

Docket Item # 4
BAR CASE # 2010-0197

BAR Meeting
July 28, 2010

ISSUE: Alterations

APPLICANT: Christine Coussens

LOCATION: 419 North Fayette Street

ZONE: RB / Residential

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Staff recommends denial of the application for aluminum-clad wood double-hung windows and vinyl awning-style basement windows and approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness for simulated divided light, double-hung, painted wood windows on the first and second stories and aluminum-clad wood awning basement windows with the following conditions:

1. That the applicant use full frame replacement windows or sash replacement kits in the existing frame rather than insert or pocket replacements;
2. That the replacement windows have fixed muntin grills on the interior and exterior with a putty glaze profile on the exterior;
3. That the glazing on the glass be tint free;
4. That the dimensions of the replacement windows match the existing window sash including the rails, stiles, and muntins;
5. That the replacement window sash corners be constructed with mortise and tenon style, butt joinery rather than mitered, picture frame joinery;
6. That the replacement windows have spacer bars between the glass and that they be a dark matte color rather than reflective silver or gold metallic;
7. That the applicant submit final window manufacturer spec sheets to staff for approval prior to application of a building permit; and
8. That the shutters be removed from the first floor tripartite window.

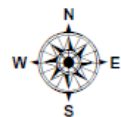
****EXPIRATION OF APPROVALS NOTE:** In accordance with Sections 10-106(B) and 10-206(B) of the Zoning Ordinance, any official Board of Architectural Review approval will expire 12 months from the date of final approval if the work is not commenced and diligently and substantially pursued by the end of 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 Building and Fire Code Administration (including siding or roofing over 100 square feet, windows and signs). The applicant is responsible for obtaining all necessary construction permits after receiving Board of Architectural Review approval. Contact Code Administration, Room 4200, City Hall, 703-746-4200 for further information.



BAR CASE #2010-0197

7/28/2010



I. ISSUE:

The applicant is requesting approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness for replacement windows at 419 North Fayette Street.

The applicant is requesting approval to replace 16 windows on the first and second stories. The existing windows are single-glazed, double-hung, six-over-six and eight-over-eight, wood windows with exterior storms. The applicant is requesting approval of Pella Architect series double-glazed, aluminum-clad wood windows. The proposed windows will be simulated divided light in an identical light pattern to the windows they are replacing. The applicant is also proposing to replace the existing awning basement windows with double-glazed vinyl awning windows manufactured by American Craftsman, an Andersen company.

The alley immediately behind the property is private but the rear of the property is visible from the public portion of the alley through the alley parking court.

II. HISTORY:

419 North Fayette Street is a freestanding, two-story, three-bay brick house with Colonial Revival detailing. According to the Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps, the house was constructed between 1941 and 1958, and described as a two-story, concrete block, brick-faced dwelling.

The National Register Uptown/Parker-Gray Historic District nomination identifies this building as a contributing resource.

III. ANALYSIS:

The proposed alterations comply with the zoning ordinance.

The *Design Guidelines* recommend that: "...replacement windows should be appropriate to the historic period of the architectural style of the building". The *Guidelines* also state that single-glazed, true divided light windows installed with an interior storm sash are the preferred replacement window type. The *Guidelines* continue by noting other acceptable window types are "double-glazed true divided light wood windows...."

Thermopane insulated glass was invented in 1930 and became commercially available for windows shortly thereafter. Andersen began offering Welded Insulating Glass in 1952 and Pella first produced the Twinlite window in 1957, both of which are early tradename examples of double-glazed, insulated windows. Staff, therefore, believes, insulating glass is appropriate for replacement windows on mid 20th century buildings, such as 419 North Fayette Street. In support of the use of simulated divided lights, Staff notes their allowance for a thinner muntin profile which more accurately visually replicates the look of a historic, divided light, single-glazed window. In Staff's field experience, modern simulated divided light windows with dark spacer bars are nearly visually indistinguishable from true divided light, insulated glass windows. Finally, Staff believes that insulated glass windows are more attractive than single-glazed windows paired with aluminum storm windows in addition to being slightly more energy efficient. Staff would also like to note that double-glazed windows; when specified with low-e film are more comfortable in both summer and winter, and are more likely to be used by the occupant for natural ventilation because they are simpler to operate.

To clarify, Staff does not recommend insulated glass windows for 18th or 19th century buildings and does not recommend replacing windows in these buildings at all when they have existing original windows or have replacement sash constructed with 19th century cylinder (“wavy”) glass which has attained historic significance in its own right. Staff supports interior or exterior storms on these buildings for energy efficiency and to protect the historic sash from weather.

Regarding the aluminum-clad wood material the applicant proposes for these replacement windows, Staff acknowledges that the *Guidelines* clearly state that “plastic, vinyl and metal clad windows” are discouraged window types. While Staff cannot support the use of vinyl windows at the basement level, believing that there is rarely ever a circumstance where vinyl is acceptable in the historic district, the use of aluminum-clad windows may be appropriate in certain circumstances. Basement-level windows, which are subject to rain spatter, garden irrigation water and reduced air circulation behind foundation plantings, can suffer from accelerated deterioration. In anticipation of the review of replacement windows by the Modern and Sustainable Materials Ad Hoc Work Group in September, Staff proposes the following for the Parker Gray Board’s consideration and guidance.

Aluminum-clad wood windows became commercially available in the 1960s. Aluminum-clad windows have always been a more expensive option and therefore were not widely used for spec housing. In this instance, noting the age of the house, aluminum-clad windows may only be an appropriate option for small basement windows partially screened by foundation plantings with limited visibility. The applicant has provided supporting documentation indicating that the PG Board has previously approved aluminum-clad windows on similar buildings from the mid 20th century. The OHAD Board has also recently approved aluminum-clad windows on early 20th century commercial construction and new residential additions. Therefore, Staff supports the use of high-quality, aluminum-clad replacement windows for the basement windows.

However, lacking a clearly stated policy from the Board, Staff is not comfortable supporting aluminum-clad windows on the first and second floors of this freestanding dwelling since aluminum-clad wood windows were not generally available at the time of construction. Although the house is set back from the street, it is still prominently visible from the public sidewalk on three sides. The Board generally requires replacement materials which are historically compatible, high quality and durable. Many modern, less expensive wood windows have not proven to be durable. Even window manufacturers who still manufacture high quality painted wood windows often discourage their use because the quality of the plantation grown woods available for commercial production is poor, although some manufacturers do offer more durable exotic woods, such as mahogany, as an option. When wood windows are specified, Staff typically recommends that they be ordered with a factory-applied acrylic painted finish which has a longer life than field painting. Staff, nevertheless, believes that painted wood windows should be used on this dwelling because that was its original window material but supports a modern high quality and energy efficient version of that wood window as replacement.

Staff, therefore, supports simulated divided light, double-hung, painted wood windows for the first and second floors and supports aluminum-clad wood, double glazed windows for the basement windows.

Finally, Staff reminds the Board that the *Design Guidelines* strongly discourage decorative shutters that are not operable and that they “...should be the appropriate size and shape for the

opening. For example, shutters should be capable of covering the entire door or window opening when closed.” (Shutters, p.2) The shutters on either side of the first floor tripartite window cannot do this and are historically inappropriate. Staff recommends that these two shutters (see Figure #1) be removed.

STAFF:

Catherine Miliaras, Historic Preservation Planner, Planning & Zoning

Meredith Kizer, Historic Preservation Planner, Planning & Zoning

Al Cox, FAIA, Historic Preservation Manager, Planning & Zoning

IV. CITY DEPARTMENT COMMENTS

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

Code Administration:

No comments received.

Historic Alexandria:

No comments received.

V. IMAGES



Figure 1. Front and side elevations.



Figure 2. Details of existing windows.



Figure 3. Detail of existing window.