

Docket Item # 8
BAR CASE # 2007-0253

BAR Meeting
February 27, 2008

ISSUE: After-the-fact alterations
APPLICANT: Scott Mitchell for Little Street LLC
LOCATION: 419 North Alfred Street
ZONE: CL/Commercial

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

1. That the two-over-two, wood windows be single glazed, true divided light on the front elevation and may be double pane insulated, simulated divided lights on the side and rear elevations.
2. That the applicant work with staff to determine whether the existing historic siding can be repaired and retained, or if it cannot, that Staff approve the most appropriate type of new replacement wood siding prior to purchase.
3. That the applicant consult Staff and receive approval prior to any additional work if the need for additional alterations arises during the course of the project.

(Insert sketch here)

I. ISSUE:

The applicant is requesting approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness for alterations at 419 North Alfred Street.

Windows

All of the existing windows will be replaced with two-over-two, simulated divided light, double pane insulated (2 panes of glass) wood windows. The mullions will measure 7/8" in width and there will be a spacer bar between the two panes of glass. In one location – the north facing elevation of the rear ell – the applicant proposes wood casement windows on both the first and second floors.

Doors

Two sets of wood French doors are proposed to be installed on the house. One pair would be located on the north elevation of the main block and the other pair would be located on the rear (east) elevation.

Siding

The existing aluminum and particle board siding will be removed and painted cedar siding will be installed.

II. HISTORY:

The two story frame duplex at 419 North Alfred Street was constructed prior to 1896, when it appears along with its twin (417 North Alfred Street) in the Sanborn map. This Italianate house has had a number of inappropriate modifications over the years, including: the addition of nine-over-nine windows on the front façade (the original two-over-two windows were there as late as 1988 when the house was surveyed for the designation of the Parker-Gray historic district); horizontal two-over-two windows on the remainder of the house; shutters; and both aluminum and particle board siding.

Staff could find only one prior Board approval for a fence at 419 North Alfred Street (BAR Case #89-0015, June 14, 1989).

Scott Mitchell of Little Street LLC purchased the subject property in July 2007 and was issued a building permit (BLD 2007-02112) on October 23, 2007 for interior work. BAR staff approved the building permit on October 5th and specifically noted that the approval was for interior work only. A subsequent revision to the building permit set showed exterior demolition and alterations; this was denied by BAR staff on October 23, 2007, because the alterations require BAR review and approval. Subsequently, on November 8, 2007, staff received a complaint that a portion of the exterior of the house had been demolished. A Stop Work Order was issued and a notice of violation was sent to the applicant. The applicant was fined \$2,000 for violating Section 10-103A and 10-103B of the Zoning Ordinance (demolition without a Permit to Demolish and altering a structure without a Certificate of Appropriateness).

To date, the applicant has not paid the fine associated with the violation which the City Attorney's office is pursuing.

III. ANALYSIS:

The proposed alterations comply with Zoning Ordinance requirements.

Staff supports the renovation of another historic house in the Parker-Gray historic district, especially since it will replace many of the house's historically inappropriate features. While the alterations proposed are largely appropriate, this is the second time within the past two years that the applicant has begun demolition and alterations without first obtaining Board approval. In a similar case, the applicant undertook demolition and construction of alterations on the house at 529 North Alfred Street, just a block away from the subject property, also without Board approval. In that case, the alterations were largely complete and the house was in new ownership before the Board could review the project. At that time the applicant was strongly cautioned by the Board to consult with staff and, if necessary, obtain BAR approval prior to undertaking any exterior alterations or demolition on a historic property in the historic district.

Staff finds the majority of the proposed alterations to be appropriate and in conformance with the *Design Guidelines* for alterations, with a few exceptions.

Windows

The *Design Guidelines* recommend that all windows on historic properties be single glazed (1 pane of glass) with true divided lights. However, the Board has on a number of occasions permitted in less visible locations either the use of double pane insulated windows with exterior mullions and interior spacer bars, or double insulated, true divided light windows. Double pane insulated windows, like those proposed by the applicant, actually have a different appearance than historic windows with single glazing. Because windows are such a character-defining feature of a building, Staff recommends that at the very least the front elevation windows be single glazed, true divided light wood windows.

Siding

The *Design Guidelines* recommend retaining and preserving historic material whenever possible, especially when it is such a principle character defining element like siding. Staff has not yet had an opportunity to inspect the house to determine whether any historic siding exists under the aluminum and particle board siding. If original siding exists and is in good condition, staff would recommend that this be repaired and retained. If the condition of the siding is poor, staff recommends that the applicant install the same style wood siding as was originally installed on the house (the adjacent house at 417 North Alfred clearly has new German lap style siding which may or may not be appropriate). The applicant should work closely with staff to determine and approve the most appropriate course of action once the siding under the existing aluminum/particle board siding is revealed.

Other Alterations

Although no other alterations are proposed at this time, Staff wishes to remind the applicant that any unexpected modifications to the house, such as new exterior lighting, fencing, or roofing,

must be brought to staff's attention *prior* to construction or installation. If the changes are considered to be historically appropriate, staff may be able to administratively approve the work without the applicant having to return to the Board for approval.

IV. STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends approval of the application with the following conditions:

1. That the two-over-two, wood windows be single glazed, true divided light on the front elevation and may be double pane insulated, simulated divided lights on the side and rear elevations.
2. That the applicant work with staff to determine whether the existing historic siding can be repaired and retained, or if it cannot, that Staff approve the most appropriate type of new replacement wood siding prior to purchase.
3. That the applicant consult Staff and receive approval prior to any additional work if the need for additional alterations arises during the course of the project.

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 Building permit will be required for the proposed project.
- C-4 All windows must comply with IRC section R613 (residential) or IBC section 1714.5 (commercial). Specifically they must be listed as per the requirements of AAMA/NWWDA 101/ I.S.2 and/ or AAMA/NWWDA 101/ I.S.2/ NAFS, respectively.
- C-5 Structures requiring restoration of an existing window in which the structure is deemed Historic by the BAR staff will be reviewed for compliance with the building code on an individual basis.

Historic Alexandria:

No comments received.

Alexandria Archaeology:

No comments received.