

Docket Item #5
BAR CASE #2008-0048

BAR Meeting
April 23, 2007

ISSUE: Alterations
APPLICANT: Eric E. Tolbert
LOCATION: 307 N. Patrick Street
ZONE: RB Residential

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Staff recommends approval with the following conditions:

1. That the nails not show in the installation of the siding; and
2. That smooth siding be installed.

****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 a Certificate of Appropriateness to replace the existing rotting/missing masonite siding on the north elevation with a smooth finish, beaded, 7" exposure Hardiplank. Underneath the masonite is a brick-tec like product, which will be retained. There does not appear to be any historic wood fabric underneath the brick-tec. At this time, the applicant is only requesting approval for replacement material on the north elevation. This elevation has views from the primary public right-of-way of North Patrick Street.

The property owner was cited by Code Enforcement due to the condition of the masonite siding.

II. HISTORY:

307 N. Patrick Street is a two-story vernacular residential structure with Greek Revival details. It is representative of the form and style of residential properties constructed in the later part of the 19th-century and early 20th-century in the Parker-Gray neighborhood. The building first appears as a two-story dwelling on the 1891 Sanborn Fire Insurance map. Starting in 1896, it appears as a two-story dwelling with a small rear addition (also on the 1902, 1907, and 1912 maps).

The property has maintained such character-defining features as the standing seam metal roof and wood dentils and brackets at the cornice. However, masonite siding was added probably during the mid-part of the 20th-century.

Staff did not locate any prior approvals by the Board for this property.

III. ANALYSIS:

Proposed alterations comply with the Zoning Ordinance.

The *Design Guidelines* note that siding is one of the principal character defining elements of a building and that brick and wood are the predominant exterior wall materials in the historic districts. It is a central tenet of historic preservation that original historic materials should be retained and repaired rather than replaced. The *Guidelines* recommend an informed and careful analysis of the existing condition be undertaken before determining to replace and encourage repair and retention of historic materials whenever possible. As stated previously, in the area where the applicant is wishing to use Hardiplank, Staff did not see any historic materials.

The *Guidelines* discourage the use of synthetic sidings such as vinyl and aluminum but do not address fiber cement siding, as it was not widely used until after its publication in 1993. Subsequent to the publication of the *Design Guidelines*, the Board has adopted the following policy with respect to 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;
5. That the nails not show in the installation of the siding;
6. That smooth siding be installed; and,
7. That BAR Staff may administratively approve the installation of fiber cement siding on *non-historic* buildings (those constructed in 1975 or later).

Staff is aware that the Board has approved Hardiplank siding in the Parker-Gray district in a number of cases over the past six or so years. The Board has considered each case on its own merits within the context of the *Design Guidelines* and the above policy. In most cases where Hardiplank was approved by the Board, the replacement was occurring on secondary elevations (not the front façade), in less visible areas, or in areas that had limited access for maintenance. In Staff's opinion, this application merits approval, since the Hardiplank will be used only on the north elevation, which has limited views from the public right-of-way, no historic materials were found beneath the existing synthetic sidings, and the area has limited access for maintenance.

Therefore, Staff recommends approval with the standard conditions for Hardiplank.

IV. STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends approval with the following conditions:

1. That the nails not show in the installation of the siding; and
2. That smooth siding be installed.

CITY DEPARTMENT COMMENTS

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

Code Enforcement:
Comments pending.

Historic Alexandria:
Approval.