

Docket Item # 5
BAR CASE #2015-00273b

BAR Meeting
October 7, 2015

ISSUE: Certificate of Appropriateness &
Waiver of Fence Height Requirement; 7-202 (C)

APPLICANT: Robert and Constance Sprigg

LOCATION: 201 North Columbus Street

ZONE: RM / Residential

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Board approve the Certificate of Appropriateness and Waiver of Fence Height, as submitted.

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, 703-838-4360 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.



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BACKGROUND

At the last BAR hearing on September 16, 2015, the Board requested that the applicant work with staff on their fence design. It was suggested that the applicant utilize a simple board and batten or board fence that possibly highlights an Italianate or Victorian detail from the house would to make the fence unique and complement the architecture. The current revised design has responded to the Board's request.

I. ISSUE

The current request is an approval to remove the deteriorated, six foot high (6') wood, board and batten fence with scalloped detailing and replace it with a new, six foot high (6') painted cedar board and batten fence with arched trim details on each panel. The top rail will be tapered and the posts will also contain simple flat top caps. The new fence will be installed upon an existing 16" formed concrete base which lines the perimeter of the yard at 201 North Columbus Street. In addition, the applicant is also requesting a Waiver of the Fence Height Requirement.



Figure 1: Design of fence to be installed



Figure 2: Style of gate to be used



Figure 3: Style of caps to be installed on posts

II. HISTORY

The two-story Italianate brick townhouse at 201 North Columbus Street was constructed by **1885**, according to Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps. The townhouse was constructed as one of six identical Italianate style red brick rowhouses, all of which are extant and retain a high level of historic integrity. The subject property features a one-story side porch off the rear ell, facing Cameron. The porch is more high style Queen Anne or Eastlake with its detailed spindlework frieze with bead detail and lace-like brackets.



Figure 4: Existing Conditions

III. ANALYSIS

The *Design Guidelines* specify that fences are importance visual features of the historic districts and serve as distinctive features of the streetscape and individual yards. Therefore, any new fence must be compatible with the historic house and “should be appropriate in materials, design and scale to the period and character of the structures they surround.” In the case of this corner house, the proposed fence faces a public street and the design and details of the fence are subject to greater scrutiny than if it were located in a rear yard in the interior of a block and minimally visible from a public way.

Staff thanks the applicant for their willingness to work to revise the fence design. Regarding the current proposal, Staff finds that the revised design complements the existing architectural style of the building by retaining the previous board and batten style of the previous fence, while reinterpreting the original scalloped design. In addition, the fence details (arched trim and flat top post caps) complement the segmental arch window and door hoods and molded cornice found on the front façade.



Figure 5: Existing Conditions – Front Elevation

Staff believes that the applicant has responded to the Board's comments and complies with the *Design Guidelines*; therefore, recommends that the BAR approve the application as submitted.

Waiver of Height Requirement

Per Section 7-202 (C) of the Zoning Ordinance, "In the Old and Historic Alexandria and the Parker-Gray Districts, the requirement of sections 7-202(A)(1) and 7-202(B)(3) may be waived or modified by the Board of Architectural Review where the Board finds that the height of the fence would be appropriate and consistent with the character of the district."

The proposed fence height of 7'-4" remains unchanged and will continue to provide screening between the rear yard of the subject property and Cameron Street which abuts the property to the south. In addition, the fence height is consistent with the height of the adjacent neighbor's fences to the north. In the opinion of Staff, height of the fence in this location does not negatively impact the historic resources integrity and finds that it meets the above requirements and therefore Staff recommends approval.

STAFF

Michele Oaks, Historic Preservation Planner, Planning & Zoning
Al Cox, FAIA, Historic Preservation Manager, Planning & Zoning

I. CITY DEPARTMENT COMMENTS

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

Zoning Comments

- C-1 Applicant must submit proposed height of fence. If taller than 6' a waiver of fence height must be obtained from the BAR.
- C-2 Applicant must mark on the plat the portions of the fence to be proposed be replaced.
- C-3 Portions of the existing fence are not located on the subject property. All replaced fences must be located completely on the subject property.

Code Administration

No Comments received.

Transportation and Environmental Services

- R-1 The building permit must be approved and issued prior to the issuance of any permit for demolition. (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)
- 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 Management & 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)
- 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 Any work within the right-of-way requires a separate permit from T&ES. (Sec. 5-2) (T&ES)
- C-4 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

There is low potential for significant archaeological resources to be disturbed by this project. No archaeological action is required.

V. ATTACHMENTS

1 – Supplemental Materials

