

\*\*\*\*\***DRAFT MINUTES**\*\*\*\*\*

Alexandria Board of Architectural Review  
Old & Historic Alexandria District

**Wednesday, February 19, 2014**  
7:30pm, City Council Chambers, City Hall  
301 King Street, Alexandria, Virginia 22314

Members Present: Tom Hulfish, Chairman  
Oscar Fitzgerald, Vice-Chairman  
Peter Smeallie  
Chip Carlin  
Wayne Neale  
Christine Roberts  
John von Senden

Staff Present: Planning & Zoning  
Al Cox, FAIA, Historic Preservation Manager  
Mary Catherine Collins, Historic Preservation Planner

The meeting was called to order at 7:37 p.m. by Chairman Hulfish.

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**I. MINUTES**

Consideration of the minutes from the January 22, 2013 public hearing.

**BOARD ACTION: Approved as submitted, 7-0.**

On a motion by Dr. Fitzgerald, seconded by Mr. von Senden, the minutes were approved, as submitted, 7-0.

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**II. CONSENT CALENDAR**

No items were listed on the consent calendar.

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**III. NEW BUSINESS**

**1. CASE BAR2014-0016**

Request to partially demolish & capsule at **113 Princess Street**

APPLICANT: Karl & Lydia Svoboda by Christine A. Kelly

**BOARD ACTION: Portions approved and portions deferred, by roll call vote, 6-1.**

Discussion of this item was combined with item #2, below.

**2. CASE BAR2014-0017**

Request for an addition & alterations at **113 Princess Street**

APPLICANT: Karl & Lydia Svoboda by Christine A. Kelly

**BOARD ACTION: Portions approved and portions deferred, by roll call vote, 6-1.**

## **CONDITIONS**

### **SPEAKERS**

Ms. Kelly, the architect for the project, spoke in support of the project and mentioned that there were issues with tying the roof and flashing into the adjoining properties that prevented the construction of a true, fourth floor addition.

Mr. Svoboda, the applicant, spoke in support of the project.

### **BOARD DISCUSSION**

Mr. Fitzgerald asked for clarification on what prevented a design that tied into the adjoining properties roofline and noted that regardless, the rear elevator would have to tie into the adjoining properties. Ms. Kelly responded that it was architecturally feasible to create a true fourth floor addition on the front, but that it would require cooperation of the neighbors.

Mr. Smeallie stated that did not like the front dormer design because it is top-heavy and would change the roofline of the block. He asked for a restudy of the fourth floor option or a less heavy type of dormer design, but that he had no issue with the proposed alterations to the rear.

Chairman Hulfish noted that they received two letters from neighbors in favor of the project and three letters from neighbors in opposition.

Mr. Neale indicated that he was in favor of the dormer design, but noted that the elevation and section drawings were not consistent. He said that the dormer should be a receding element and look like it does in the elevation drawings, not as it appears in section.

Mr. von Senden noted that the drawings were not coordinated. He favored staff's recommendation, but said he would prefer a unique design for a dormer rather than a copy of one used nearby, if that alternative were approved for the front.

Mr. Carlin said that too many properties in the neighborhood are top-heavy with large dormers, but this particular block is pristine and that he favored a true fourth floor addition.

On a motion by Mr. Carlin, seconded by Mr. Smeallie, the Board approved the demolition/capsulation and addition on the rear and deferred approval of the front alterations by a roll call vote, 6-1 (Mr. Neale voted in opposition).

### **REASON**

The Board agreed with the staff recommendation for approval of portions and deferral of portions, finding the rear addition to be appropriate and consistent with the Design Guidelines, but asked for a restudy of masonry front façade in lieu of a large dormer in this particular location.

3. **CASE BAR2014-00018**

Request to partially demolish & capsule at **711 Prince Street**

APPLICANT: David E., Jr. & Mary Davis Holt by Stephanie Dimond, Dimond Adams Architecture

**BOARD ACTION: Deferred by a role call vote (6-1)**

Discussion for this item was combined with item #4, below.

4. **CASE BAR2014-00019**

Request for an addition & alterations at **711 Prince Street**

APPLICANT: David E., Jr. & Mary Davis Holt by Stephanie Dimond, Dimond Adams Architecture

**BOARD ACTION: Deferred by a role call vote (6-1)**

**SPEAKERS**

Stephanie Dimond, the designer of the project, representing the applicant, spoke in support of the project. She explained the rationale for the design, explaining that the proposed location for the elevator was the only location that would preserve the historic integrity of the front rooms. She also submitted an alternate design for the rear addition using a two-story shed roof form.

Morgan Delaney, representing the Historic Alexandria Foundation (HAF), clarified the role of HAF as an easement holder and that HAF does not have the ability to prevent the addition under the terms of the easement. However, he noted that HAF is opposed to the project. He also stated that Virginia Department of Historic Resources (DHR), who also holds an easement on the subject property, did not discuss the project or their recommendation with HAF, as is indicated in the approval letter from DHR. Mr. Delaney further noted that the property owners have already demolished portions of the interior without contacting DHR to facilitate moving forward with a large addition. Mr. Delaney, on behalf of HAF agreed with staff's recommendation for deferral because the proposed demolition/capsulation and addition are not in keeping with the intent of the family that first offered an easement on the property.

Bert Ely, a member of the Old Town Civic Association, spoke on his own behalf. His office is located at 108 S. Columbus and he lives at S. Pitt and Prince, therefore he passes this property daily and views the property from both Prince and S. Columbus Street. He noted that the proposed addition is very significant and very visible from both S. Columbus Street and, possibly, the alley running west from S Washington Street. He felt that each little change to the buildings of Old Town creates a cumulative effect over time that degrades the historic character of Old Town. He supported staff's recommendation and asked that the structure be honored for what is and that the owners should be a steward of their property.

Charles Trozzo, resident at 209 Duke Street, and member of the Historical Restoration and Preservation Commission for Alexandria (HRPC), provided background on the letter

that HRPC provided to the Board. He reiterated that HRPC supports staff's recommendation and that all six criteria for demolition/capsulation are met, which the Board should consider, regardless of what zoning permits.

Yvonne Callahan, president of Old Town Civic Association, said that OTCA unanimously supported staff's recommendation for deferral. She commented on Latrobe's possible connection to the property and recommended further research through the archives at St. Paul's Church. She echoed the previous statements made that this is a significant capsulation and that the addition is unnecessarily large and highly visible.

Poul Hertel spoke in support of denial of the project. He agreed with staff's conclusion that the addition would block the view of the historic ell, detract from the building, and does not relate the building.

### **BOARD DISCUSSION**

Mr. von Senden stated that criteria 1, 3, and 5 for a Permit to Demolish, as listed in the zoning ordinance, are met. He said that it is not inappropriate to add an elevator to the property and its location is suitable, but the massing is too large. He supported staff's recommendation for deferral.

Mr. Fitzgerald did not support demolition of walls, but acknowledged the applicant's need for an elevator. He suggested an easement of the walls to be capsulated and supported deferral of the project for restudy to minimize the impact on the historic structure, scale down the mass of the addition, and eliminate the gable roof. He reminded the applicant to differentiate the addition from the historic walls through material or color.

Ms. Roberts supported Mr. Fitzgerald's comments, including the differentiation of material necessary for the proposed addition. She liked the gable roof form of the proposed addition, but thought that it should be pushed back flush with the historic ell, so as not to completely obscure the view of the back of the house from S. Columbus Street.

Mr. Smeallie was persuaded by the history and public testimony that he could not support demolition or capsulate at this point. He stated that this property is a crown jewel of Alexandria's historic districts and that he did not feel any change was appropriate and that he would look hard at any changes proposed.

Mr. Carlin agreed with Mr. Smeallie and Mr. von Senden. He said allowable FAR was not relevant in this case. He would support the elevator in its proposed location but reminded the applicant that this house has historical, cultural, and architectural significance because the contrast of the high-style front with the informal rear ell shows the evolution of the building and the story of Alexandria merchants.

Mr. Neale noted that the rear elevations of historic buildings are disordered and show change over time, but there should be a balance of preservation and modern living. He stated that the proposal is appropriate and will make the house livable. He preferred the

gable addition to the shed roofed alternate suggested by the applicant. He, therefore, favored the application as submitted and made a motion for approval. The motion failed for lack of a second.

Mr. Fitzgerald offered an alternate motion for deferral that was seconded by Mr. von Senden and approved by a vote of 6-1, with Mr. Neale in opposition.

**REASON**

The Board agreed with the staff recommendation for deferral, requesting restudy of a smaller addition that met the recommendations of the Design Guidelines.

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**IV. OTHER BUSINESS**

Staff informed the members of the Board that an appeal of the Board's decision for 207 Prince Street would be heard at City Council on February 22, 2014. Oscar Fitzgerald was nominated as the representative from the OHAD Board.

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**V. ADJOURNMENT**

Chairman Hulfish adjourned the meeting at approximately 8:38 pm.

Minutes submitted by,

Mary Catherine Collins, Preservation Planner  
Board of Architectural Review