

*******DRAFT MINUTES*******

Board of Architectural Review
Wednesday, November 17, 2021
7:00 p.m., Virtual Public Hearing
Zoom Webinar

Members Present: Christine Roberts, Chair
James Spencer, Vice Chair
Purvi Irwin
Christine Sennott
John Sprinkle
Laurie Ossman
Robert Adams

Members Absent: None

Secretary: William Conkey, AIA, Historic Preservation Architect

Staff Present: Susan Hellman, Historic Preservation Planner

I. CALL TO ORDER

The Board of Architectural Review hearing was called to order at 7:00 p.m. All members were present at the meeting by video conference.

2. Resolution Finding Need to Conduct the Board of Architectural Review Electronically.

By unanimous consent, the Board of Architectural Review voted to approve the resolution. The motion carried on a vote of 7-0.

II. MINUTES

3. Consideration of minutes from the November 3, 2021 meeting.

BOARD ACTION: Deferred

By unanimous consent, the Board of Architectural Review deferred the November 3, 2021 minutes.

III. CONSENT CALENDAR

4. BAR #2021-00584 OHAD

Request for alterations at 727 South Alfred Street.

Applicants: Barney Ales and Marguerite DeVoll

BOARD ACTION: Approved, as Submitted

On a motion by Ms. Irwin and seconded by Ms. Sennott, the Board of Architectural Review voted to approve BAR #2021-00584, as submitted. The motion carried on a vote of 7-0.

5. BAR #2021-00561 OHAD

Request for alterations at 430 North Union Street.
Applicants: Vernon and Maria Kirby

BOARD ACTION: Approved, as Submitted

On a motion by Ms. Irwin and seconded by Ms. Sennott, the Board of Architectural Review voted to approve BAR #2021-00561, as submitted. The motion carried on a vote of 7-0.

IV. NEW BUSINESS

6. BAR #2021-00586 OHAD

Request for encapsulation at 513 South Lee Street.
Applicants: Harry Mahon and Twig Murray

7. BAR #2021-00592 OHAD

Request for addition and alterations at 513 South Lee Street.
Applicants: Harry Mahon and Twig Murray

BOARD ACTION: Approved, as Submitted

On a motion by Mr. Spencer and seconded by Ms. Ossman, the Board of Architectural Review voted to approve BAR #2021-00586 and BAR #2021-00592, as submitted. The motion carried on a vote of 7-0.

CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL

None.

REASON

The Board agreed with staff's recommendations.

SPEAKERS

Mr. Michael Sass, representing the applicants, was available to answer any questions.

DISCUSSION

There was no discussion.

8. BAR #2021-00593 PG

Request for after-the-fact alterations at 1012 Queen Street (Parcel ID: 064.03-05-50) and 1014 Queen Street.
Applicant: Historic Virginia Holdings

BOARD ACTION: Denied

On a motion by Mr. Spencer and seconded by Ms. Irwin, the Board of Architectural Review voted to deny BAR #2021-00593, advising the applicant to replace the siding. The motion carried on a vote of 5-2. Mr. Adams and Ms. Sennott opposed.

CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL

The application to approve the after-the-fact work was denied. The applicant was advised to replace the wood-grain siding with siding with a smooth finish.

REASON

The Board found that the property owners knew about BAR procedures and Guidelines as they stated on camera and that they should have had secured staff's approval before doing the work. The Board also had concerns about the false sense of historic fabric that the wood grain synthetic siding would reveal, appearing to be the original wood siding and therefore compromising the building's integrity.

SPEAKERS

Mr. Leonard Hacker and Mr. Alan Gordon, the property owners, were available to answer any questions.

Board members asked questions of the applicant prior to opening the public hearing.

Ms. Irwin asked if the siding on the rear of the property had been removed or encapsulated with the wood grain fiber cement siding. The applicant responded that the previous siding had been removed prior to the installation of the siding that is currently in place.

Ms. Ossman asked why the applicant chose to install fiber cement siding with a wood grain texture. The applicant responded that he mistakenly thought that the installation of siding on the rear of a property would not require approval.

Ms. Roberts asked Mr. Conkey to explain the process for administrative approval of the replacement of existing siding. Mr. Conkey summarized the administrative approval process.

Ms. Roberts asked Mr. Conkey if a building permit would be required to replace the siding. Mr. Conkey explained that a permit would be required to replace this amount of siding. Ms. Roberts asked Mr. Conkey if it would be impossible to replace the existing wood grain siding with siding with a smooth finish.

Ms. Sennott asked Mr. Conkey to clarify the scope of work contained in this application. Mr. Conkey responded that the submitted application is for the after the fact approval of the fiber cement siding with a wood grain finish on the rear of the structures. The replacement of siding on the sides and repair of siding on the front would be done through the administrative application process.

At this time, the hearing was opened for public comment.

Ms. Carol Black, who did not want to disclose her address but assured being a resident in Alexandria, spoke against staff's recommendation of approval of the after-the-fact work. She mentioned that the four properties owned by Historic Virginia Holdings (1010-1016 Queen Street) have been neglected for many years and that she believes that these homeowners should be fined. Ms. Black also stated that if she had not filed a complaint about the work being done without approval, they would have gotten away with not complying with the rules that every other property owner in the district is required to do.

Mr. Robert Meyers, resident at 3411 Alabama Avenue, stated that he owns the property at 222 North Patrick Street which is across from the alley behind these properties. Mr. Meyers stated that he had submitted his concerns in writing to the BAR and hoped everyone had the opportunity to

read them. He had questions about the BAR procedures since the property owners stated that they have never applied for the siding replacement on the rear elevations of 1012 and 1014 Queen Street, but staff had mentioned that an incomplete BAR Administrative Approval application had been submitted and, in his point of view, it was not clear what the Board was voting on. Mr. Meyers had questions about the Guidelines and the Parker-Gray Residential Reference Guide, which appear to have contradicting information. Mr. Conkey explained that in Parker-Gray synthetic siding is allowed on the side and rear elevations provided the inexistence of historic siding underneath the upper siding layer. This was the case for the side elevation, but he could not confirm that the rear elevations had the same condition as the side elevations, as the siding on the rear elevations had been already replaced when staff visited the site. Mr. Meyers asked the Board to defer the application.

Ms. Gail Rothrock, representing the Historic Alexandria Foundation, spoke against staff's recommendation to approve the after-the-fact work since the property owners had been given a lot of information and warnings and she believes that in this case a fine is appropriate.

Mr. Hacker and Mr. Gordon were given three minutes to address the public speakers' concerns. Mr. Gordon clarified that he had done the work by mistake and not how it had been perceived by the speakers. Mr. Gordon stated that they had been trying to improve these properties and have been working closely with Code Administration, Inspector Pugh, and Inspector Lawmaster who can verify his efforts. He stated that it was upsetting to hear personal vendettas in this venue. Mr. Hacker added that he had been treated unfairly since he had contributed tremendously to the Lyceum and historical societies, and to say that he was doing something purposely is inaccurate.

Ms. Roberts clarified that none of the public speakers attending the hearing were from the City, Lyceum, or Alexandria Archaeology, and that she was sure that they all were very appreciative for the amount of information and knowledge he have provided them.

DISCUSSION

Mr. Spencer stated that he passes by these properties every day when going to work and that he was glad to see that some improvement was being done but he was having a hard time in supporting the after-the-fact work approval. Ms. Roberts suggested that Mr. Spencer, as an architect, explain the reason why wood grain synthetic siding is not appropriate on historic buildings. Mr. Spencer clarified that even though, as stated in the staff report, the wood grain finish is not perceivable from a distance, the inaccurate impression of material is not appropriate as it can be perceived as original. He also said that the wood grain finish in synthetic siding is unrealistic and not aesthetically recommended, but it would not be noticeable to an average person who could mistake it for the real wood siding. Therefore, he understands that's the reason why smooth finish is required for synthetic siding, and he did not think that the after-the-fact wood grain siding, even on the rear, is appropriate on these early buildings because of the false sense of integrity it would portray.

Ms. Irwin asked the homeowners how long they have owned the properties and if they have ever done any work on them. Mr. Hacker answered that they have owned the properties since 1981 and that they have made improvements to them constantly. Ms. Irwin then asked if he has knowledge of the BAR process and requirements to do work on buildings inside the historic districts. Mr. Hacker confirmed that he has a copy of the 1980s Design Guidelines and, as he recalls, the document does not mention anything about work on the rear of buildings having to be approved,

only portions of the buildings visible from the street would require BAR approval. Ms. Irwin stated that she was not convinced that they were not aware of the requirements since they have owned and done work on these properties for that long. She also said that she agrees with Mr. Spencer that wood grain synthetic siding is not appropriate for these early buildings, and she thinks it needs to be replaced with smooth finish siding.

Mr. Adams said that he was sympathetic with everyone's comments but that the Board, throughout the years, has worked with applicants who have made mistakes and allowed them to remain. He also stated that, in this case, he believes that the owners have learned that they need to follow the rules and that he agrees with staff's judgement and recommendations. Mr. Adams made the first motion to approve the application with staff's recommendations; the motion failed.

Ms. Sennott said that she had a couple of issues with this case. First, that the owners apparently knew that there was a process, confusing, but a process in place to be followed and she does not understand why homeowners failed to comply. Then she stated that the Board had approved similar after-the-fact work and she did not understand why this case was different. Ms. Roberts suggested the case be deferred so the Board members could check the visibility of the wood grain synthetic siding at the site. Her suggestion was not accepted by the other Board members. Ms. Sennott asked if a motion to fine the applicant for the after-the-fact work was viable, and if the staff's recommendation to approve the smooth siding on the side elevation could be approved. Ms. Roberts clarified that the after-the-fact work on the rear elevations would need to be addressed and that the siding on the side could be approved administratively. Ms. Irwin asked for clarification on the application which appeared to her to be only for the after-the-fact work done on the rear and that staff will be approving any other work administratively which was confirmed by Mr. Conkey. Ms. Sennott made a motion to fine the property owners for not following the Guidelines. The motion failed.

Mr. Spencer made a motion to deny the after-the-fact work and require the owners to replace the wood grain siding with the appropriate smooth finish, Ms. Irwin seconded. The motion failed. Ms. Sennott wasn't sure why was a motion to deny the after-the-fact work since the Board had previously approved a similar case. Ms. Roberts clarified that the case Ms. Sennott was referring to was after-the-fact work done on a newer building which does not have the standards than older, historic buildings as these buildings before them now.

Ms. Sennott reinstated her motion to impose a fine for failing to comply with the Guidelines. The motion failed. Mr. Spencer clarified that requiring the homeowner to replace the inappropriate siding would be more effective than a fine, since the cost of the replacement is much more than a fine and a slap on the wrist.

Ms. Ossman stated that it was a difficult case for her since she did not understand what would be accomplished in this project by being punitive, particularly when the after-the-fact work was on a short elevation on the rear of the buildings that are not really visible from the public viewshed. Ms. Ossman said that she was trying to focus on the issue at hand, not the larger issue of setting a precedent. She agreed with staff recommendation so as not to waste the resources to have the rest of the work done properly. Ms. Roberts explained that the Board cannot take financial considerations into account. Ms. Ossman clarified that the word resources that she used was not referring to economic resources, but to resources used such staff time etc.

Ms. Sennott offered another motion to require the wood grain siding to be replaced only on the portion that is visible from the public alley, above the fence line. Mr. Sprinkle stated that he did not have an opinion on the case, but he believes that the siding is either visible or not and that the siding below the second story windowsill line is not an addition and not compatible with the reference guide requirements in his interpretation. He also said that in his opinion the application should be denied, and the applicants could appeal to City Council if they wished. The suggestion became a motion to deny the application for the after-the-fact work. The motion failed.

Ms. Irwin asked the applicants when they started the work on the rear, since it was brought up by Ms. Sennott that the applicants did not know about the requirements. Ms. Irwin's perspective was that the applicant had submitted an application on August 8 and staff had sent a copy of the Guidelines on August 10, according to the staff report. Mr. Gordon said that the work on the rear of the property at 1012 was done several years ago and he did not remember when the work on 1014 was done. Mr. Conkey reminded the Board that staff received a complaint about work being done on the properties on August 27. Ms. Roberts stated that not only did the owners not obtain the required BAR approval, they also failed to secure a permit for the work which cannot be excused since any contractor or homeowner knows a permit is required.

Mr. Spencer reinstated his motion to deny the after-the-fact work and require the wood grain siding to be replaced with the smooth finish siding as required by the Guidelines. Ms. Irwin seconded. The motion passed.

V. ADJOURNMENT

The Board of Architectural Review hearing was adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

VI. ADMINISTRATIVE APPROVALS

The following projects were administratively approved since the last BAR meeting:

BAR #2021-00549 OHAD

Request for roof replacement at 905 Prince Street.

Applicants: William and Jill Vantine

BAR #2021-00572 OHAD

Request for roof replacement at 308 North Royal Street.

Applicant: Cathy Vanderslice

BAR #2021-00573 OHAD

Request for roof replacement at 1119 Powhatan Street.

Applicant: Sayuri Inoue

BAR #2021-00577 OHAD

Request for new deck at 208 South Fayette Street.

Applicant: John Gosling

BAR #2021-00596 OHAD

Request for signage at 315 Cameron Street.
Applicant: Elizabeth Todd

BAR #2021-00597 PG
Request for repointing at 417 North Fayette Street.
Applicant: Tind Ryen

BAR #2021-00599 OHAD
Request for handrails at 607 Prince Street.
Applicant: 805 Partners

BAR #2021-00601 OHAD
Request for new gas lanterns at 224 North Fairfax Street.
Applicant: Pamela Chase

BAR #2021-00603 OHAD
Request for fence replacement at 1315 Prince Street.
Applicant: Karel Malinovsky

BAR #2021-00605 PG
Request for alterations at 510 North Columbus Street.
Applicants: Steve and Vallery Stylianoudis

BAR #2021-00608 OHAD
Request for alterations at 603 South Lee Street.
Applicant: Ellen McCallie

BAR #2021-00610 OHAD
Request for roof replacement at 207 North Royal Street.
Applicants: Douglas Birkey and Heather Penny

BAR #2021-00612 OHAD
Request for roof replacement at 919 Prince Street.
Applicant: Kelsey Gutierrez

BAR #2021-00617 OHAD
Request for roof replacement at 428 North Washington Street.
Applicant: Finn Construction

BAR #2021-00618 OHAD
Request for roof replacement at 717 South Royal Street.
Applicant: Blair Lapp

BAR #2021-00619 OHAD
Request for fencing replacement at 711 Princess Street.
Applicants: Neeta Helms and Johan Van Zyl

BAR #2021-00620 OHAD

Request for window replacement at 1307 Duke Street.
Applicant: Aaron Jones

BAR #2021-00623 OHAD
Request for siding replacement at 315 South Lee Street.
Applicant: John Neary