



## Historic Alexandria Foundation

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July 19, 2016

John Von Senden, Chairman and Members  
O&HD Board of Architectural Review  
City Hall, 301 King Street  
Alexandria VA 22314

RE: BAR 2016-00221 & BAR 2016-00222

Dear Mr. Von Senden and fellow Board members,

I provide the following comments on behalf of the Historic Alexandria Foundation's Advocacy Committee which has met and reviewed this project.

This building is a key anchor, at the corner of King and Lee of an iconic row of 3 & 4 story early 19<sup>th</sup> c. brick buildings. Alone, or as part of the row, it clearly meets the standards #1, #5, and #6 of the Bar's standards against permission to demolish: It is of such architectural and historical interest that significant alterations, capsulation or razing would be to the detriment of the public interest; its retention helps preserve the character of the historic district, and its retention maintains and increases real estate values.

Therefore, it is a relief to see that the applicant is only proposing minimal demolition on Swift's alley, and in the roof on the Lee Street façade, in order to install a mechanical well, and for alley access. The applicant's proposal overall is a significant exterior rehabilitation. We agree with the staff recommendation of approval of the permit to demolish/capsulate.

We also commend the applicant for the removal of the through the wall and window unit air conditioning units, the security grates, and the exterior fire stairs. and for appropriate repointing .

However, the proposal for steel windows and doors on the first floor of all elevations, and simulated divided lite double hung windows on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> elevations is not acceptable. Staff explains very well that the early buildings in the 100 and 200 blocks of King Street have retained much of their historic integrity. Their storefront windows are primarily constructed of wood in a multi-light configuration.

Therefore, we support all of the staff recommendations, and in particular we entirely endorse the staff recommendation as illustrated in Figure 2 for double wood framed doors. The full glass metal doors and metal windows proposed by the applicant are not appropriate for this important anchor building for the reasons articulated by staff.

Having looked at all the windows on the King Street and Lee Street facades from the exterior, I believe that most of them could be rehabilitated rather than replaced. From what can be seen from the sidewalk, they are single glazed, and have narrow muntin profiles. We request that they be inspected by staff and the applicant's architect with the intent of restoring and reusing as many as possible. If this is not possible, then we would support staff's condition #2 that the double-hung wood replacement windows must be single-glazed and must meet the Board's Window Policy.

Regarding, staff's suggestion on page 6, that staff "would prefer to see the applicant retain the pent roof projecting bays at the first floor on the South Lee Street elevation for the variety and playfulness they provide" we entirely agree. If the front windows of the former Why Not Shop must be replaced, thereby losing the physical evidence of the memories of the great displays of children's toys in those windows, then there is all the more reason to leave these two windows on the Lee Street façade to provide evidence of the history of this building for the past 60 years. We request that the Board add a condition that the two pent windows be retained.

Finally, on the Swift's Alley rear façade, because of the points raised in Morgan Delaney's letter about the significance of this historic alley, we see no reason why a wooden door cannot serve the same purpose as the steel door and would suggest that staff and the applicant be directed to select a wooden door similar to that at the rear of the Delaney building, and that a dark color brick rather than concrete block be used for the alcove.

Thank you for your consideration of these comments.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Gail C Rothrock". The script is cursive and fluid, with the first letters of each word being capitalized and prominent.

Gail C. Rothrock, Co-Chair  
HAF Advocacy Committee