story door will have a wood railing at the base. Two rectangular windows will be located above the second story window and doors, serving as a clerestory. The east elevation of the stair tower will match that of the west elevation with a long narrow window divided into two sections separated by wood panels within a wall clad in wood siding.

Addition – north elevation

Again, the north elevation is composed of three sections: the story stair tower at the forefront, the two story portion of the addition set back 6'6", and the narrow sliver of two story addition at the east end. The 16'2" wide north wall of the stair tower section will be without openings (this had been 17'7" wide in the last iteration). It will be clad in wood siding with a narrow strip of wood panels at the west end. Horizontal wood trim strips will define the three sections. Beyond this will be the two story addition which is broken into two fields, one clad in brick and one in siding. There will be a window in each story. A rectangular window will be located in the first and the second story near the west end of this section. On the same plane but not as tall is a narrow two story section that is almost entirely glazed, consisting of a full length window in the first and second stories.

The addition will be readily visible from a number of vantage points along North West Street and is anticipated to be visible in through-block views from Oronoco Street to the north and obscurely from N. Payne Street to the east.

II. HISTORY:

As discussed in docket item #2, the free-standing, two story brick house at 419 North West Street appears to have been constructed circa 1938. The one story addition to the rear was added at a later date. There is no record of prior BAR reviews or building permits for this property.

III. ANALYSIS:

The subject property is zoned RB, residential. The proposed addition and alterations comply with the zoning ordinance requirements. However, the proposed trellis roof must be at least 80% open to be deducted from floor area.

As stated in the previous reports, the property at 419 North West Street presents unusual opportunities and challenges. The large lot provides an opportunity for a substantially larger building than the existing, very modest house. Like most of the Parker Gray district, the property is zoned RB, which has a floor area ratio of 0.75 the lot area, allowing a house with a net floor area (FAR) of 2,962 square foot. The existing house has a net floor area of only 1,031 square feet. On the other hand, the *Design Guidelines* for residential additions caution that additions should not overwhelm the existing structure or neighboring buildings (Residential Additions – Page 6). Located as it is on a relatively loosely developed block and surrounded by properties with open side yards, the lot also provides many opportunities for views of a proposed rear addition from the

surrounding neighborhood and streets. Unlike the more typical case in the historic districts where there are strings of attached rowhouses blocking views to the rear from the street and preventing additions from being seen in direct relation to the main block of the house at the front, here the addition will be seen in context with the existing house and with neighboring buildings. For the most part, the neighboring buildings on both sides of the 400 block of North West Street and on all sides of the square bounded by North West, Oronoco, North Payne, and Princess Streets are small in scale.

The visibility of the addition means that not only is size and massing a factor, but also its architectural character. In its design, it must be compatible with the architectural character of not only the house to which it is attached, but to the surrounding neighborhood. These factors need not be constraints or impediments to the new addition, but they do require that the addition be handled with a great deal of skill and sensitivity. It should be possible to design a substantial addition in a modern vocabulary that will work in this context. However, it must be approached in a very thoughtful and respectful manner.

Size and Scale

Staff would like to commend the applicant for taking the comments and concerns of the Board and Staff into strong consideration as they revised the project. By reducing the overall square footage of the proposed addition by 501 square feet (2,264 sf reduced from the prior 2,765 sf), the applicant has made substantial strides in mitigating the impact of the massing of the addition on the existing house. The elimination of the third story has also greatly reduced the visual impact of the scale of the addition on the existing house. Staff's previous concerns that the addition would be overwhelming to the existing house appear to be resolved due to the decrease in height and overall square footage. While the current project at 419 North West Street seeks to add 1233 net square feet to the existing 1031 net square feet (a 119% increase), Staff now believes the size of the addition is not out of scale with the existing house and with the modest houses that characterize the neighborhood. The current design and massing approach allows the existing house to retain its visual prominence and focus on the lot, while the addition reads as secondary.

Architectural Character

The *Design Guidelines* make it clear that whether an addition uses an historical vocabulary or one which is more modern, it must be respectful of the building to which it is appended and compatible with the surrounding district.

The Boards generally prefer addition designs that are respectful of the existing structure and which seek to be background statements or which echo the design elements of the existing structure (Residential Additions - Page 5).

Another approach to a design for a residential addition is one which creates a distinct yet compatible contrast with the original building through the use of differing materials, colors and the abstraction of the principal design elements of the original building (Residential Additions - Page 5).

Staff supports the architectural expression chosen for the addition and believes it is in keeping with the Design Guidelines. The 1938 house at 419 North West Street is very

basic and does not offer much in the way of design elements from which to draw. In Staff's opinion, a more contemporary design expression, using material cues from the existing building, is an appropriate approach for the addition. While the surrounding houses tend to be earlier, dating to the turn-of-the last century and reflecting the popular Queen Anne, 2nd Empire and Italianate styles of that period, the proposed addition as modified is at least more harmonious with the existing building if not with the older neighbors. The flat roof of the addition, stair tower, and the flat roof of the new porch help to tie the old and new sections of the building together and provide quieter appearance overall. While Staff has some reservations about the increase in height of the parapet on the existing house and the new porch with roof overhang along the south face of the historic main block and trellis, Staff recognizes that these features could be reversed with little loss of historic fabric and that they are being proposed as a means of linking the new and the old, and to mitigate height differences.

Height, Massing, and Form

Again, the *Design Guidelines* offer recommendations with regard to these aspects of the design of an addition and, not surprisingly, they call for additions that respect the existing building and prevailing characteristics of the blockface (Residential Additions - Pages 6 & 7). In the current scheme, the height of the main block of the addition has been reduced to 23', in respect to the height of the existing house at 25' (with the addition of 3' to the parapet). While the height of the stair tower is 26'7", this new element is located approximately 21' from the face of the main house. In Staff's opinion, the stair tower will read as a secondary element and should recede from views despite being somewhat taller than the existing historic main block.

In the opinion of Staff, the revisions in height and reduction of overall square footage of the addition have successfully resolved the issues of scale, height, and mass. The addition now reads as a background component, allowing the existing house to retain its prominence. By resolving these issues, the more contemporary design expression also appears to be an appropriate means of achieving design compatibility with the simplistic nature of the 1938 building.

One element of the project that poses concerns with Staff is the proposed replacement of the existing six-over-six windows with one-over-one windows. Staff understands that the applicant wishes to do this as an additional way to link the new and old. However, Staff does not have adequate information to determine if the window replacement is appropriate and warranted. If the existing windows are not historic, Staff could support their replacement. If, however, the existing windows are historic and in repairable condition, Staff would recommend that they be retained and repaired. Staff would like to work with the applicant to resolve this issue. With this one exception, Staff now supports the project and recommends approval, noting the archaeology conditions.

IV. STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends approval with the following conditions:

1. That the following statement appears 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;

2. That Staff review and approve final design details and drawings prior to the filing of a building permit;
3. That Staff review and approve the proposed brick prior to construction; and,
4. That the applicant work with Staff to determine that age of the existing windows on the main house, and if determined to be not historic or original, that the windows may be replaced with one-over-one windows to match the windows used on the addition.



Proposed East Elevation



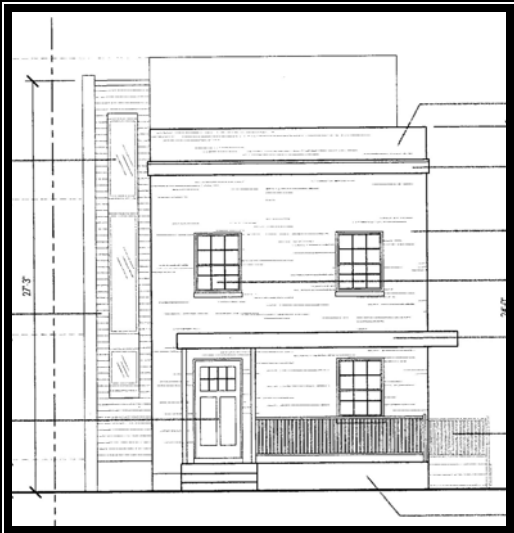
Previously Proposed East Elevation, 10/24/07



Previously Proposed East Elevation, 7/25/07



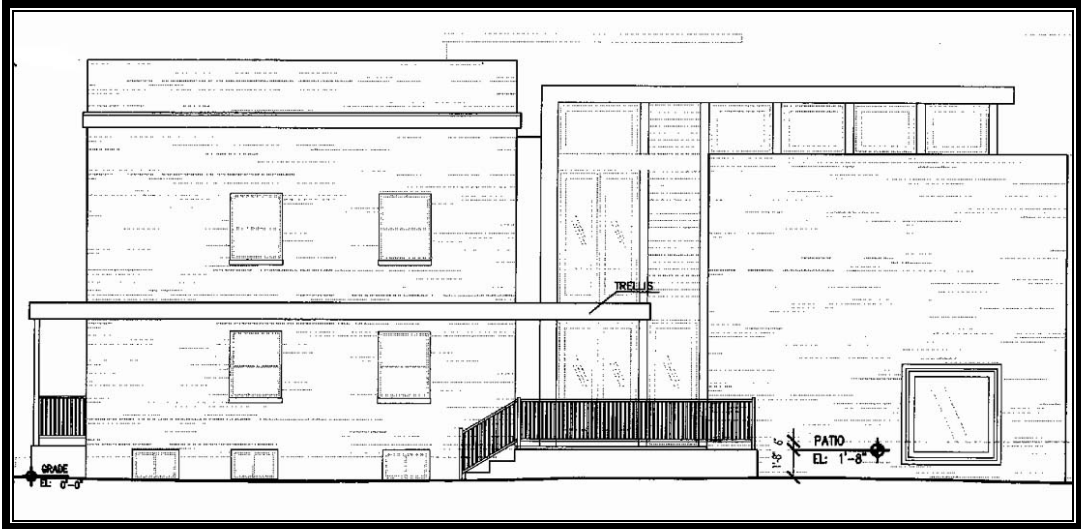
Proposed West Elevation



Previously Proposed West Elevation, 10/24/07



Previously Proposed West Elevation, 7/25/07



Proposed South Elevation



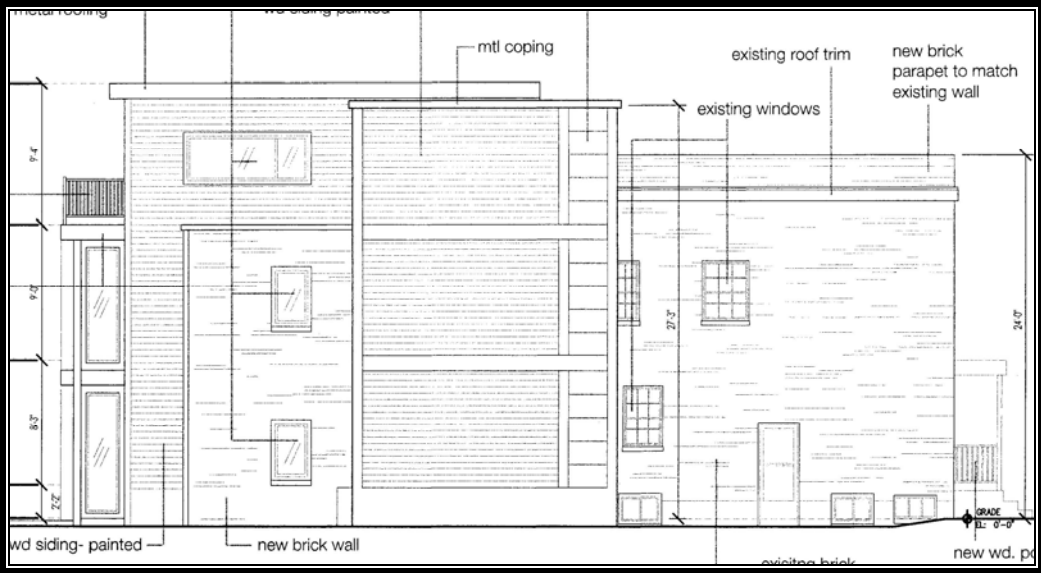
Previously Proposed South Elevation, 10/24/07



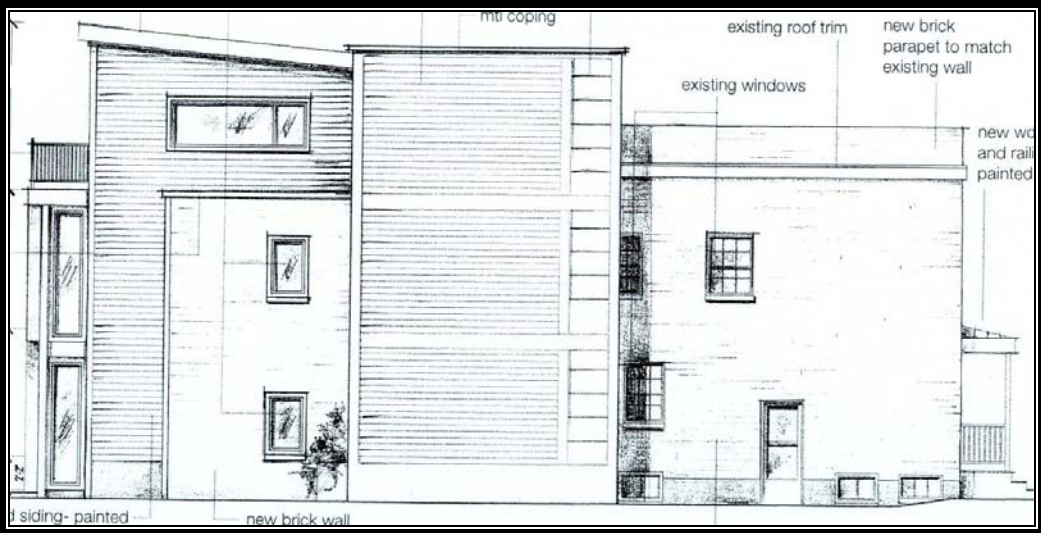
Previously Proposed South Elevation, 7/25/07



Proposed North Elevation



Previously Proposed North Elevation, 10/24/07



Previously Proposed North Elevation, 7/25/07

DEPARTMENT COMMENTS

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

Code Enforcement:

- C-1 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 be taken to prevent the spread of rodents from the construction site to the surrounding community and sewers.
- C-2 Before a building permit can be issued on any proposed future alterations, a certification is required from the owner or owner's agent that the building has been inspected by a licensed asbestos inspector for the presence of asbestos (USBC 110.3).
- C-3 Construction permits are required for this project. Plans shall accompany the permit application that fully details the construction as well as layouts and schematics of the mechanical, electrical, and plumbing systems.
- C-4 New construction must comply with the current edition of the Uniform Statewide Building Code (USBC).
- C-5 Alterations to the existing structure must comply with the current edition of the Uniform Statewide Building Code (USBC).
- C-6 Alterations to the existing structure and/or installation and/or altering of equipment therein requires a building permit. Five sets of plans, bearing the signature and seal of a design professional registered in the Commonwealth of Virginia, must accompany the written application. The plans must include all dimensions, construction alterations details, kitchen equipment, electrical, plumbing, and mechanical layouts and schematics.
- C-7 The new handrails must comply with USBC for a minimum/maximum height of 30 to 34 inches. The ends must extend 12" beyond the top and bottom risers. The handgrip position must not be more that 2-1/4" in cross-sectional dimension, or the shape must provide an equivalent gripping surface. The handgrip portion must have a smooth surface with no sharp corners. The space between the wall and handrail must not be less that 1-1/2".
- C-8 The new stairs must comply with USBC for riser and tread dimensions.
- C-9 Guardrail height and openings must comply with USBC 1012.2 and 1012.3.
- C-10 Handrails must comply with USBC 1009.11.
- C- 11 Sheeting and shoring shall not extend beyond the property line; except when the developer has obtained a written release from adjacent property owners which has been recorded in the land records; or through an approved encroachment process.

- C-12 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-13 Roof drainage systems must be installed so as neither to impact upon, nor cause erosion/damage to adjacent property.
- C-14 All exterior walls within 5 feet from an interior property line shall have a fire resistance rating of 1 hour, from both sides of the wall. As alternative, a 2 hour fire wall may be provided. This condition is also applicable to skylights within setback distance. Openings in exterior walls between 3 and 5 feet shall not exceed 25% of the area of the entire wall surface (This shall include bay windows). Openings shall not be permitted in exterior walls within 3 feet of an interior lot line.
- C-15 A soils report must be submitted with the building permit application.
- C-16 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:

R – Approve as submitted.

Alexandria Archaeology:

- F-1 The G.M. Hopkins insurance map shows that by 1877, at least one structure was present on the block bounded by West, Oronoco, Princess and Payne streets. 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:

FINDINGS

- F1. An approved Plot Plan must be attached to the building permit application. The Plot Plan is required because the submitted documentation indicates that the area of the new building footprint exceeds the area of the existing building footprint by more than 100%.
In general, a Plot Plan is required when construction of a proposed addition:
- Results in a new building footprint that exceeds the area of the existing building footprint by 100% or more.

- Results in less than 50% of the existing first floor exterior walls, in their entirety, remaining. The walls must comprise the footprint of the existing building and shall be measured in linear feet. The remaining walls must remain as exterior walls. The definition of a first floor exterior wall is that it must have its finished floor surface entirely above grade.
- Results in land disturbance associated with the project of 2,500 square feet or greater in area. The disturbed area will be determined by adding a minimum of 10' to the perimeter of the building (or addition) footprint and calculating the area within the increased perimeter. In addition, a 10 foot wide access path from the edge of the disturbed area to the street or paved driveway must be included in the disturbed area calculation. Provision must be made for stockpile, staging, dumpsters and material storage areas within the limits of disturbance.
- Changes to existing grade elevation of 1-foot or greater.
- Changes to existing drainage patterns. (TES)

RECOMMENDATIONS

- R1. 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.]. (TES)
- R2. Applicant shall be responsible for repairs to the adjacent city right-of-way if damaged during construction activity. (TES)
- R3. All improvements to the city right-of-way such as curbing, sidewalk, driveway aprons, etc. must be city standard design. (TES)
- R4. 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. (TES)
- R5. An erosion and sediment control plan must be approved by T&ES prior to any land disturbing activity greater than 2,500 square feet. (TES)
- R6. Compliance with the provisions of Article XIII of the City's zoning ordinance for stormwater quality control is required for any land disturbing activity greater than 2,500 square feet. (TES)