

Docket Item #11
BAR CASE # 2017-00287

BAR Meeting
September 6, 2017

ISSUE: After-the-fact Alterations

APPLICANT: Amy and Paul Reed

LOCATION: 402 South Pitt Street

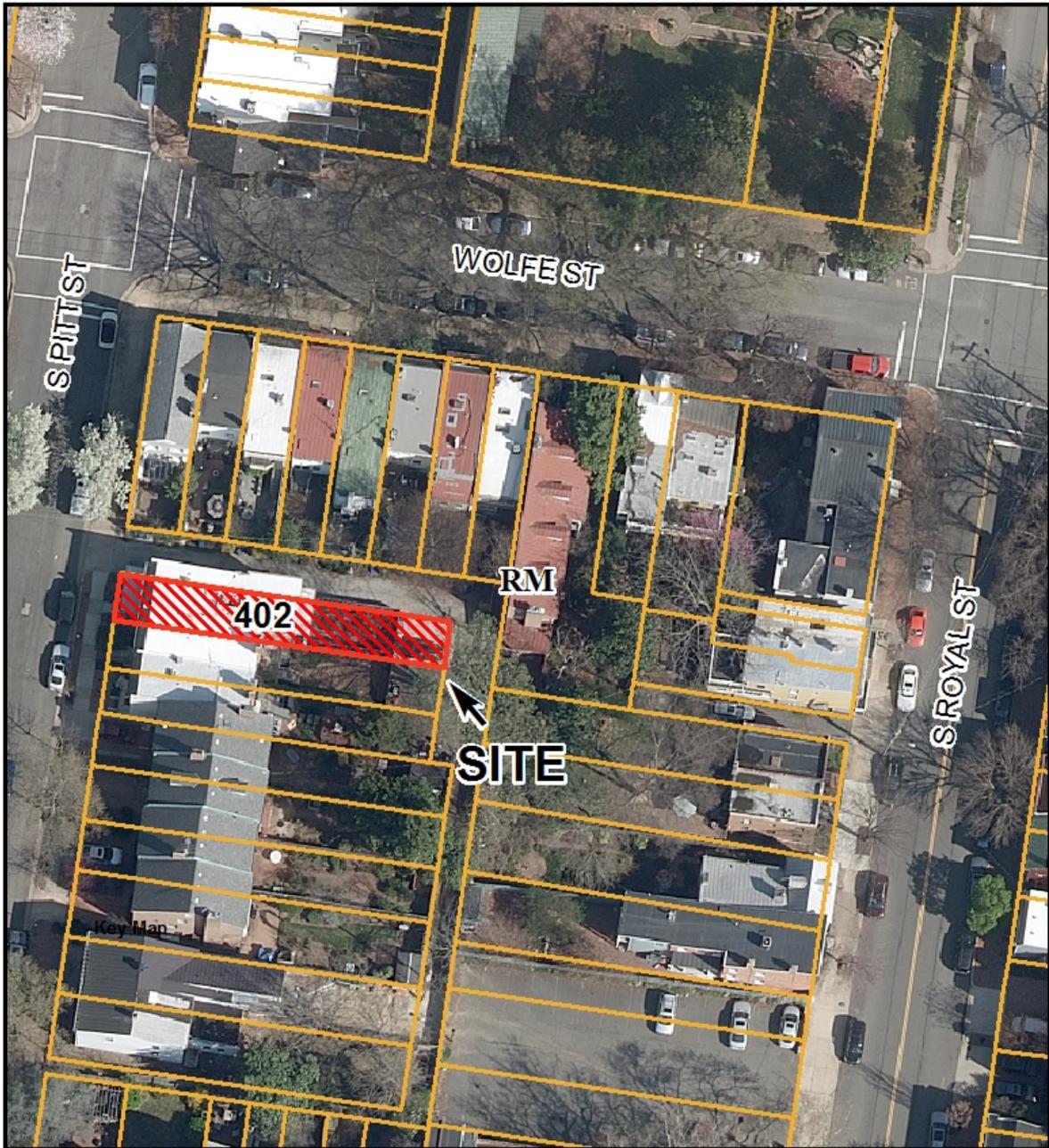
ZONE: RB / Residential

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends denial of the request for after-the-fact approval of the painting of unpainted masonry.

GENERAL NOTES TO THE APPLICANT

1. **ISSUANCE OF CERTIFICATES OF APPROPRIATENESS AND PERMITS TO DEMOLISH:** Applicants must obtain a stamped copy of the Certificate of Appropriateness or Permit to Demolish PRIOR to applying for a building permit. Contact BAR Staff, Room 2100, City Hall, 703-746-3833, or preservation@alexandriava.gov for further information.
2. **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.
3. **COMPLIANCE WITH BAR POLICIES:** All materials must comply with the BAR's adopted policies unless otherwise specifically approved.
4. **BUILDING PERMITS:** 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 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.
5. **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.
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.



BAR #2017-00287
402 South Pitt Street



I. ISSUE

The applicant requests after-the-fact approval for the painting of unpainted masonry on the front (west) elevation at 402 South Pitt Street. The historic façade is comprised of a signature, surface textured yellow brick. The side (north) elevation is made of common brick and was previously painted and is therefore not part of the request.

II. HISTORY

The two-story, two-bay brick townhouse with a one-story front porch located at 402 South Pitt Street was constructed as one of three townhouses by 1931, according to Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps from that year. The townhouses were likely constructed in the **1920s** as this type of two-story solidly-constructed brick townhouse with a front porch is often referred to as a Wardman-style rowhouse. Harry Wardman, a real estate developer during the early 20th century, constructed a large number of this style rowhouse throughout Washington, D.C., with a few found in Alexandria. While all three originally had one-story front porches, the two adjacent townhouses no longer have front porches and were painted at some point in the past in an effort to make them look more “colonial.” Each townhouse was constructed with a two-story rear porch. The two-story rear porches have all been enclosed or demolished in this row.

In 1964 the Board approved a fence at 402-404-406 South Pitt Street. In June 2012, the Board approved a Permit to Demolish for partial demolition and capsulation and a Certificate of Appropriateness for an addition and alterations, including the reopening of an enclosed front porch (BAR Case #2012-0156 & -1157).

In November 2012, the BAR denied the painting of the façade, finding it historically inappropriate and inconsistent with the adopted *Design Guidelines* and policies, by a vote of 6-1 (BAR Case #2012-0317).

The alleys to the side and rear are private.

III. ANALYSIS

The painting of unpainted masonry on the front elevation of this yellow brick townhouse was brought to BAR staff’s attention from a citizen complaint while the work was underway in July. A Zoning Inspector immediately went to the site and informed the contractor and owner of the violation and issued a Stop Work Order. At that time, the owner indicated that no further work would continue and a small portion was left unpainted (See Figure 1). The owner soon applied to the BAR for after-the-fact approval of the painting of unpainted masonry. However, since that time it appears that the owner allowed the work to be completed despite being informed of the zoning ordinance violation and agreeing to stop work, thus preventing the BAR from seeing a portion of the unpainted brick for themselves. It is extremely unfortunate when property owners willfully disregard the BAR’s standards, policies and *Design Guidelines*. While some may argue that a change to just one historic building is of little consequence, the cumulative effect of a number of seemingly small but inappropriate alterations to buildings ultimately threatens the overall integrity of the country’s third historic district.

As a reminder to the BAR, an annual letter is sent to all property owners within both regulated historic districts advising them of the BAR's regulatory role including notification that the BAR reviews all exterior alterations (Attachment 3). This is done as part of the City's outreach and also because Virginia law does not require real estate agents to disclose that a property is located in a locally-regulated historic district. While the property owners had purchased this property in April 2017, according to City Real Estate records it appears that the property owners until recently owned another property (unpainted red brick) in the Old and Historic Alexandria District for the past seven years.



Figure 1. 402 South Pitt appearance at issuance of a notice of violation. Note unpainted portion at corner.

The BAR is very concerned about the painting of previously unpainted masonry. The zoning ordinance specifically prohibits painting previously unpainted masonry surfaces without BAR approval. Section 10-109(B)(4) of the zoning ordinance states: "The painting of a masonry building which was unpainted prior to such painting shall be considered to be the removal of an exterior feature having historic and/or architectural significance requiring a certificate of appropriateness." The *Design Guidelines* further state that "painting a previously unpainted masonry surface, no matter what color, requires review and approval of a certificate of appropriateness by the Boards. Additionally the Boards strongly discourage the painting of a previously unpainted masonry surface." Due to the abundance of previously painted masonry structures in Old Town, and the fact that most brick masonry buildings were not originally painted, the Boards do not normally support such requests. Historically, most property owners avoided painting brick because the use of brick was a clear sign that the building was higher quality and built of a more expensive material than frame construction with wood siding. Furthermore, once a building has been painted, depending on the type of paint used and the

characteristics of the brick, it is not easily reversible and can be very challenging to successfully remove paint in the future. Such a change effectively “demolishes” the character of the existing unpainted brick. Additionally, nationally-accepted preservation thought from the National Park Service also strongly discourages the painting or coating to historically unpainted or uncoated masonry buildings to create a new appearance.¹

In this particular case, the subject property is one of three townhouses constructed at the same time and in the same style, with only subtle differentiation between them. The subject townhouse has retained the most historic integrity, as it is the only one with its front porch intact (enclosed in the past and then restored in 2012) and, until recently, clearly expressing the unique early 20th-century brick. Until this summer, the subject property was the only one that remained unpainted on the front elevation (the side elevation, with a common brick, had previously been painted). The brick on the front elevation is a highly-textured yellow brick, often used as a decorative element on early twentieth-century buildings but here used for the entire façade and porch piers. As red brick is most common in Alexandria, this is a type of brick not commonly found throughout the historic districts, adding to its significance. It is a hard-fired with a highly textured surface. The surface texture and the yellow color of the brick place this townhouse in a specific architectural period and results in a character-defining expression for the façade.



Figure 2. Streetscape view of the three rowhouses with 402 South Pitt on the left side and unpainted.

¹ See page 31 and page 80 of *The Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties with Guidelines for Preserving, Rehabilitating, Restoring and Reconstructing Historic Buildings* (from www.nps.gov).

The BAR has consistently denied requests to paint unpainted masonry for the reasons stated above. The only recent exceptions have been when the BAR has allowed for later brick buildings, such as those dating from the 1960s and later, to have a vapor permeable limewash applied which allows for the red brick underneath to remain somewhat visible and which weathers away over time. The BAR has only found this acceptable on buildings constructed within the past fifty years and with unremarkable red brick. The application of limewash does not have the same character-altering effect as more traditional opaque paint. In the case of this particular house, at the time the district was created in 1946 it would have been only twenty years old and not the type of building that the district intended to preserve at that time (18th and 19th-century buildings). However, as our understanding of the evolution of Old Town has grown and preservation thought has expanded, many early to mid-20th-century buildings have acquired significance in their own right as historic resources that contribute to the overall character of the district. Staff finds that this particular townhouse, now 90 years old and with a high level of integrity, is an example of a significant and widely recognized historic residential building type from the early 20th century. Although many contemporary townhouses were painted in the middle of the early 20th century when there was little historic value associated with those buildings at the time, today we understand this townhouse to be a historic building today.

Staff notes that paint has been successfully removed from a number of painted brick buildings over the past few years, including the Burke & Herbert Bank building at 117 North Fairfax Street, Duvall's Tavern at 305 Cameron Street, and the Victorian townhouse at 230 N Royal.

As a reminder, the BAR's determination for a Certificate of Appropriateness must consider the *Standards* listed in Section 10-105 of the zoning ordinance. For reference, staff has included the *Standards* with a brief discussion with respect to this case. It should be noted that the BAR must "consider" the elements and features identified below but that there is not a "yes" or "no" response, as the BAR typically finds with the criteria for a Permit to Demolish.

(a) Overall architectural design, form, style and structure, including, but not limited to, the height, mass and scale of buildings or structures;

The original architectural design of the building featured a signature textured yellow brick used on the façade and porch piers. The painting of the façade significantly alters the original design intent.

(b) Architectural details including, but not limited to, original materials and methods of construction, the pattern, design and style of fenestration, ornamentation, lighting, signage and like decorative or functional fixtures of buildings or structures; the degree to which the distinguishing original qualities or character of a building, structure or site (including historic materials) are retained;

The textured yellow brick is the original construction material and is characteristic of an early 20th-century building. For this simple rowhouse, the use of a specific and unusual brick contributes very much to the rowhouse's architectural and historic integrity. Removing the paint will allow the original materials to retain prominence.

(c) Design and arrangement of buildings and structures on the site; and the impact upon the historic setting, streetscape or environs;

Inappropriate alterations have a negative impact not only on the subject property but also the adjacent area and the overall historic district.

(d) Texture, material and color, and the extent to which any new architectural features are historically appropriate to the existing structure and adjacent existing structures;

The material of the brick with its uncommon yellow color and rough texture is a signature element of this 1920s rowhouse. This building is one of very few that was not painted in the middle of the 20th-century, raising its significance.

(e) The relation of the features in sections 10-105(A)(2)(a) through (d) to similar features of the preexisting building or structure, if any, and to buildings and structures in the immediate surroundings;

As stated above, this rowhouse was one of only a few in the historic district that was not painted in the middle of the 20th-century. The building has acquired significance in its own right as a 90 year old building representing the evolution of Alexandria over time.

(f) The extent to which the building or structure would be harmonious with or incongruous to the old and historic aspect of the George Washington Memorial Parkway;

Not applicable.

(g) The extent to which the building or structure will preserve or protect historic places and areas of historic interest in the city;

The overall townhouse form of the present building will continue to exist. However, as a painted building it will not accurately or appropriately tell its history.

(h) The extent to which the building or structure will preserve the memorial character of the George Washington Memorial Parkway;

Not applicable.

(i) The extent to which the building or structure will promote the general welfare of the city and all citizens by the preservation and protection of historic interest in the city and the memorial character of the George Washington Memorial Parkway; and

Allowing inappropriate alterations done without BAR approval to remain does a disservice to the general welfare of the city and threatens to erode tourist interest and

property values in Alexandria's signature neighborhood. Property owners are stewards of the historic buildings which they occupy. It is not fair for one group to follow the rules established by the community for everyone's benefit while others ignore them. The concept of being a steward of the historic resources helps to protect and preserve the built environment for the future.

(j) The extent to which such preservation and protection will 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 in which to live.

The historic district is multi-faceted and attracts a range of people for different reasons. While the subject building itself may not attract visitors, it contributes to the overall character of the historic district. Alexandria prides itself on being an authentic place and preventing inappropriate alterations without approval is at the heart of maintaining its authenticity.

Board Options

The BAR has the following options:

1. Deny the request for after-the-fact approval of the painting of unpainted masonry and require that the paint be carefully removed.
2. Approve the request for painting of unpainted masonry as submitted.

Based on the BAR's directives in the zoning ordinance and the adopted *Design Guidelines*, there is little reason to approve the painting of historically unpainted masonry. For an applicant following the proper procedures, the BAR would review the request and make a decision, typically for denial. The BAR previously denied a similar request at this very property in 2012. Where there have been instances of painting of unpainted masonry without BAR approval over the past 20 years, the BAR has required that the inappropriate paint be removed. There have been notable improvements in the past decade for removing paint from historic brick buildings. As noted above, it has been successfully done at other properties. Further, staff has informally consulted with a respected local masonry contractor who has experience with successful paint removal and they advised that it would be feasible to remove the paint entirely from this façade without damaging the brick.

Alternatively, the BAR may approve the existing painting as submitted. In order to avoid setting a precedent that conflicts with the zoning ordinance, national preservation theory and the BAR's adopted *Design Guidelines*, staff recommends that the BAR make a clear finding as to why the painting of historically unpainted masonry is uniquely appropriate in this particular instance.

Staff Recommendation

Staff recommends denial of after-the-fact approval of the painting of unpainted masonry. Staff further conditions the recommendation on the applicant's removal of the recently applied paint within three months with a paint removal process and application that follows paint removal guidance from the National Park Service. BAR staff will evaluate and approve the paint removal process and a test patch prior to the applicant's commencing the entire paint removal of the front elevation.

STAFF

Catherine K. Miliaras, Principal 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

Zoning

C-1 Proposed scope of work complies with zoning.

Code Administration

No comment.

Transportation and Environmental Services

- R1. Applicant shall be responsible for repairs to the adjacent city right-of-way if damaged during construction activity. (T&ES)
- F1. 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)
- F2. If the alley located at the side of the parcel is to be used at any point of the construction process the following will be required:
For a Public Alley - The applicant shall contact T&ES, Construction Permitting & Inspections at (703) 746-4035 to discuss any permits and accommodation requirements that will be required.
For a Private Alley - The applicant must provide proof, in the form of an affidavit at a minimum, from owner of the alley granting permission of use. (T&ES)
- C1. 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)
- C2. 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)

- C3. Any work within the right-of-way requires a separate permit from T&ES. (Sec. 5-2) (T&ES)
- C4. All improvements to the city right-of-way such as curbing, sidewalk, driveway aprons, etc. must be city standard design. (Sec. 5-2-1) (T&ES)

V. ATTACHMENTS

- 1 – Application for BAR 2017-0287: 402 South Pitt Street*
- 2 – Supplemental Materials*
- 3 – Annual Letter to Property Owners in the Historic Districts*

ADDRESS OF PROJECT: 402 S. Pitt St. Alexandria VA 22314

TAX MAP AND PARCEL: Lot 535 Sec 2 Federal Hill ZONING: RM
Map 074, 04-08-46

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: Amy & Paul Reed

Address: 402 S. Pitt St.

City: Alexandria State: VA Zip: 22314

Phone: 312-451-6353 E-mail: amyusubayd@gmail.com

Authorized Agent (if applicable): Attorney Architect _____

Name: _____ Phone: _____

E-mail: _____

Legal Property Owner:

Name: Same as applicant

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____ E-mail: _____

- Yes No Is there an historic preservation easement on this property?
- Yes No If yes, has the easement holder agreed to the proposed alterations?
- Yes No Is there a homeowner's association for this property?
- Yes No If yes, has the homeowner's association approved the proposed alterations?

If you answered yes to any of the above, please attach a copy of the letter approving the project.

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).

Paint front exterior brick that was previously unpainted. to match painted brick on the side of the house. This painting of the front brick would also be consistent with houses that abut our house and with houses that our adjacent to our home on Wolfe St.

SUBMITTAL REQUIREMENTS:

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.

Electronic copies of submission materials should be submitted whenever possible.

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.

Additions & New Construction: Drawings must be to scale and should not exceed 11" x 17" unless approved by staff. All plans must be folded and collated into 3 complete 8 1/2" x 11" sets. Additional copies may be requested by staff for large-scale development projects or projects fronting Washington Street. 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.

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

- I have submitted a filing fee with this application. (Checks should be made payable to the City of Alexandria. Please contact staff for assistance in determining the appropriate fee.)
- 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 3 sets of 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: Amy B Reed
Printed Name: Amy Reed
Date: 8/7/17

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 ten 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.	N/A		
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 _____ (address), unless the entity is a corporation or partnership, in which case identify each owner of more than ten 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.	Paul Reed		
2.	Amy Reed	402 S. RH ST.	50%
3.	Paul Reed	402 S. RH ST.	50%

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.	N/A		
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.

8/7/17 _____ Amy Reed _____ Amy B Reed
Date Printed Name Signature



 **Message**





402



402

404



402

2 HOUR
PARKING
8AM-5PM
MON.-FRI.
EXCEPT HOLDERS OF
DISTRICT 1 PERMITS

404

404



424

426



424



DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND ZONING

301 King Street, Room 2100

Alexandriava.gov/preservation

P.O. Box 178
Alexandria, VA 22313

Phone (703) 746-4666
Fax (703) 838-6393

January 2016

IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR HISTORIC PROPERTY

Dear Residents and Property Owners:

You are receiving this letter because our records indicate that you own or reside in a structure that is located in one of Alexandria's two locally regulated historic districts in Old Town - the **Old and Historic Alexandria District (OHAD)** or the **Parker-Gray (P-G) District** - or is an individually designated **100 Year Old Building** located outside of a historic district. In each of these areas, there are special architectural protections for the exterior of buildings. Since 1946, the community and the City government have worked diligently to preserve the historic resources that create Alexandria's unique character. *There have been a number of recent changes which may impact your future projects and may make the review process significantly easier, particularly for the approval of signs.*

BOARD OF ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW APPROVALS

New construction, demolition and any exterior alterations visible from a public right-of-way (which includes public alleys and parks) must be approved by the Board of Architectural Review (BAR). The Boards approve alterations and new construction by issuing a **Certificate of Appropriateness**. The Boards must also approve any demolition or capsulation greater than 25 square feet, regardless of visibility, by issuing a **Permit to Demolish**. **While the Boards do not review paint color, painting of previously unpainted masonry requires a Certificate of Appropriateness.**

Over the past several years, the Boards have greatly simplified the process for many common minor alterations and repairs and delegated review of these items to BAR staff through an **Administrative Approval** process. The *Design Guidelines* and regulations are slightly different in each district but the following architectural features may generally be administratively approved if they comply with the guidelines:

- | | | |
|---------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|
| ▪ doors and windows | ▪ fences and gates | ▪ shutters |
| ▪ siding | ▪ signage and awnings | ▪ steps and railings |
| ▪ roofing | ▪ HVAC equipment | ▪ sheds |
| ▪ exterior vents | ▪ exterior lighting | ▪ decks and porches |

Please be aware that failure to obtain the required Certificate of Appropriateness, Permit to Demolish, Building Permit or BAR Administrative Approval prior to undertaking a project may subject both you and your contractor to separate monetary fines and other penalties, as specified in the Zoning Ordinance and the Uniform Statewide Building Code. In addition, you will be required to correct the violation.

BAR STAFF IS AVAILABLE TO HELP

Historic Preservation staff within the Department of Planning & Zoning is available to help you navigate the BAR process. We encourage you, your architect or your contractor to contact staff early in the planning process in order to provide sufficient time in your design and construction schedule for the necessary reviews. Please visit the City's website at www.alexandriava.gov/preservation for more detailed information, including the BAR *Design Guidelines*, the Parker-Gray Residential Reference Guide, applications and forms, and Board meeting schedules. Some applications may now be processed by staff via e-mail without your having to visit City Hall. Where a BAR public hearing is necessary, staff can explain the applications, supporting materials and public notice requirements. Should you have any additional questions about historically appropriate materials, or would like to schedule a pre-application meeting or site visit, please call the Historic Preservation staff at 703-746-3833.

BUILDING PERMITS

In many cases, a building permit is also required for work described above. For instance, in the historic districts, **building permits are required for replacement of over 100 square feet of roofing or siding and for the installation of any windows.** Owners and residents are cautioned to use only licensed contractors, as required by the Virginia Department of Professional and Occupational Regulation. If you have work performed by unlicensed contractors or without the benefit of permits and City approval, your ability to sell or refinance your home or to file insurance policy claims may be affected.

Information about whether a building permit is required and whether a contractor is licensed to work in the City of Alexandria may be obtained by calling the Department of Code Administration at 703-746-4200 or from the City's website at <http://alexandriava.gov/code>.

SHARE INFORMATION WITH NEIGHBORS

With your help, we can keep Alexandria's historic buildings and districts safe and beautiful for future generations. We hope that you will share this important information with your neighbors and contractors, thereby ensuring that everyone knows to obtain the proper approvals and permits before embarking on a project affecting the exterior.

We also encourage you to sign up for the City of Alexandria's free *eNews* service to receive updates from various agencies about topics of interest to you, including Historic Preservation, Building and Fire Code Administration, or Construction/Permitting. You can subscribe to *eNews* at the City's website <https://enews.alexandriava.gov>.

Sincerely,



Karl Moritz, Director
Department of Planning and Zoning



Gregg Fields, Director
Department of Code Administration

From: Melissa Dunn
Sent: Friday, September 01, 2017 10:51 AM
To: Kristen Walentisch
Subject: FW: BAR Case 2017-00287 -- 402 S. Pitt St.

From: Marsha Mercer [<mailto:marsha.mercer@gmail.com>]
Sent: Thursday, August 31, 2017 2:02 PM
To: Melissa Dunn <Melissa.Dunn@alexandriava.gov>
Cc: amymsuboyd@gmail.com
Subject: BAR Case 2017-00287 -- 402 S. Pitt St.

Hi Melissa Dunn,

I'm writing in support of the application by Amy and Paul Reed for a Certificate of Appropriateness for exterior painting at 402 S. Pitt St. I live right across the street at 409 S. Pitt.

Sixteen years ago when I moved in, the house at 402 was nowhere nearly as attractive as it is now. A large tree obscured almost the entire front of the house. I was sad when it was cut down because it had hidden an old enclosure on the front porch that lacked appeal. The enclosure, fortunately, was taken off when the house was remodeled a few years ago.

The original yellow brick in front wasn't as attractive as the new neutral paint, which fits in very well with the next two painted brick houses.

I hope the board agrees that the Reeds' request for a Certificate of Appropriateness at 402 S. Pitt is well justified.

Thank you,
Marsha Mercer

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Marsha Mercer
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