

Docket Item #3
BAR CASE #2008-0033

BAR Meeting
March 26, 2008

ISSUE: Alterations

APPLICANT: Boys and Girls Club by Stephanie Dimond

LOCATION: 401 North Payne Street

ZONE: RB/Residential

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Staff recommends approval of wood replacement windows with the existing muntin pattern in either wood or aluminum clad exteriors.

(Insert sketch here)

I. ISSUE:

The applicant is requesting approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness for alterations to the Boys and Girls Club at 401 North Payne Street. The applicant states that the structure is in need of building-wide improvements in order to make it function more efficiently and better serve the surrounding community.

Windows

The applicant proposes to replace the windows throughout the building with double insulated, simulated divided light Loewen brand wood windows. The windows will have the same muntin pattern as the existing Colonial Revival style windows (primarily 12-over-12) and will be painted white.

Dormers

New dormers will be added on the third floor of the building in order to provide additional office space for the Boys and Girls Club. Three gable roofed dormers will be added on both the front and rear façades, for a total of six dormers. The middle gable on the rear façade will be wider, with three double-hung windows, in order to accommodate the width of the new interior stairway up to the third floor. The dormers will be clad with fiber cement siding on the side elevations.

Exterior Emergency Egress Stair

Because the third floor of the building will now be utilized, the existing exterior egress stair will need to be increased in height. The roof of the stair will either be retained or reconstructed, and new steel I-beams will be added to raise the height of the stair tower. New egress doors will be added at the basement, first and third floors, and another flight of stairs will be added to reach the new third floor door.

Roofing

The front gable roof will be re-roofed with architectural style asphalt shingles. The flat gymnasium roof will get a new rubber membrane.

Front Entrance Stoop, Stairs, and Handicapped Accessible Ramp

A new stoop and stairs are proposed to be constructed at the building front entrance on the west façade in place of the existing stoop and stairs. A new ADA handicapped accessible ramp is proposed to begin along the south side of the building and turn the corner to terminate at the main entrance. The new ramp will be constructed inside of the existing wrought iron fence which will remain. The stoop, stairs and ramp are proposed to be constructed of brick to match the building and will be topped with a decorative metal railing.

Other Alterations

Additional improvements include demolition of a portion of the third floor wall on the south façade to install a new window. The new third floor window is proposed to be constructed with a jack arch header with cast keystone to match the configuration of the existing windows openings. An existing vent at the top of the third floor gable on the east façade is proposed to be removed and infilled to match the existing brick wall. Central air conditioning is proposed to be installed which will result in removal of the window air conditioning units. A new six panel

wood front door with a transom is proposed at the front entrance in place of the existing metal door and blank panels.

II. HISTORY:

The two-story on raised basement, brick-faced, steel frame and concrete block structure at 401 North Payne Street was designed and constructed by Dr. Robert South Barrett, Jr. in 1936 as the Alexandria Boys' Club. It has an overall Colonial Revival design vocabulary with a center hall entrance, brick quoining at the corners, multi-pane windows and gable roof. Dr. Barrett was the son of Dr. Robert South Barrett, a prominent minister, and Katherine Waller Barrett, a noted philanthropist and social worker. The younger Barrett was also noted for his philanthropy. In addition to other institutional projects and foundations he sponsored, the Boys' Club was a gift to the community, as was the Queen Street library he built to honor his mother. Dr. Barrett was vice president of the Alexandria Investment Corporation, editor of the *Alexandria Gazette* from 1911-1916, and a high-ranking Mason. In 1909, he organized the Memorial Association which was responsible for the creation of the George Washington Masonic National Memorial.

According to the building permits on file with the Bureau of Code Enforcement, the only major alteration that has been made to the structure is the reconstruction of the gymnasium roof in 1955 (permit #12416, October 3, 1955). At that time the gable roof was replaced with a flat roof and the exterior I-beam supports were added on the north and south sides.

The Board has approved numerous alterations to the building over the past eight years, including:

- An exterior egress stair, BAR Case #2000-0277, December 13, 2000.
- Reapproval of the exterior stair, BAR Case #2001-0302, December 19, 2001.
- Alterations to the exterior stair, BAR Case #2002-0183, July 24, 2002.
- Window replacement, BAR Case #2006-0226, October 25, 2006.

III. ANALYSIS:

The Boys and Girls Club is classified as a noncomplying use; however, since the amount of physical expansion does not exceed the 0.75 FAR of the building's several lots of record, the proposed alterations comply with zoning ordinance requirements.

Staff supports the Boys and Girls Club undertaking renovation of this highly visible building to enhance their ability to serve the community. Staff supports the application as discussed below.

Windows

The existing windows appear to be original to the 1936 structure and are in poor condition. The Board approved a building-wide window replacement in 2006; however, it was never undertaken. The *Design Guidelines* recommend that all windows on historic properties be single glazed (one pane of glass) with true divided lights. Double insulated windows, like those proposed by the applicant, actually have a different appearance than historic windows with single glazing. However, since the Board previously approved double insulated, simulated divided light windows for this building, staff has no objection to the window replacement.

Because this is an institutional building, Staff would also have no objection if the replacement windows were aluminum clad. This is consistent with the treatment of other Colonial Revival style institutional buildings in the historic districts.

Roof

Staff has no objection to the proposed new roofing materials at the Boys and Girls Club. Asphalt shingles are an appropriate roofing material for this historic institutional building, and the flat rubber roof membrane on the gymnasium will not be visible.

Exterior Emergency Egress Stair

The extension of the proposed exterior staircase complies with the *Design Guidelines*. The proposed metal stair extension is appropriate to the age of the original structure and the stair does not hide, obscure, or cause the removal of historic architectural features. In fact, the open design of the stair allows for good visibility of the north gable-end wall, and leaves as much of the wall as possible. The new door openings that are proposed on the north elevation are necessary to access the stairs.

Dormers

The proposed dormers are very similar to the third floor dormers depicted on a 1955 building permit for construction on the front of the building. In the opinion of staff, the dormers meet all of the recommendations contained in the *Design Guidelines*, including their style, size, material and location. Furthermore, the dormers allow the Boys and Girls Club to capture usable space for support offices without the necessity of a separate addition. Staff has no objection to the use of fiber cement cladding on the sides of the dormers because they are on the third floor where the siding material will be minimally visible.

Front Entrance Stoop, Stairs, and Handicapped Accessible Ramp

Staff finds the proposed brick stoop, stair, handicapped accessible ramp and associated railings acceptable and in compliance with the recommendations contained in the *Design Guidelines*, which states that: "ramps and structures...be made of materials which are sympathetic to the building materials generally found in the historic district."

Other Alterations

The proposed alterations to install a new third floor window, infill the existing gable vent, and install a new front door and transom are historically appropriate. Removal of the window air conditioning units, as well as removal of the painted blue ventilation box on the basement level of the front elevation will greatly improve the appearance of this prominent community building. Staff is supportive of the applicant's efforts to renovate the Boys and Girls Club.

IV. STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Staff recommends approval of wood replacement windows with the existing muntin pattern in either wood or aluminum clad exteriors.

CITY DEPARTMENT COMMENTS

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

Code Enforcement:

- F-1 Stairs must comply with USBC for riser and tread dimensions.
- 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 taken to prevent the spread of rodents from the construction site to the surrounding community and sewers.
- C-1 A Building / Mechanical / Electrical permit is required for the proposed project.
- C-2 Alterations to the existing structure must comply with the current edition of the Uniform Statewide Building Code (USBC).
- C-3 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-4 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-5 Certification is required from the owners or owner's agent that the building has been inspected by a licensed asbestos inspector for the presence of asbestos (USBC 110.3).
- C-6 The handicapped ramp must comply with the requirements of USBC 1010.1. The front approach to the exterior door (which is on the pull side) must comply with the landing requirements of USBC 1010.6. Handrails must comply with USBC 1010.8
- C-7 Accessibility shall comply with Chapter 11 and Section 3409 of the USBC.
- C-8 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-9 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.

Historic Alexandria:

R-1 Approve.

Planning and Zoning:

- C-1 Prior to building permit approval a survey plat of the property must be submitted illustrating that the proposed new stoop, stairs and handicapped accessible ramp are fully located on the subject property.
- C-2 A wall check survey must be submitted for approval after installation of the foundation for the new stoop, stairs and handicapped accessible ramp and must be approved before commencing above grade construction.
- R-1 Staff recommends consolidation of the existing lots of record into one lot as is reflected in the current single occupant use of the property.
- R-2 Recommend white or light color low albedo roof membrane for gymnasium to save facility energy use and reduce heat gain.