

City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: June 19, 2009

TO: Parker-Gray Board of Architectural Review

FROM: BAR Staff

SUBJECT: Consideration of a request for demolition at 224 North Fayette Street, American Legion Building

Please find attached for your review information relating to the request by William Cromley to consider a proposal for wholesale demolition of the building located at 224 North Fayette Street, known as the American Legion. We have also attached for your review the information Mr. Cromley prepared as a component of his application for a Permit to Demolish.

Background:

Mr. Cromley purchased the property in February of 2009. After meeting with P & Z Staff and exploring options for rehabilitation, including possibly a new addition, Mr. Cromley determined that it was not feasible to rehabilitate the building. In March, Mr. Cromley offered to donate the building to the City, and to have it moved to the adjacent Hunter/Miller Park, however, the City declined the offer. In April, Mr. Cromley re-approached P & Z with a proposal to demolish the building and then construct a new building. In May, Mr. Cromley filed an application for a Permit to Demolish to be heard by the Board at the June 24 hearing. Following discussions with the department, in which Staff voiced strong concerns regarding the appropriateness of a total demolition, Mr. Cromley agreed to take this item as a discussion item to the Board prior to moving forward as a formal docketed item at a hearing.

Staff has conducted site visits to the building, in relation to other proposals for redevelopment, including one as recent as 2007.

History of 224 North Fayette:

The building located at 224 North Fayette Street is a simple, one-story, rectangular, gable-fronted, freestanding frame dwelling constructed in 1944. The building has original asbestos shingle siding, asphalt shingle roof, and twelve-over-twelve, double-hung wood windows. While very minimal in detailing, the building does have exposed rafter ends and gabled stick style hoods over the centered front and rear entrances, characteristic of mail-order buildings from 1910-1940. While the building has deteriorated due to a lack of proper maintenance, the original character defining features are still evident and have been retained.

The structure was originally built to house a nursery school operated by the City school system. Later, in 1950, the building was leased and then sold to the American Legion Post, named for William Thomas, the first African-American soldier from Alexandria to be killed in action during World War I. The American Legion itself was chartered in 1931. During the segregation era, it served as the only American Legion outpost in Alexandria open to African-Americans. The American Legion sponsored such activities as Boys State, youth programs, sports teams and participated in parades.

As noted, while the building has been poorly maintained, the simple vernacular building remains virtually unaltered from the time of construction. The building has been determined to be a contributing building to the proposed Uptown/Parker-Gray National Register Historic District. The District itself has been listed in the Virginia Landmarks Register by the Virginia Board of Historic Resources as of June 2008. The area of significance that Parker-Gray meets in terms of criteria for listing on the state and federal registers include the categories of architecture, ethnic heritage: African-American, and social history.

The American Legion building contributes to the District's significance because of its age—65 year old, its intact architectural integrity, and its association as an African-American institution within the neighborhood.

Criteria for a Permit to Demolish/Encapsulate:

In considering a Permit to Demolish or Capsulate, the Board must consider the following criteria set forth in the Zoning Ordinance, Sec 10-205(B):

- (1.) Is the building or structure of such architectural or historical interest that its removal would be to the detriment of the public interest?
- (2.) Is the building or structure of such interest that it could be made into an historic shrine?
- (3.) Is the building or structure of such old and unusual or uncommon design, texture, and material that it could not be reproduced or be reproduced only with great difficulty?
- (4.) Would retention of the building or structure help preserve and protect an historic place or area of historic interest in the city?
- (5.) Would retention of the building or structure promote the general welfare by maintaining and increasing real estate values, generating business, creating new positions, attracting tourists, students, writers, historians, artists, and artisans, attracting new residents, encouraging study and interest in American history, stimulating interest and study in architecture and design, educating citizens in American culture and heritage and making the city a more attractive and desirable place to live?
- (6.) Would retention of the building or structure help maintain the scale and character of the neighborhood?

Analysis:

From a preliminary review of the building and information from the National Register nomination form, other research, and information provided by the applicant, Staff finds that the building meets criteria (1), (4), (5), and (6). Staff finds that the existing building retains its historic integrity as it relates to its original design and form, details, location, setting and association. Staff notes that because Parker-Gray is largely comprised of residential buildings,

that it's small number of civic and institutional buildings then have even greater importance. Buildings such as the American Legion that are directly connected to the social history of the neighborhood, namely its African-American history and the era of segregation, are important to be retained and preserved. As the neighborhood has undergone changes and transitions, Staff is concerned that its history and the building stock associated with it will be lost. While the history associated with the building is important, in respect to its architectural style and form, 224 North Fayette retains its architectural integrity, because it has only been very slightly altered since its construction over 65 years ago.

The Design Guidelines state "Generally speaking, there must be a compelling reason for the demolition, either in whole or in part, of a significant structure in the historic districts." In Staff's opinion, the American Legion building is a significant structure in that it is now listed on the Virginia Landmarks Register as a contributing building to the Uptown/Parker-Gray Historic District, and thus, is also a contributing structure to the proposed National Register District. The building meets 4 of the 6 criteria set forth in the Ordinance for reviewing proposed demolition for its intact architecture (Criteria 1 and 6), and for its historical associations (Criteria 4 and 5).

At this time, Staff does not believe that a compelling argument has been made by the applicant to warrant demolition. Furthermore, Staff believes that greater input from the community and neighborhood, as well as those associated with the history of the Parker-Gray neighborhood, needs to occur prior to a recommendation being made and a decision by the Board. Mr. Cromley has indicated that he will share additional information at the discussion session with the Board, including additional history and testimonies that he has received from community members.

Departmental Comments:

Alexandria Archaeology:

Findings:

F-1 In *Historic Alexandria, Virginia, Street by Street, A Survey of Existing Early Buildings*, Ethelyn Cox indicates that an early powder house was present at the southwest corner of Queen and Fayette Streets in the 18th century. The Hopkins Insurance Map shows that structures were present on this property in 1877, and in the early 1940's the City built a nursery school on the lot. Later, this structure was leased and then sold to the American Legion Post, named for William Thomas, the first African American soldier from Alexandria to be killed in action during World War I. Given the lack of intensive development on this property, it is possible some evidence of the powder house (if it extended onto the lot) could remain despite the 19th and 20th-century construction. The lot therefore has the potential to yield archaeological resources which could provide evidence of residential and other activities in the 19th and early 20th centuries and of the highly significant earlier powder house.

F-2 This project will require a site plan and will need to comply with provisions of the Archaeological Protection Code.

Recommendations:

For Demolition of the Existing Building:

1. To insure that archaeological resources are not disturbed by the demolition process, the applicant shall obtain a Scope of Work from Alexandria Archaeology and hire an archaeological firm to provide monitoring for the demolition of the structure. No ground disturbance shall result on the entire property as a result of the demolition (i.e., the foundation and/or wall footings, steps, walls, basement, buried utility lines, etc. may not be removed; ground surfaces may not be rutted or cut into by heavy equipment).

For Development of the Property:

1. To insure that significant information is not lost as a result of the current development project, the applicant shall hire an archaeological consultant to complete a Documentary Study and an Archaeological Evaluation. The applicant shall contact Alexandria Archaeology to obtain a scope of work for this investigation. Archaeological monitoring shall be required during demolition. The Documentary Study and Archaeological Evaluation shall be completed prior to submittal of the site plan for preliminary review. If significant resources are discovered, the consultant shall complete a Resource Management Plan, as outlined in the *City of Alexandria Archaeological Standards*. Preservation measures presented in the Resource Management Plan, as approved by the City Archaeologist, will be implemented.

2. The statements in archaeology conditions below shall appear in the General Notes of all site plans and on all site plan sheets that involve demolition or ground disturbance (including Demolition, Foundation/Basement Plans, Erosion and Sediment Control, Grading, Landscaping, Utilities, and Sheeting and Shoring) so that on-site contractors are aware of the requirements:

a. All required archaeological preservation measures shall be completed prior to ground-disturbing activities (such as coring, grading, filling, vegetation removal, undergrounding utilities, pile driving, landscaping and other excavations as defined in Section 2-151 of the Zoning Ordinance) or a Resource Management Plan must be in place to preserve and/or recover significant resources in concert with construction activities. To confirm, call Alexandria Archaeology at (703) 838-4399.

b. The applicant/developer shall 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.

c. The applicant/developer shall not allow any metal detection to be conducted on the property, unless authorized by Alexandria Archaeology.

3. The applicant shall hire a professional consultant to work with staff and the landscape designers to incorporate and interpret elements of the historical character and archaeological findings into the design of the open space and to prepare interpretive signs, which shall be erected as part of the development project. The site plan shall indicate themes and locations of interpretive elements. Prior to release of the final site plan, the consultant shall provide text and graphics for the signage subject to approval by the Office of Historic Alexandria/Alexandria Archaeology and the Directors of P&Z and RP&CA.

Office of Historic Alexandria:

R-Deney demolition

Zoning:

1. Demolition complies with zoning. However, staff urges applicant to receive approvals for redevelopment prior to razing the building.

Images:



Figure 1. Locator Map for 224 N. Fayette St

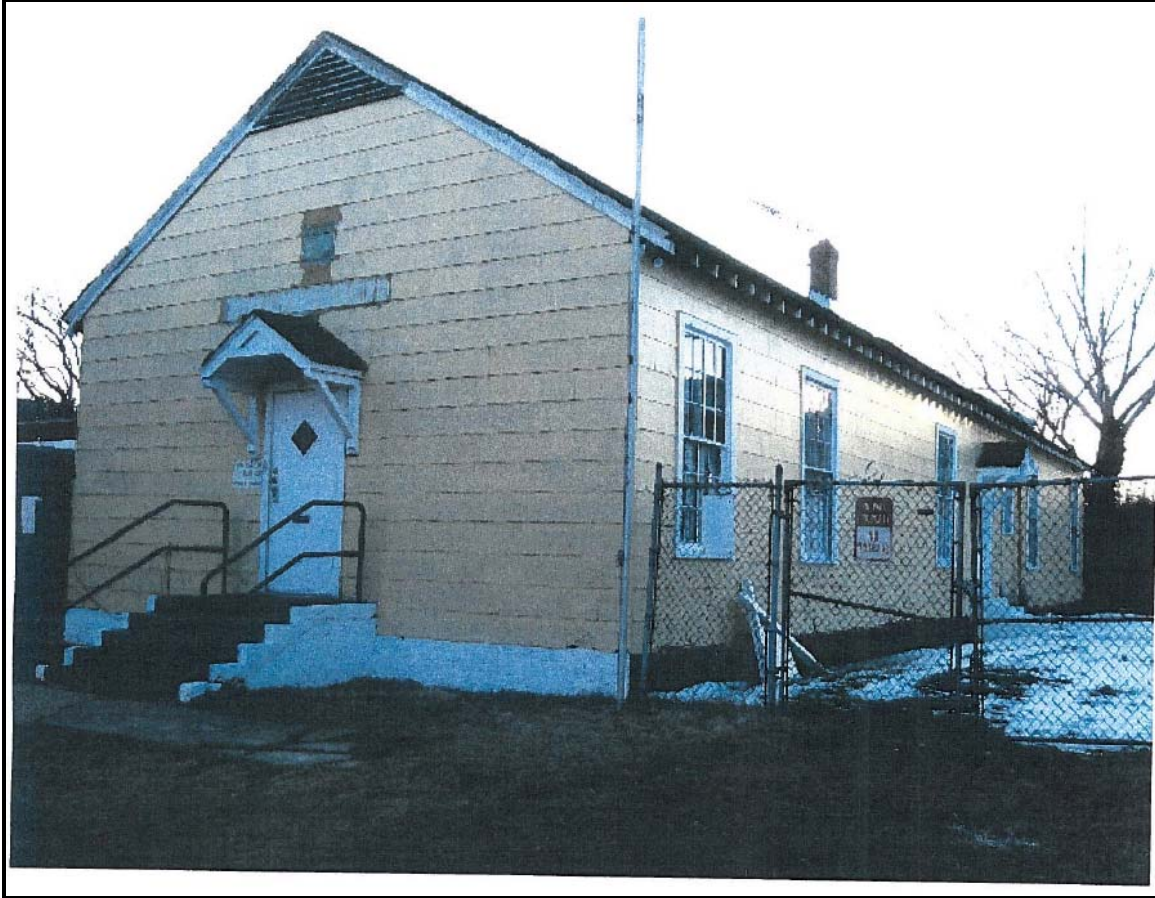


Figure 3. Image of American Legion from N. Fayette St



East (Front) Elevation,2009/05/14 08:35:02



North (Park) Elevation,2009/05/14 08:36:21



South Elevation,2009/05/14 08:37:00



West (Rear) Elevation,2009/05/14 08:38:33

Figure 4. Other Images of American Legion

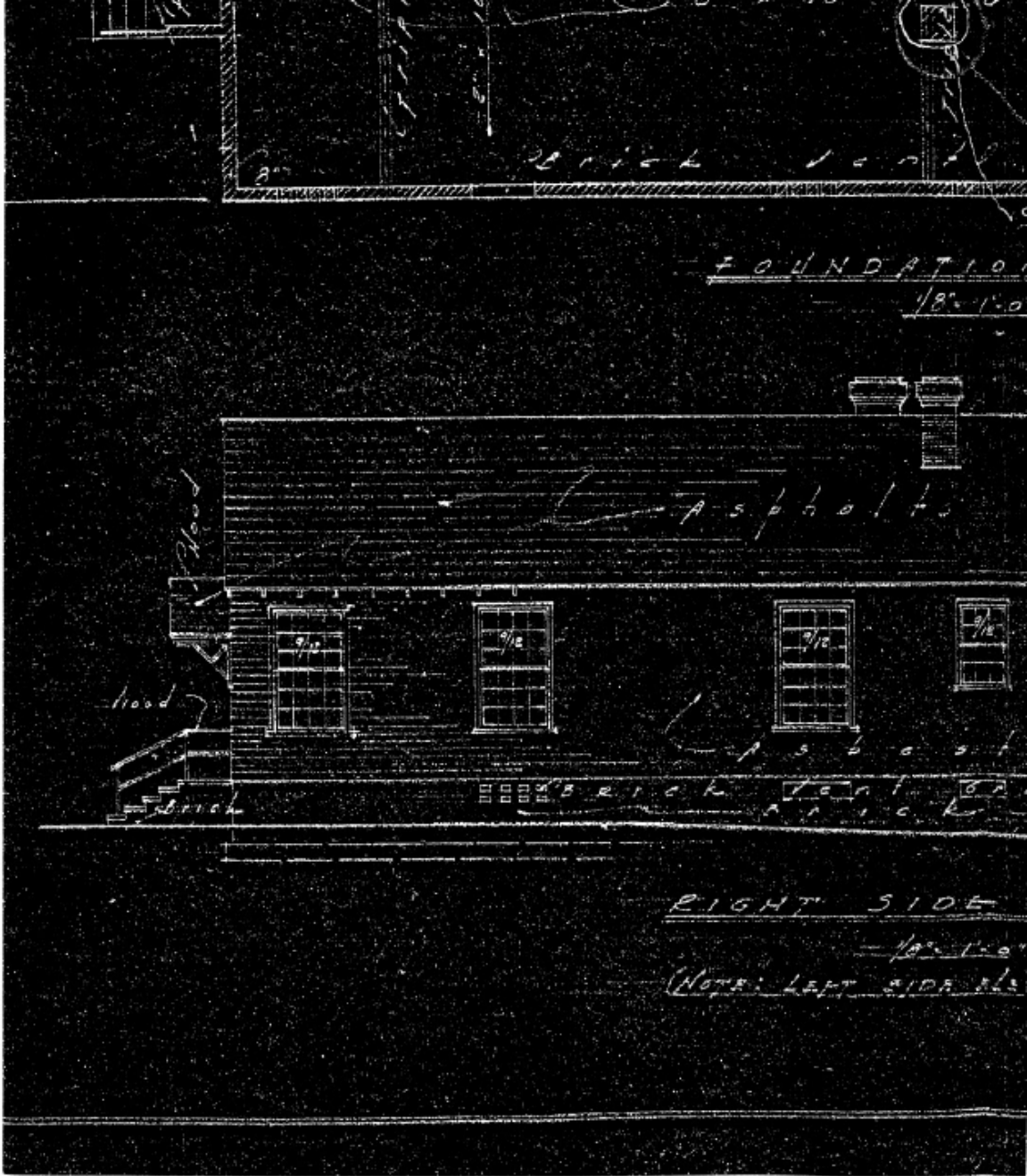


Figure 7. Original drawings.

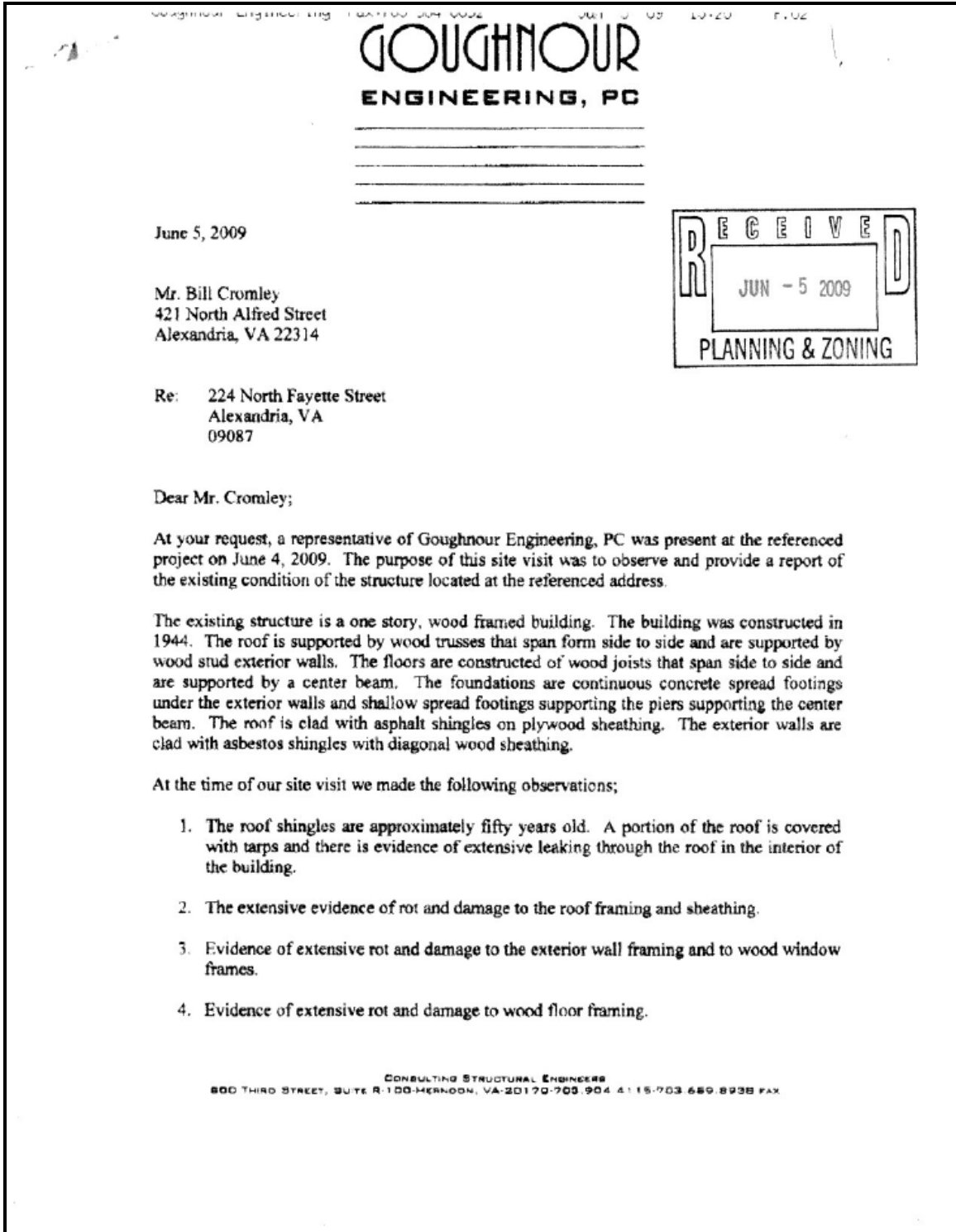


Figure 7. Letter from structural engineer.

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5. There are cracks in the foundation at the West end of the building.
6. The chimneys at the South side of the building are leaning away from the building.
7. There is poor drainage and standing water at the North side of the building.

In our opinion the existing building has poor potential for renovation. The roof and exterior wall cladding need to be removed and replaced. The interior finishes need to be stripped to the framing and replaced. Most of the wood framing is exhibiting evidence of rot and will need to be replaced. The foundation needs to be underpinned and the site needs to be regarded to drain storm water from the site.

Thank you for this opportunity to be of service. If you have any further questions regarding this matter, please feel free to contact us.

Very truly yours,

Steven D. Goughnour, P.E.
President

Figure 8. Letter from structural engineer.



Chain of Custody

Asbestos Lab Services

1910905212

EMSL Analytical, Inc.
10768 Baltimore
Avenue
Beltsville, MD 20705

Phone: (301) 937-5700
Fax: (301) 937-5701
<http://www.emsl.com>

Please print all information legibly.

Company:	Gormley Environmental Corp.	Bill To:	Gormley Environmental Corp.
Address1:	P.O. Box 28	Address1:	P.O. Box 28
Address2:		Address2:	
City, State:	Bryans Road, MD	City, State:	Bryans Road, MD
Zip/Post Code:	20616	Zip/Post Code:	20616
Country:	US	Country:	US
Contact Name:	Larry Gormley	Attn:	Larry Gormley
Phone:	301-753-5659	Phone:	301-753-5659
Fax:	301-753-6476	Fax:	301-753-6476
Email:	lgormley@gormleyenvironmental.com	Email:	lgormley@gormleyenvironmental.com
EMSL Rep:		P.O. Number:	
Project Name/Number: 224 N. Fayette Street			

MATRIX			TURNAROUND			
<input type="checkbox"/> Air	<input type="checkbox"/> Soil	<input type="checkbox"/> Micro-Vac	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 3 Hours	<input type="checkbox"/> 6 Hours		<input type="checkbox"/> 24 Hours (1 day)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Bulk	<input type="checkbox"/> Drinking Water		<input type="checkbox"/> 48 Hours (2 days)	<input type="checkbox"/> 72 Hours (3 days)	<input type="checkbox"/> 96 Hours (4 days)	<input type="checkbox"/> 120 Hours (5 days)
<input type="checkbox"/> Wipe	<input type="checkbox"/> Wastewater		<input type="checkbox"/> 144+ hours (6-10 days)			

TEM AIR, 3 hours, 6 hours. Please call ahead to schedule. There is a premium charge for 3-hour tat, please call 1-800-220-3675 for price prior to sending samples. You will be asked to sign an authorization form for this service.

PCM - Air	TEM Air	TEM WATER
<input type="checkbox"/> NIOSH 7400(A) Issue 2, August 1994	<input type="checkbox"/> AHERA 40 CFR, Part 763 Subpart E	<input type="checkbox"/> EPA 100.1
<input type="checkbox"/> OSHA w/TWA	<input type="checkbox"/> NIOSH 7402	<input type="checkbox"/> EPA 100.2
<input type="checkbox"/> Other:	<input type="checkbox"/> EPA Level II	<input type="checkbox"/> NYS 198.2
PLM - Bulk	TEM BULK	TEM Microvac/Wipe
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EPA 600/R-93/116	<input type="checkbox"/> Drop Mount (Qualitative)	<input type="checkbox"/> ASTM D 5755-95 (quantitative method)
<input type="checkbox"/> EPA Point Count	<input type="checkbox"/> Chatfield SOP - 1988-02	<input type="checkbox"/> Wipe Qualitative
<input type="checkbox"/> NY Stratified Point Count	<input type="checkbox"/> TEM NOB (Gravimetric) NYS 198.4	
<input type="checkbox"/> PLM NOB (Gravimetric) NYS 198.1	<input type="checkbox"/> EMSL Standard Addition:	XRD
<input type="checkbox"/> NIOSH 9002:		<input type="checkbox"/> Asbestos
<input type="checkbox"/> EMSL Standard Addition:	PLM Soil	<input type="checkbox"/> Silica NIOSH 7500
SEM Air or Bulk	<input type="checkbox"/> EPA Protocol Qualitative	
<input type="checkbox"/> Qualitative	<input type="checkbox"/> EPA Protocol Quantitative	OTHER
<input type="checkbox"/> Quantitative	<input type="checkbox"/> EMSL MSD 9000 Method fibers/gram	<input type="checkbox"/>

http://www.emsl.com/COC_Print.cfm?action=print&ServiceCatSelect=3&LabsSelect=Belts... 6/5/2009

Figure 9. Asbestos removal information.



EMSL Analytical, Inc.
 10768 Baltimore Avenue, Beltsville, MD 20705
 Phone: (301) 937-5700 Fax: (301) 937-5701 Email: beltsvillelab@emsl.com

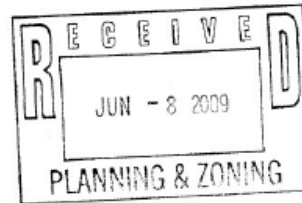
Attn: **Larry Gormley**
Gormley Environmental
P.O. Box 28
Bryans Road, MD 20616

Fax: (301) 753-6476 Phone: (301) 753-9358
 Project: **224 N. FAYETTE STREET**

Customer ID: GORM50
 Customer PO:
 Received: 06/05/09 12:50 PM
 EMSL Order: 190905212
 EMSL Proj:
 Analysis Date: 6/5/2009

Asbestos Analysis of Bulk Materials via EPA 600/R-93/116 Method using Polarized Light Microscopy

Sample	Description	Appearance	Non-Asbestos		Asbestos
			% Fibrous	% Non-Fibrous	% Type
F 1 190905212-0001	FLOOR TILE	Black Non-Fibrous Heterogeneous		90% Non-fibrous (other)	10% Chrysotile
F 2 190905212-0002	EXTERIOR SIDING	Beige Non-Fibrous Heterogeneous		70% Non-fibrous (other)	30% Chrysotile



Analyst(s)
 Alexis Turner (2)

Joe Centifoni, Laboratory Manager
 or other approved signatory

Due to magnification limitations inherent in PLM, asbestos fibers in dimensions below the resolution capability of PLM may not be detected. The limit of detection as stated in the method is 1%. The above test report relates only to the items tested and may not be reproduced in any form without the express written approval of EMSL Analytical, Inc. EMSL's liability is limited to the cost of analysis. EMSL bears no responsibility for sample collection activities or analytical method limitations. Interpretation and use of test results are the responsibility of the client. Samples received in good condition unless otherwise noted. This report must not be used to claim product endorsement by NVLAP or any agency of the U.S. Government.
 NVLAP Lab Code 200263-0

Figure 10. Asbestos removal information.



Chain of Custody
Asbestos Lab Services

EMSL Analytical, Inc.
 10768 Baltimore Avenue
 Beltsville, MD 20705
 Phone: (301) 937-5700
 Fax: (301) 937-5701
 http://www.emsl.com

Please print all information legibly.

Client Sample # (s) F1 F2 Total Samples #: 2

Relinquished: [Signature] Date: 6/5/09 Time: _____

Received: [Signature] Date: 6/5/09 Time: 12:50pm W/W

Relinquished: _____ Date: _____ Time: _____

Received: _____ Date: _____ Time: _____

SAMPLE NUMBER	SAMPLE DESCRIPTION/LOCATION	VOLUME (if applicable)
F1	FLOOR TILE	BULK
F2	EXTERIOR SIDING	BULK

RECEIVED
 JUN - 8 2009
 PLANNING & ZONING

Figure 11. Asbestos removal information.