

Docket Item # 6
BAR CASE # 2008-0113

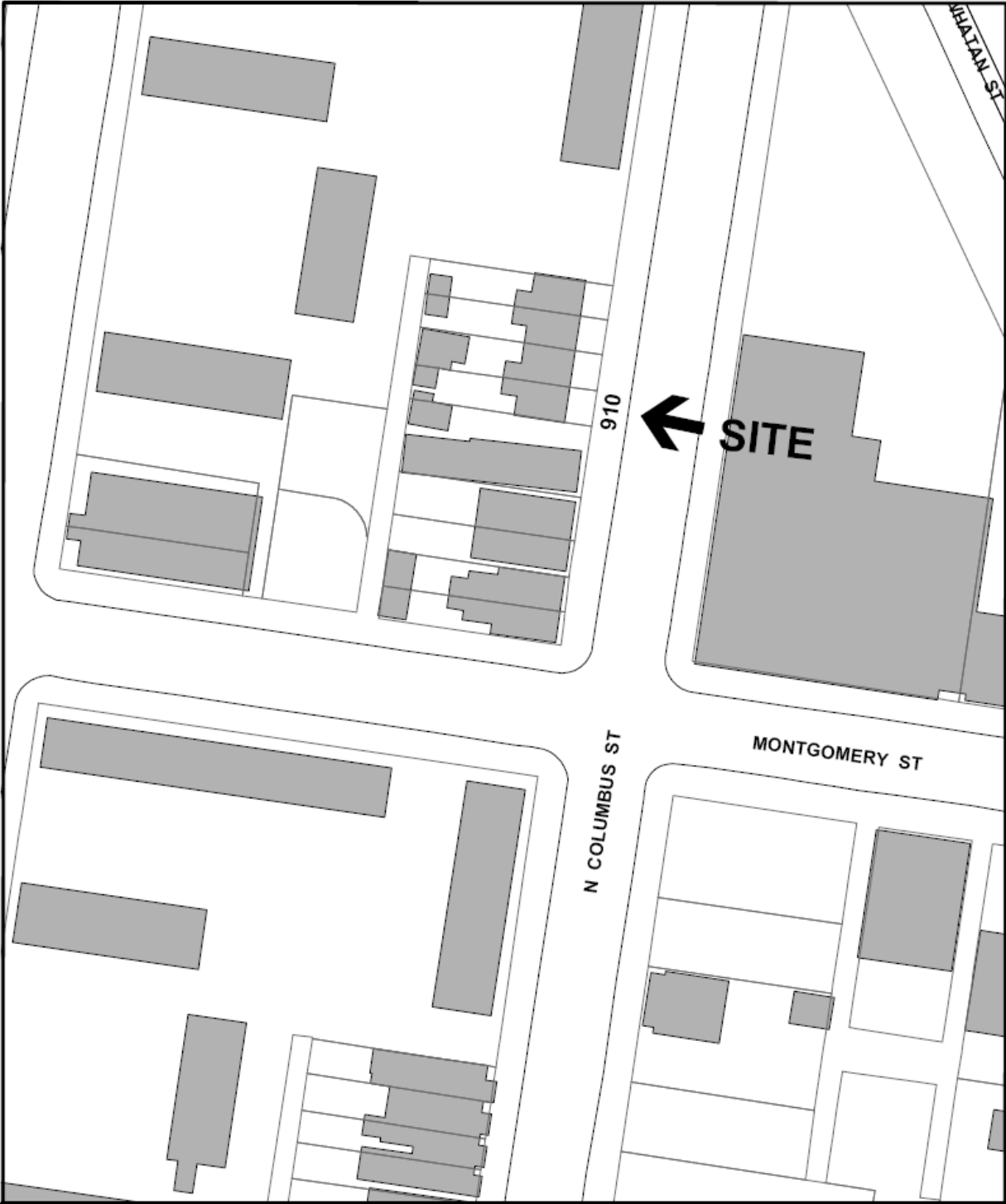
BAR Meeting
July 23, 2008

ISSUE: Alterations
APPLICANT: Michael Johns
LOCATION: 910 North Columbus Street
ZONE: RB/Residential

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Staff recommends denial of the Certificate of Appropriateness.

****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



BAR CASE #2008-0113

7/23/2008



I. ISSUE:

The applicant is requesting approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness for the dwelling at 910 North Columbus Street to install three through-the-wall air conditioning units. Each unit will require the removal of approximately 2 ½ square feet of brick wall for a total of 7 ½ square feet. In addition, the applicant is requesting to repair the wood overhang over the front door.

The rear of the dwelling is currently minimally visible from the rear alley. There is a carport/garage structure and fence at the rear of the property obstructing views of this elevation.

II. HISTORY:

910 North Columbus Street is an attached, two-story, brick dwelling with a flat roof. The dwelling is an end unit of four rowhouses. This series of four stripped-down Colonial Revival rowhouses likely dates from the late 1940s and remains fully intact.

Staff did not locate any prior approvals from the Board.

III. ANALYSIS:

Proposed alterations comply with zoning ordinance requirements.

Although the applicant expresses concerns for enhanced security and to maximize the amount of daylight from the windows, those issues are generally beyond the purview of the Board. Staff recognizes these concerns but must analyze the proposed alteration within the scope of the *Design Guidelines*. The *Design Guidelines* strongly discourage HVAC equipment which is prominently visible from a public right-of-way. In addition, the *Guidelines* state that HVAC equipment should not disrupt the architectural character of a structure. Regarding through-the-wall air conditioning units, the *Guidelines* discourage such equipment due to the adverse visual impact as well as the loss of historic building material that results from their installation.

Although through-the-wall air conditioning units have been installed on neighboring properties, Staff was unable to locate BAR approval for such alterations. Staff has concerns regarding the removal of historic fabric for the units. In addition, the installation of such units will permanently alter the historic character of this post-World War II series of rowhouses. Staff finds that alternative solutions, such as installing an alarm system or security locks or hardware, or installing a skylight on the flat roof, would address the applicant's concerns. Staff does not support the installation of through-the-wall air conditioning units.

Staff finds the in-kind repair of the existing wood overhang to be historically appropriate. Typically this work is administratively approved by BAR Staff. Staff will administratively approve this request.

IV. STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends denial of the Certificate of Appropriateness.

V. 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 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-3 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-4 Where appliances are located $\leq 10'$ from a roof edge or open side with a drop $\wedge \geq 24"$, guards shall be provided (USBC 2801.1)

Historic Alexandria:

Approve.

VI. IMAGES



Figure 1: 910-916 North Columbus Street (910 on left)



Figure 2: Example of through-the-wall AC units

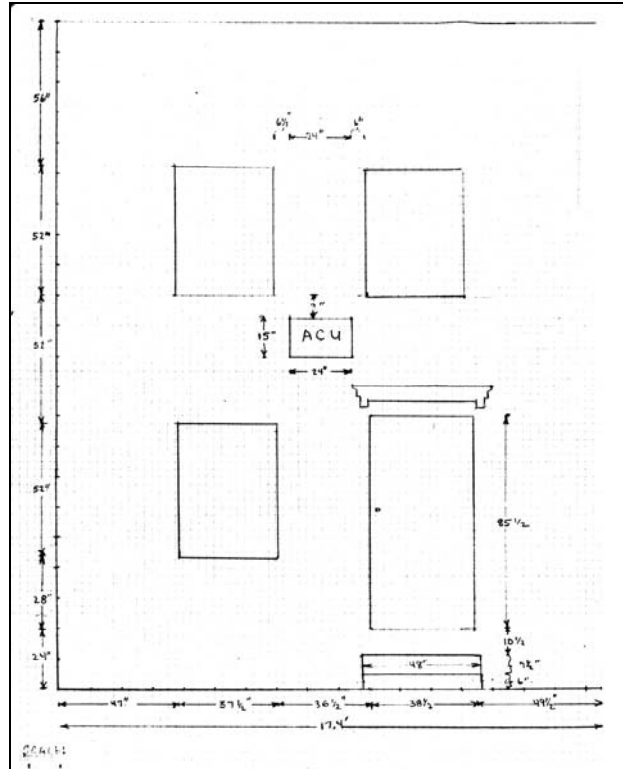


Figure 3: Proposed alteration for front elevation.

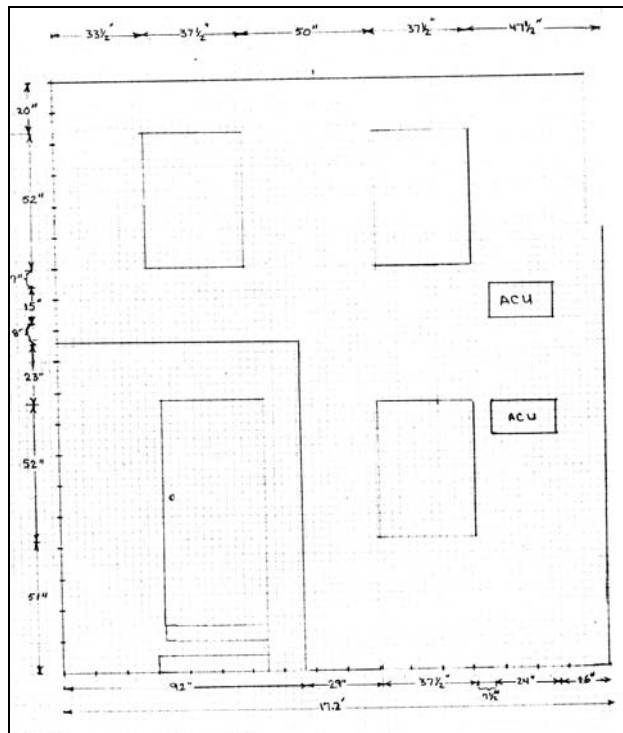


Figure 4: Proposed alteration for rear elevation.