

City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: JANUARY 5, 2022

TO: CHAIR AND MEMBERS OF THE BOARD OF ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW

FROM: HISTORIC PRESERVATION STAFF

SUBJECT: STAFF RESPONSE TO HAF LETTER FOR 322 & 324 S. LEE ST.
BAR #2021-00654 & BAR #2021-00655

On January 4, 2022, historic preservation staff received a letter via email from the Historic Alexandria Foundation (HAF) regarding 322 & 324 S. Lee St (BAR2021-00654/00655). This memo is staff response to the concerns expressed in that letter.

- I. On page two, in the second paragraph, the author indicates that the “main block has intact and outstanding Italianate features which should have been described in the Staff Report to provide the BAR and the public an adequate appreciation of its importance.” The main block is not a part of the scope of work, so an extensive history of it is not necessary for the Board or the public to review the case. It is staff’s practice to keep all reports as concise and to the point as possible. The history section of the report includes the age of the structure, a current architectural description, and a summary of approved alterations over the years.
- II. In the section labeled *Incorrect Summary of Applicable Standards of Review*, HAF states that they believe staff incorrectly analyzed questions 1, 3, & 5 of the demolish criteria as set for in the Zoning Ordinance, §10-105(B). Staff stands by the provided analysis. The demolition/capsulation is limited to wall area of the ell and later 1999 rear addition. The applicant extensively details the amount of wall area that will be impacted by the proposal on sheets A2-3 & A2-4. Only the “capsulating” portions of questions #1 is relevant to the application and the proposed capsulation will not be a detriment of the public interest. In regard to question #2, while the building is an early building with outstanding features it isn’t unusual or uncommon in design, texture, or material, and can easily be reproduced. Staff indicated “no” for question #3 because demolition of the building is not proposed and there are other examples of this architectural style within the historic district.

Additionally, the letter references the analysis of a previously heard BAR case, 111 S. Alfred St. These analyses should not be compared because the scopes of work are not comparable. The case at 111 S. Alfred St. was for after-the-fact approval of complete siding replacement. This applicant isn’t proposing to replace the siding. They will only be repairing the areas affected by the demolition/capsulation. All repairs will be done in-kind.

- III. The following are responses to the questions in the section labeled *Unanswered Questions*.
1. The amount of demolition/capsulation is explained on sheets A2-3 and A2-4. 63 square feet of the existing south elevation will be removed for the new elements on that elevation. The later building is the two-story addition on the rear.
 2. Sheets A2-3 and A2-4 clearly show which materials/architectural features will be removed, replaced or capsulated. These items are windows, siding and chimneys.
 3. Replacement of the siding is not proposed in this application. All affected siding from the proposed alterations will be repaired in-kind.
 4. Not a part of the scope of work.
 5. The staff report states that the property is an early building with a later rear addition.
- IV. The following are responses to the questions in the section labeled *Additional Concerns*.
1. The ell is a part of the original structure and expanding the porch remains appropriate because only a minimum amount of siding will be impacted. The majority of the wall area under the expanded porch will remain visible.
 2. Staff can request additional information regarding the windows from the applicant. If the windows are original and salvageable, the windows should be repaired in-kind.
 3. A minimum amount of siding will be impacted by the reconfiguration of the windows.
 4. Sheets A2-3 and A2-4 indicate the amount of wall areas impacted by the project and the sections impacted by the reconfiguration.
 5. 2/2 windows are the appropriate window configuration for this Italianate property. 6/6 windows indicate the possibility that the windows were replaced previously. Staff has no record of any replacement. We can work with the applicant to salvage and reuse any historic windows.
 6. Siding replacement is not a part of this scope of work.
 7. The lanterns are appropriate and comply with the Administrative Approval policy.
 8. The new brick chimney is appropriate. The existing chimney is 3' above the roofline and the proposed will be 5' above the roofline. The chimney will be minimally visible. The color should match the existing chimney.