

**ISSUE:** Certificate of Appropriateness for alterations

**APPLICANT:** Leah and Ben Williams

**LOCATION:** Old and Historic Alexandria District  
212 South Saint Asaph Street

**ZONE:** RM/Residential Townhouse Zone

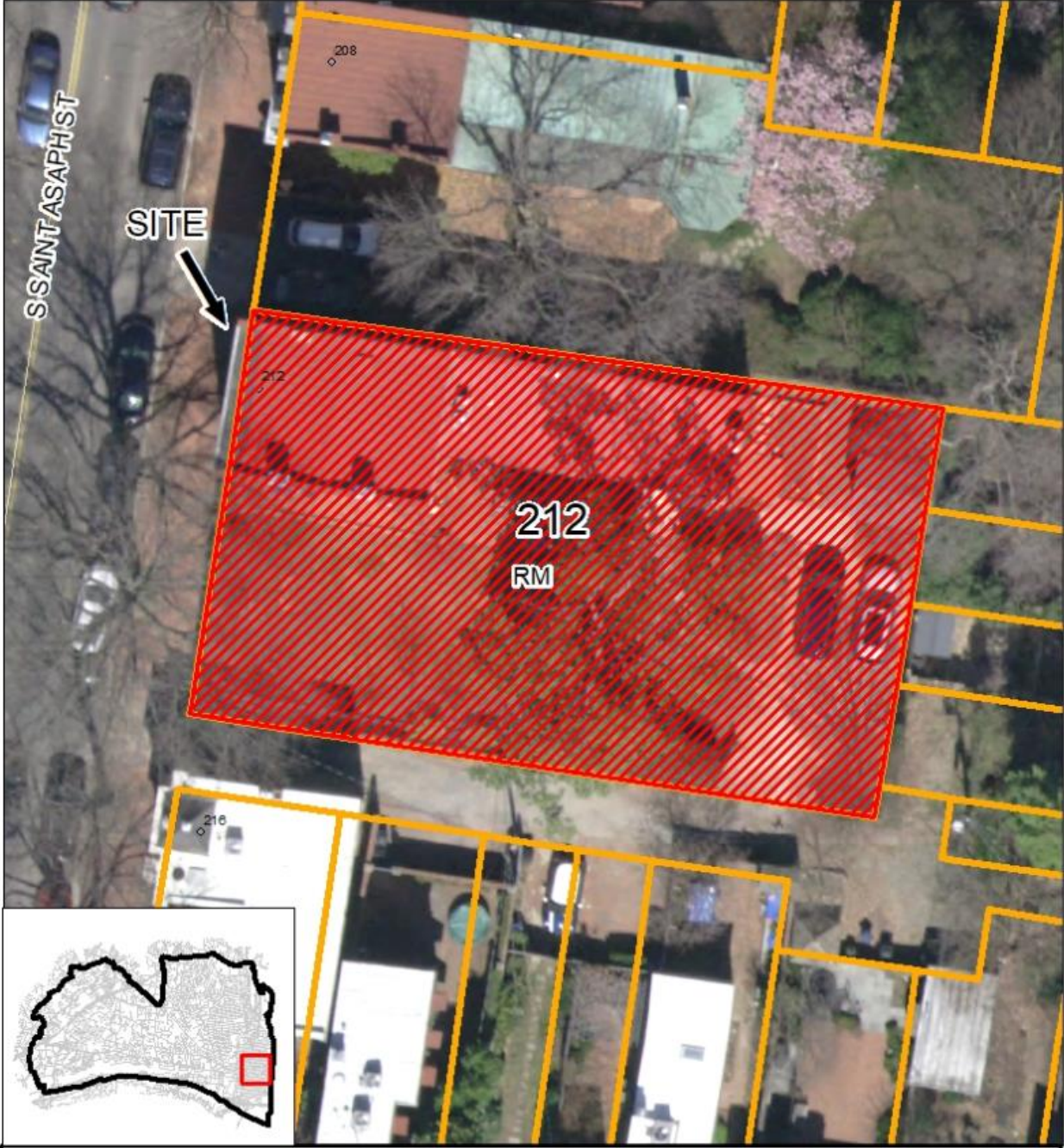
---


**STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

Staff recommends approval of the alterations to the existing property as submitted.


**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, Room 4200, City Hall, 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, Room 2100, City Hall, 703-746-3833, or [preservation@alexandriava.gov](mailto: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.



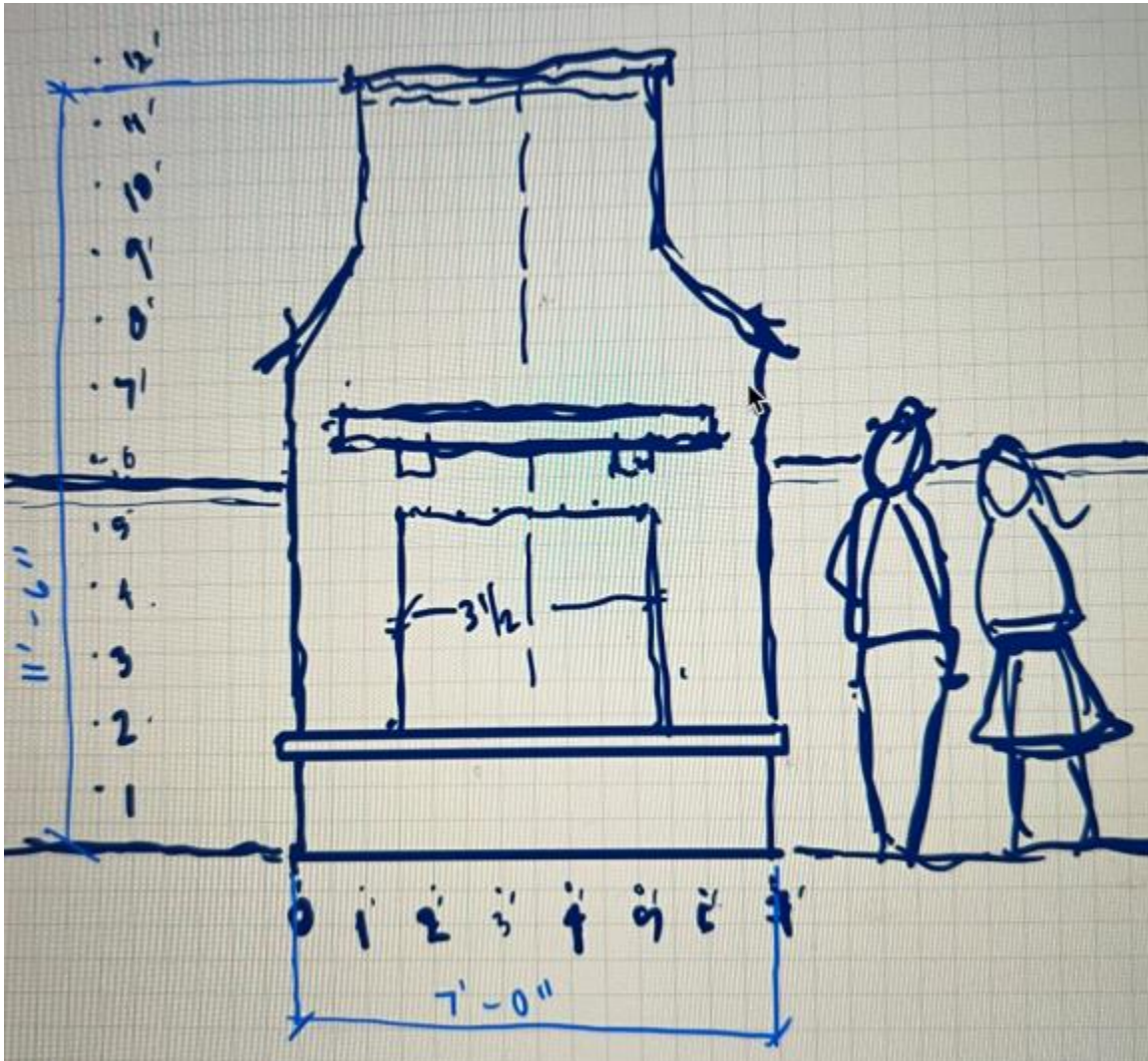
 **BAR #2022-00387**  
**212 South Saint Asaph Street**

0 10 20 40 Feet

N 

**I. APPLICANT'S PROPOSAL**

The applicant is requesting approval for the construction of a freestanding, natural stone clad outdoor fireplace in the yard adjacent to the house at 212 South Saint Asaph Street. The fireplace will be 11'-6" tall and 7'-0" wide at the base (Figure 1).



**Figure 1: Dimensioned elevation of proposed outdoor fireplace**

Site context

The property at 212 South Saint Asaph Street is on the east side of the street with the main entrance facing South Saint Asaph Street. The alley immediately to the south of the property is private. The property is a double lot, there is no 214 South Saint Asaph Street. The existing structure is built on the north end of the double lot with a large side yard on the south side of the structure. This side yard is enclosed by an existing brick wall ranging in height from 6'-2" to 6'-4" (Figure 2). As shown in the photos of the mock-up included in the application, approximately 9 square feet of the upper portion of the fireplace will be visible from the public right of way.



Figure 2: View of side yard from South Saint Asaph Street

## II. HISTORY

According to Ethelyn Cox’s *Historic Alexandria, Street by Street, A Survey of Existing Early Buildings*, the three story brick house on the lot was built by William H McKnight in April 1855. On November 4, 1856, McKnight conveyed the lot “improved by a three story brick dwelling house” to D. Boyd Smith for \$8,500. On the same day, Smith bought the southern 22 feet of the present lot.

A review of historic maps shows that the side yard has remained undeveloped since the original construction of the house.

Previous BAR Approvals

- BAR 2011- 00353 – Administrative Approval for replacement of existing roof
- BAR 2022-00040 – Administrative Approval to repair alley site wall

## III. ANALYSIS

The applicant is proposing to install a new stone clad outdoor fireplace towards the rear of the enclosed yard at the south side of the property (Figure 3). The fireplace will be freestanding with no connection to the historic structure. As shown in the submitted documents, the stone cladding will be a natural finish with a fire box opening and a stone mantel.

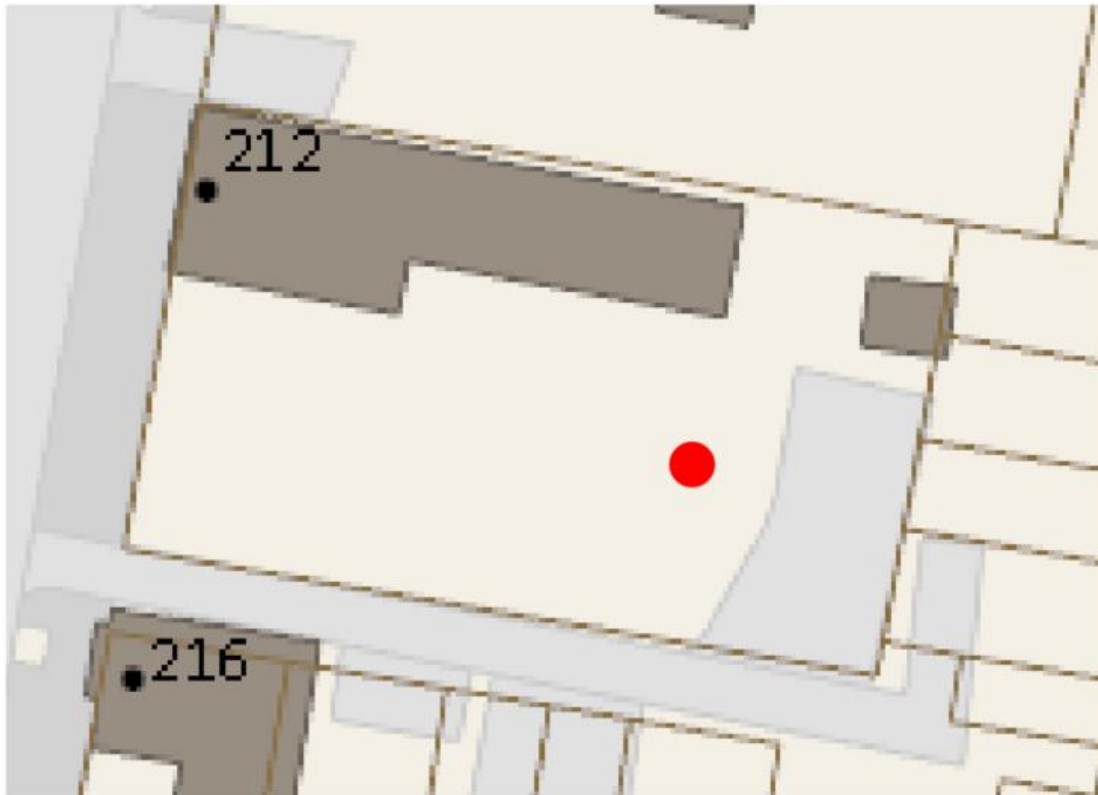


Figure 3: Diagram showing approximate location of proposed outdoor fireplace

The *Design Guidelines* do not specifically address the construction of outdoor fireplaces, but the chapter on accessory structures does provide some guidance on the design of these elements. They state that “Free-standing accessory structures should complement, not compete with, the architecture of the main building”. Regarding the materials used for the construction of accessory structures the *Guidelines* say that “Exterior finishes for accessory structures should be selected to complement the main building... Stone or brick accessory structures should generally not be painted.”

Given the depth of the side yard and the height of the existing brick wall, only the upper portion of the proposed fireplace will be visible from a public right of way. The portion that is visible will be clad in a natural stone finish that is clearly different than the historic structure while being entirely compatible with its surroundings. Staff finds that the siting and design for the proposed outdoor fireplace create an inviting outdoor environment for the applicants and is consistent with the Design Guidelines. Staff recommends that the Board approve the application as submitted.

**STAFF**

Bill Conkey, AIA, Historic Preservation Architect, Planning & Zoning

Tony LaColla, AICP, Land Use Services Division Chief, Planning & Zoning

### **III. CITY DEPARTMENT COMMENTS**

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

#### **Zoning**

- F-1 A plat was not provided to confirm exact location of the proposed chimney. The chimney is an accessory structure and must be located at least 5 feet from the south property line and at least 16 feet from the rear property line.
- F-2 The proposed appears to comply with zoning, however, plans that show the height and exact location on the lot are needed to confirm compliance.

#### **Code Administration**

No comments received.

#### **Transportation and Environmental Services** **CONDITIONS**

- 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)

#### **FINDINGS**

- 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)
- F-2 If the alley located at the rear 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)

#### **CODE REQUIREMENTS**

- 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 Roof, surface and sub-surface drains be connected to the public storm sewer system, if available, by continuous underground pipe. Where storm sewer is not available applicant must provide a design to mitigate impact of stormwater drainage onto adjacent properties and to the satisfaction of the Director of Transportation & Environmental Services. (Sec.5-6-224) (T&ES)
- C-4 All secondary utilities serving this site shall be placed underground. (Sec. 5-3-3) (T&ES)
- C-5 Any work within the right-of-way requires a separate permit from T&ES. (Sec. 5-2) (T&ES)
- C-6 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)

### **ALEXANDRIA ARCHAEOLOGY**

Archaeology has no comments

### **V. ATTACHMENTS**

*1 – Supplemental Materials*

*2 – Application for BAR 2022-00387 212 South Saint Asaph Street*

BAR Case # \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS OF PROJECT: 212 S St Asaph St

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

TAX MAP AND PARCEL: 074.02-15-15 ZONING: \_\_\_\_\_

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: Leah + Ben Williams

Address: 212 S St Asaph St

City: Alexandria State: VA Zip: 22314

Phone: 704 577 0290 E-mail: leahharperwilliams@gmail.com

Authorized Agent *(if applicable)*:  Attorney  Architect  \_\_\_\_\_

Name: Duncan Blair

Phone: 703 966-7556

E-mail: d.blair@landcarroll.com

Legal Property Owner:

Name: Benjamin F or Leah H Williams

Address: 212 S St Asaph St

City: Alexandria State: VA Zip: 22314

Phone: 704 577 0290 E-mail: leahharperwilliams@gmail.com

- 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
  - fence, gate or garden wall
  - HVAC equipment
  - shutters
  - doors
  - windows
  - siding
  - shed
  - lighting
  - pergola/trellis
  - painting unpainted masonry
  - other \_\_\_\_\_
- ADDITION**
- DEMOLITION/ENCAPSULATION**
- SIGNAGE**

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

Portion of chimney visible from a public right of way

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**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.

**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. 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.) *Told by BAR staff that I will*
- 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. *notified of fee spoke to Amiral*
- 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: *Leah Williams*

Printed Name: Leah Williams

Date: 8/8

LEAH & BEN WILLIAMS  
212 South St Asaph St  
Alexandria, VA 22314

## BAR Submission Documents

### 1. Scope of Work

The project includes a natural stone fireplace of which approximately 9SF will be visible above the brick wall. A photo of the type of fireplace is below.



### 2. Materials

The fireplace will be constructed using natural stone veneer. The fireplace will have stone on all sides. A close up of the stone is pictured below.



Fireplace Mock-up, to scale



VIEW FROM FRONT OF YARD



VIEW FROM SIDE, TOWARD ALLEY



VIEW FROM MIDDLE OF YARD



VIEW FROM REAR OF YARD  
INSIDE WALK

Street views



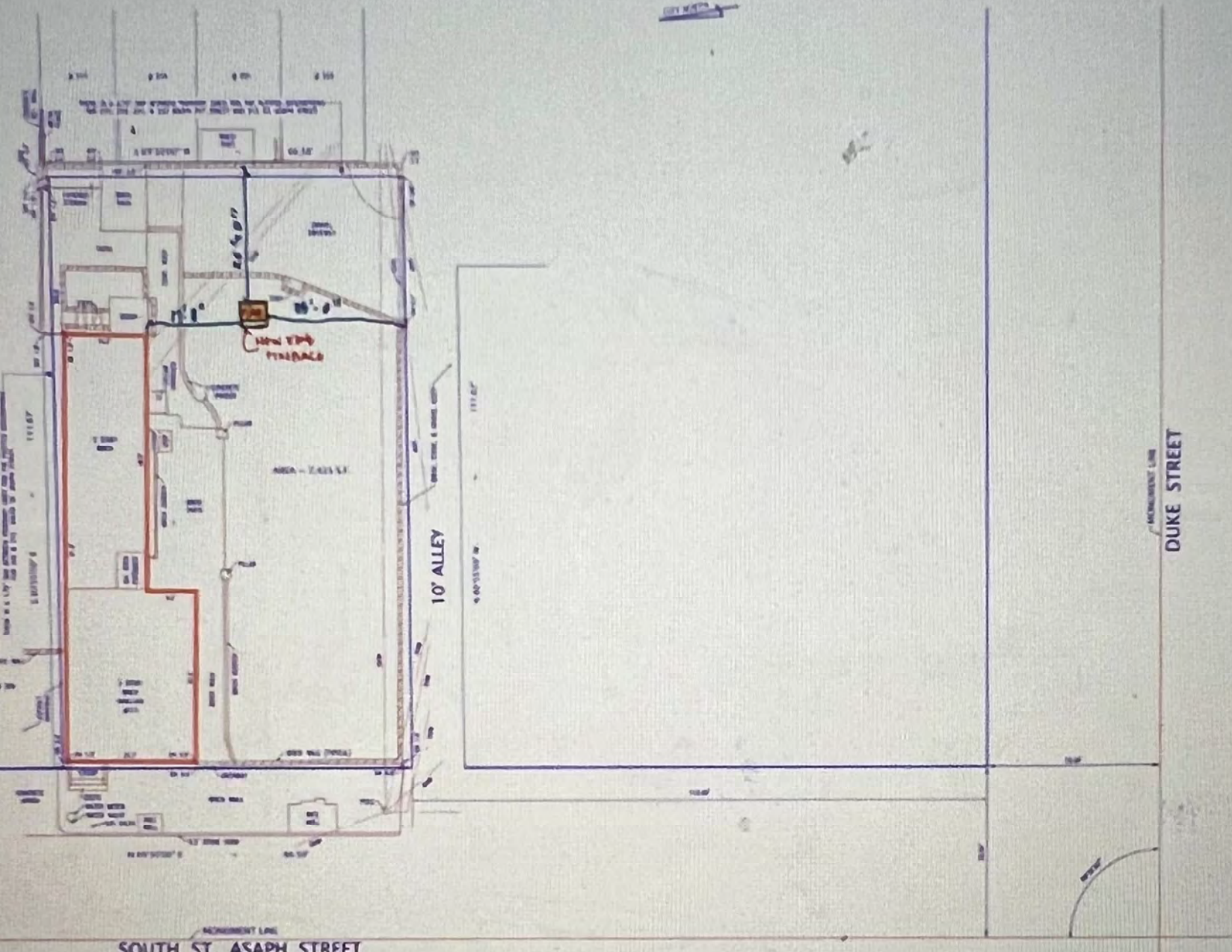
ALPUGH S. ST. ASAPH ST  
200 BLOCK



ALPUGH S. ST. ASAPH ST  
200 BLOCK



SIDE WALK IN FRONT  
OF 212 S. ST. ASAPH ST.



MEASUREMENT LINE  
DUKE STREET

MEASUREMENT LINE  
SOUTH ST. ASAPH STREET

PLAT  
SHOWING REVERSE LOCATION OF  
THE PROPERTY LOCATED AT  
# 212 SOUTH ST. ASAPH STREET  
CITY OF ALEXANDRIA, VIRGINIA  
SCALE 1" = 10' REVISION 2, 2021



<p>ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED HEREIN IS THE PROPERTY OF THE SURVEYOR AND IS NOT TO BE REPRODUCED OR TRANSMITTED IN ANY FORM OR BY ANY MEANS, ELECTRONIC OR MECHANICAL, INCLUDING PHOTOCOPYING, RECORDING, OR BY ANY INFORMATION STORAGE AND RETRIEVAL SYSTEM, WITHOUT THE WRITTEN PERMISSION OF THE SURVEYOR.</p>	<p>DATE REVISION: PROCESSED BY: DRAWN BY: NVS SOLE, LLC</p>	<p>ALTERRA SURVEYING &amp; CONSULTING 11111 UNIVERSITY BLVD ALEXANDRIA, VA 22304 TEL: 703.701.1111 WWW.ALTERRASURVEYING.COM</p>
--	---	---

Virginia Bennett and Scott Sekerke  
208 S. Saint Asaph Street  
Alexandria, Virginia 22314

August 26, 2022

Board of Architectural Review  
301 King Street  
Alexandria, Virginia 22314

Dear BAR Friends,

We are writing to offer enthusiastic support for a proposal by our neighbors Leah and Ben Williams at 212 S. Saint Asaph Street, which will be reviewed at the September 7 BAR meeting.

The property at 212 S. Saint Asaph Street is one of those few remaining in Old Town with a second lot forming a garden adjacent to the house, with a beautiful old magnolia tree and ample shade space. The Williamses have submitted plans for an outdoor fireplace in the garden, of which the very tip of the chimney will be partially visible from a public way. From a visual standpoint, we believe the glimpse of a chimney would enhance our block, and while it would not be historic in nature per se, would certainly be in keeping with Old Town's architectural traditions.

Moreover, maximum utilization of their glorious walled garden space is desirable, from a community perspective. For Old Town to remain its vitality as a place of residence, people need to be out in it, relishing their outdoor surroundings as much as their home interiors. As the immediately adjacent neighbors who also adore our venerable urban setting, we would certainly welcome the conviviality the smell of wood burning fire and quiet sounds of companionship the proposed outdoor fireplace would offer.

As true stewards of a wonderful historic home, the Williamses in their first year of residence have undertaken a number of conservation projects to enhance their home's longevity and historic aesthetic, returning fixtures to their original gas, burying electric power lines, and investing considerable effort to point up a crumbling old smokehouse that spans multiple S. Pitt Street property lines. We have cheered on all of their efforts and enthusiastically endorse their outdoor fireplace proposal, which will further enhance their property use in the finest of Old Town's traditions.

Sincere regards,



Virginia L. Bennett and Scott Sekerke



Erin Cleary  
211 South Saint Asaph Street  
Alexandria, VA 22314

August 25, 2022

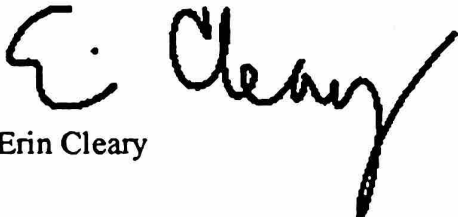
Board of Architectural Review  
City Of Alexandria  
301 King Street  
Alexandria, VA 22314

To the BAR Chairman and BAR Committee:

I am writing to express our approval for the proposed outdoor stone fireplace at 212 South Saint Asaph Street, the residence of Leah and Ben Williams. My husband, Paul Murtagh, and I reside directly across the street from the Williams residence. The submitted documents show that the fireplace will be minimally visible from our property, and we believe the fireplace will be a tasteful and appropriate addition to the block.

If there is anything additional we can provide to show our approval of the proposed outdoor fireplace, please contact me at 202.297.0906 or [ecleary@clearyoxford.com](mailto:ecleary@clearyoxford.com).

Sincerely,



Erin Cleary

9/1/22, 7:27 AM

Gmail - BAR Support Letter



Leah Williams <leahharperwilliams@gmail.com>

---

## BAR Support Letter

---

**Zachary Opperman** <zopperman@gmail.com>  
To: Leah Williams <leahharperwilliams@gmail.com>  
Cc: Christine Opperman <cpo23@cornell.edu>

Wed, Aug 31, 2022 at 3:16 PM

To whom it may concern,

I am Zachary Opperman who, along with my wife, Christine Opperman (CC'd), own 225 S. Pitt St., Alexandria, VA.

I am writing to express my support for Leah and Ben Williams's project at 212 S. St. Asaph st. I understand that they will be building a chimney approximately 9 ft.<sup>2</sup> in their backyard which will be visible from public right of way. This will be visible from my backyard as well. I have reviewed the proposed scope of work along with photos of what the project will look like and I am supportive.

Please feel free to contact me with any questions or concerns.

Sent from my iPhone