

ISSUE: Certificate of Appropriateness for alterations

APPLICANT: Ramesh Ponnuru

LOCATION: Old and Historic District
608 South Fairfax Street

ZONE: RM

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends **denial** of the Certificate of Appropriateness for alterations.

GENERAL NOTES TO THE APPLICANT

1. **APPEAL OF DECISION:** In accordance with the Zoning Ordinance, if the Board of Architectural Review denies or approves an application in whole or in part, the applicant or opponent may appeal the Board's decision to City Council on or before 14 days after the decision of the Board.
2. **COMPLIANCE WITH BAR POLICIES:** All materials must comply with the BAR's adopted policies unless otherwise specifically approved.
3. **BUILDING PERMITS:** Most projects approved by the Board of Architectural Review require the issuance of one or more construction permits by Department of Code Administration (including signs). The applicant is responsible for obtaining all necessary construction permits after receiving Board of Architectural Review approval. Contact Code Administration, 703-746-4200 for further information.
4. **ISSUANCE OF CERTIFICATES OF APPROPRIATENESS AND PERMITS TO DEMOLISH:** Applicants must obtain a copy of the Certificate of Appropriateness or Permit to Demolish PRIOR to applying for a building permit. Contact BAR Staff, City Hall, 703-746-3833, or preservation@alexandriava.gov for further information.
5. **EXPIRATION OF APPROVALS NOTE:** In accordance with Sections 10-106(B), 10-206(B) and 10-307 of the Zoning Ordinance, any 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.
6. **HISTORIC PROPERTY TAX CREDITS:** Applicants performing extensive, certified rehabilitations of historic properties may separately be eligible for state and/or federal tax credits. Consult with the Virginia Department of Historic Resources (VDHR) prior to initiating any work to determine whether the proposed project may qualify for such credits.

I. APPLICANT'S PROPOSAL

The applicant requests a Certificate of Appropriateness for alterations to replace the front door.

Site context

The subject property is bound by South Fairfax Street to the west and private development on all other sides. The door is visible from South Fairfax Street.

II. HISTORY

The Board approved a Permit to Demolish for the demolition of a small 20th-century vernacular dwelling on this property on December 16, 2015 (BAR Case #2015-0358). The Board approved a Certificate of Appropriateness on **January 20, 2016** (BAR Case#2015-0359) for new construction. The house was constructed in a Federal Revival style. In October 2025, staff administratively approved an application to replace the front door with a new 6-panel solid wood door with the top two panels being glass.



Figure 1: View of subject property showing existing 6-panel door.

Previous BAR Approvals

| | |
|-------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|
| BAR2015-00358 & BAR2015-00359 | Demolish existing building and build new one |
| BAR2017-00397 | Garden fence and shutter installation |
| BAR2023-00123 | Lattice trashcan enclosure |
| BAR2025-00411 | Door replacement |

III. ANALYSIS

The applicant requests a Certificate of Appropriateness for alterations to replace the 6-panel solid wood front door on the front (west) elevation with a new solid wood door. The door

administratively approved in 2025 has four wood panels and two clear glass panels above. The door currently proposed has six glass panels.

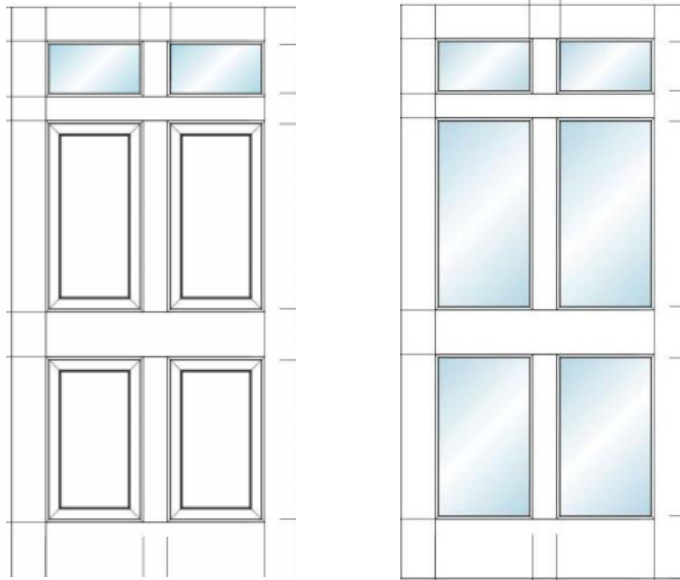


Figure 2. Replacement door approved in 2025 (left) and currently proposed door (right).

According to the *Design Guidelines*, “exterior doors are prominent visual elements of a building’s main façade and are highly visible to pedestrians when buildings are adjacent to the sidewalk”. Federal style doors typically have six wood panels, centered and incorporated into a decorative door surround. The proposed door design with six glass panels is not appropriate for a Federal Revival style house. Large glass panels are typically not incorporated into Federal style doors, and as such the proposed door would conflict with the overall architectural style of the house. Staff previously approved the 4 wood panel + 2 glass panel design because the glass is limited to the upper portion of the door, which allows it to largely retain its Federal style. As this approved administrative application is still valid for several months, the applicant has the option to use this design as a replacement.

Therefore, staff recommends **denial** of the Certificate of Appropriateness for alterations.

STAFF

Brendan Harris, Historic Preservation Planner, Planning & Zoning
Tony LaColla, AICP, Land Use Services Division Chief, Planning & Zoning

IV. CITY DEPARTMENT COMMENTS

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

Zoning

C-1 Proposed door change will comply with Zoning.

Code Administration

No comment.

Transportation and Environmental Services

- R-1 The building permit must be approved and issued prior to the issuance of any permit for demolition, if a separate demolition permit is required. (T&ES)
- R-2 Applicant shall be responsible for repairs to the adjacent city right-of-way if damaged during construction activity. (T&ES)
- R-3 No permanent structure may be constructed over any existing private and/or public utility easements. It is the responsibility of the applicant to identify any and all existing easements on the plan. (T&ES)
- F-1 After review of the information provided, an approved grading plan is not required at this time. Please note that if any changes are made to the plan it is suggested that T&ES be included in the review. (T&ES)
- C-1 The applicant shall comply with the City of Alexandria's Solid Waste Control, Title 5, Chapter 1, which sets forth the requirements for the recycling of materials (Sec. 5-1-99). (T&ES)
- C-2 The applicant shall comply with the City of Alexandria's Noise Control Code, Title 11, Chapter 5, which sets the maximum permissible noise level as measured at the property line. (T&ES)
- C-3 Any work within the right-of-way requires a separate permit from T&ES. (Sec. 5-2) (T&ES)

Alexandria Archaeology

No archaeology comments.

V. ATTACHMENTS

1 – Application Materials

- *Completed application*
- *Plans*
- *Material specifications*
- *Scaled survey plat if applicable*
- *Photographs*

2 – Supplemental Materials

- *Public comment*
- *HOA approval if applicable*
- *Easement approval if applicable*
- *Any other supporting documentation*

BAR CASE# _____
(OFFICE USE ONLY)

ADDRESS OF PROJECT: 608 South Fairfax Street

DISTRICT: Old & Historic Alexandria Parker – Gray 100 Year Old Building

TAX MAP AND PARCEL: 081.01-02-07 ZONING: RM

APPLICATION FOR: *(Please check all that apply)*

- CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS
- PERMIT TO MOVE, REMOVE, ENCAPSULATE OR DEMOLISH
(Required if more than 25 square feet of a structure is to be demolished/impacted)
- WAIVER OF VISION CLEARANCE REQUIREMENT and/or YARD REQUIREMENTS IN A VISION CLEARANCE AREA *(Section 7-802, Alexandria 1992 Zoning Ordinance)*
- WAIVER OF ROOFTOP HVAC SCREENING REQUIREMENT
(Section 6-403(B)(3), Alexandria 1992 Zoning Ordinance)

Applicant: Property Owner Business *(Please provide business name & contact person)*

Name: Ramesh Ponnuru

Address: _____

City: _____

Phone: _____

Authorized Agent *(if applicable)*: Attorney Architect Father-in-law

Name: Donald Foster

Phone: _____

E-mail: _____

Legal Property Owner:

Name: Ramesh Ponnuru

Address: _____

City: _____

Phone: _____

NATURE OF PROPOSED WORK: *Please check all that apply*

- NEW CONSTRUCTION
- EXTERIOR ALTERATION: *Please check all that apply.*
 - awning
 - doors
 - lighting
 - other _____
 - fence, gate or garden wall
 - windows
 - pergola/trellis
 - HVAC equipment
 - siding
 - painting unpainted masonry
 - shutters
 - shed
- ADDITION
- DEMOLITION/ENCAPSULATION
- SIGNAGE

DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED WORK: *Please describe the proposed work in detail (Additional pages may be attached).*

We would like to replace the door with a six-panel door with beveled glass.

SUBMITTAL REQUIREMENTS:

Check this box if there is a homeowner's association for this property. If so, you must attach a copy of the letter approving the project.

Items listed below comprise the minimum supporting materials for BAR applications. Staff may request additional information during application review. Please refer to the relevant section of the *Design Guidelines* for further information on appropriate treatments.

Applicants must use the checklist below to ensure the application is complete. Include all information and material that are necessary to thoroughly describe the project. Incomplete applications will delay the docketing of the application for review. Pre-application meetings are required for all proposed additions. All applicants are encouraged to meet with staff prior to submission of a completed application.

Demolition/Encapsulation : *All applicants requesting 25 square feet or more of demolition/encapsulation must complete this section. Check N/A if an item in this section does not apply to your project.*

- N/A
- Survey plat showing the extent of the proposed demolition/encapsulation.
- Existing elevation drawings clearly showing all elements proposed for demolition/encapsulation.
- Clear and labeled photographs of all elevations of the building if the entire structure is proposed to be demolished.
- Description of the reason for demolition/encapsulation.
- Description of the alternatives to demolition/encapsulation and why such alternatives are not considered feasible.

BAR CASE# _____

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Additions & New Construction: Drawings must be to scale and should not exceed 11" x 17" unless approved by staff. Check N/A if an item in this section does not apply to your project.

- ^{N/A} Scaled survey plat showing dimensions of lot and location of existing building and other structures on the lot, location of proposed structure or addition, dimensions of existing structure(s), proposed addition or new construction, and all exterior, ground and roof mounted equipment.
- FAR & Open Space calculation form.
- Clear and labeled photographs of the site, surrounding properties and existing structures, if applicable.
- Existing elevations must be scaled and include dimensions.
- Proposed elevations must be scaled and include dimensions. Include the relationship to adjacent structures in plan and elevations.
- Materials and colors to be used must be specified and delineated on the drawings. Actual samples may be provided or required.
- Manufacturer's specifications for materials to include, but not limited to: roofing, siding, windows, doors, lighting, fencing, HVAC equipment and walls.
- For development site plan projects, a model showing mass relationships to adjacent properties and structures.

Signs & Awnings: One sign per building under one square foot does not require BAR approval unless illuminated. All other signs including window signs require BAR approval. Check N/A if an item in this section does not apply to your project.

- ^{N/A} Linear feet of building: Front: _____ Secondary front (if corner lot): _____.
- Square feet of existing signs to remain: _____.
- Photograph of building showing existing conditions.
- Dimensioned drawings of proposed sign identifying materials, color, lettering style and text.
- Location of sign (show exact location on building including the height above sidewalk).
- Means of attachment (drawing or manufacturer's cut sheet of bracket if applicable).
- Description of lighting (if applicable). Include manufacturer's cut sheet for any new lighting fixtures and information detailing how it will be attached to the building's facade.

Alterations: Check N/A if an item in this section does not apply to your project.

- ^{N/A} Clear and labeled photographs of the site, especially the area being impacted by the alterations, all sides of the building and any pertinent details.
- Manufacturer's specifications for materials to include, but not limited to: roofing, siding, windows, doors, lighting, fencing, HVAC equipment and walls.
- Drawings accurately representing the changes to the proposed structure, including materials and overall dimensions. Drawings must be to scale.
- An official survey plat showing the proposed locations of HVAC units, fences, and sheds.
- Historic elevations or photographs should accompany any request to return a structure to an earlier appearance.

BAR CASE# _____

(OFFICE USE ONLY)

ALL APPLICATIONS: *Please read and check that you have read and understand the following items:*

- I understand that after reviewing the proposed alterations, BAR staff will invoice the appropriate filing fee in APEX. The application will not be processed until the fee is paid online.
- I understand the notice requirements and will return a copy of the three respective notice forms to BAR staff at least five days prior to the hearing. If I am unsure to whom I should send notice I will contact Planning and Zoning staff for assistance in identifying adjacent parcels.
- I, the applicant, or an authorized representative will be present at the public hearing.
- I understand that any revisions to this initial application submission (including applications deferred for restudy) must be accompanied by the BAR Supplemental form and revised materials.

The undersigned hereby attests that all of the information herein provided including the site plan, building elevations, prospective drawings of the project, and written descriptive information are true, correct and accurate. The undersigned further understands that, should such information be found incorrect, any action taken by the Board based on such information may be invalidated. The undersigned also hereby grants the City of Alexandria permission to post placard notice as required by Article XI, Division A, Section 11-301(B) of the 1992 Alexandria City Zoning Ordinance, on the property which is the subject of this application. The undersigned also hereby authorizes the City staff and members of the BAR to inspect this site as necessary in the course of research and evaluating the application. The applicant, if other than the property owner, also attests that he/she has obtained permission from the property owner to make this application.

APPLICANT OR AUTHORIZED AGENT:

Signature: _____

Printed Name: _____

Ramesh Ponnuru

Date: _____

3.9.26

OWNERSHIP AND DISCLOSURE STATEMENT

Use additional sheets if necessary

1. Applicant. State the name, address and percent of ownership of any person or entity owning an interest in the applicant, unless the entity is a corporation or partnership, in which case identify each owner of more than three percent. The term ownership interest shall include any legal or equitable interest held at the time of the application in the real property which is the subject of the application.

| Name | Address | Percent of Ownership |
|-------------------|------------|----------------------|
| 1. Ramesh Ponnuru | [REDACTED] | 100 |
| 2. | | |
| 3. | | |

2. Property. State the name, address and percent of ownership of any person or entity owning an interest in the property located at 608 S. Fairfax Street _____ (address), unless the entity is a corporation or partnership, in which case identify each owner of more than three percent. The term ownership interest shall include any legal or equitable interest held at the time of the application in the real property which is the subject of the application.

| Name | Address | Percent of Ownership |
|-------------------|------------|----------------------|
| 1. Ramesh Ponnuru | [REDACTED] | 100 |
| 2. | | |
| 3. | | |

3. Business or Financial Relationships. Each person or entity listed above (1 and 2), with an ownership interest in the applicant or in the subject property is required to disclose any business or financial relationship, as defined by Section 11-350 of the Zoning Ordinance, existing at the time of this application, or within the 12-month period prior to the submission of this application with any member of the Alexandria City Council, Planning Commission, Board of Zoning Appeals or either Boards of Architectural Review.

| Name of person or entity | Relationship as defined by Section 11-350 of the Zoning Ordinance | Member of the Approving Body (i.e. City Council, Planning Commission, etc.) |
|--------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. | | |
| 2. | | |
| 3. | | |

NOTE: Business or financial relationships of the type described in Sec. 11-350 that arise after the filing of this application and before each public hearing must be disclosed prior to the public hearings.

As the applicant or the applicant's authorized agent, I hereby attest to the best of my ability that the information provided above is true and correct.

3.9.26

Date

Ramesh Ponnuru

Printed Name



Signature



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