

Docket Item # 3  
BAR CASE # 2016-00325

BAR Meeting  
October 19, 2016

**ISSUE:** Certificate of Appropriateness – Alterations and Waiver of Fence Height

**APPLICANT:** Ann Begeman

**LOCATION:** 207 North Columbus Street

**ZONE:** RM/ Residential

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**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:**

Staff recommends approval of the application with the following condition:

1. The existing brick chimney must remain unpainted.

**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](mailto: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, 703-746-4200 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.



BAR2016-00325



## I. ISSUE

The applicant is requesting approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness for alterations and a waiver of the fence height at 207 North Columbus St. The proposed work will be located at the rear of the property and includes the following:

1. Replace existing wood gate and brick fence. The new gate and fence will match the existing fence height (ranging from 6'8" to 7'3") and existing brick will be re-used where possible.
2. Remove existing octagonal window on rear addition and replace with new siding to match existing siding.
3. Add a new window adjacent to the chimney to match the existing door height and width on the rear addition.
4. Add a wood trellis off the rear addition.
5. Paint the existing chimney to match the siding color

The applicant is also proposing to replace the existing rear steps and patio, and create new planting beds. These elements are not visible from the public right-of-way and do not require BAR approval.

## II. HISTORY

207 North Columbus Street is a two-story, brick rowhouse dating from 1880, constructed as one of a row of six Italianate rowhouses commonly known as Church Row. It first appears on the 1885 Sanborn map. The rear addition was designed by Richard Clausen and was approved by the Board at the February 19, 1986 hearing.



Figure 1: Existing Elevation

### Previous Approvals:

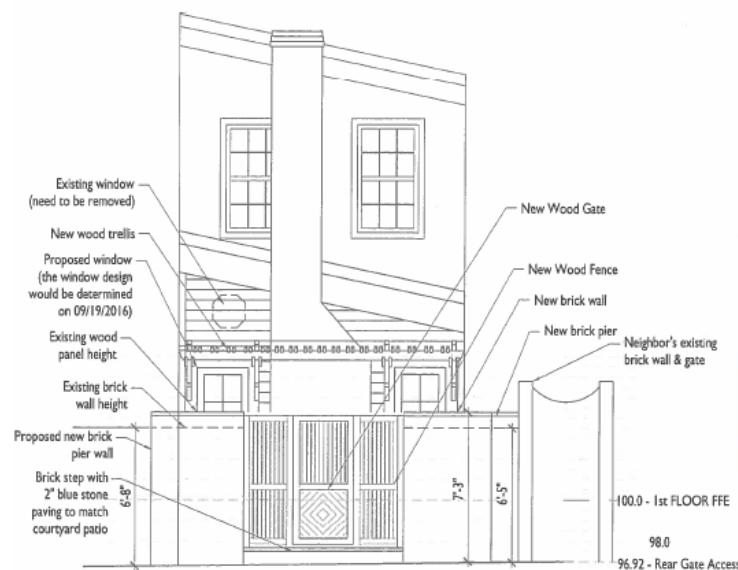
BAR2003-00267 & BAR2003-00268: The Board approved the applicant's request for a Permit to Demolish portions of the rear addition consisting of three windows and replacement with fiber

cement siding. The Board also approved the applicant's request to replace existing wood siding with new fiber cement siding.

The rear alley is private but the rear of the property is visible from Cameron Street.

### III. ANALYSIS

Staff has no objections to the enclosing of the existing octagonal window (2.1 sq. ft.) and removal of 16.18 sq. ft. of siding to create a new window. The new six-light window will be minimally visible from the public right-of-way and match the existing rear door's design and size. Additionally, the new window will make the rear façade more symmetrical. A Permit to Demolish is not required because less than 25 square feet of the wall surface is being removed or demolished.



**Figure 2: Proposed Elevation**

The proposed re-design of the wood gate and fence will match the existing in height, ranging from 6'8" to 7'3", and remain in the same location. The new design will centralize the wood gate and add a brick step with 2" blue stone paving to match the courtyard patio. Section 7-202(C) of the zoning ordinance permits both Boards of Architectural Review to waive the permitted fence height "where the board finds that a proposed fence would be architecturally appropriate and consistent with the character of the district." While there are many areas in the districts where rear fences over six feet in height are not appropriate, staff finds that a taller fence is appropriate in this particular area. Staff measured the adjacent fences and noted that they range in height from 6'8" to 7' to 7'7". As these residential properties immediately abut the five-story post office building and its rear parking area, it is architecturally appropriate in this location to have taller fences. The rear forms of Church Row all remain visible and legible from the public way. Therefore, staff recommends approval of the fence and granting of the waiver of fence height to permit the fence to be a maximum of 7'3".





Figure 3. Current Google Streetview showing the rear property lines and fences, with red arrow indicating subject property.

The *Design Guidelines* state that chimneys and flues are important functional elements of a building and provide visual variety to the roofline. Painting of a brick chimney for aesthetic purposes is uncommon within the historic district and by past practices not supported by staff. Because the chimney is located on the 1986 addition, painting it is a design issue rather than a historic preservation issue. Staff was unable to identify examples of painted chimneys on wood-frame buildings and does not support the proposed painting, noting that it also creates future maintenance issues.

The proposed new wood trellis will project 2'-9" into the rear yard and is 80% open. The new wood trellis is stylistically compatible and appropriate in scale.

Staff recommends approval of the application with the condition that the existing brick chimney remain unpainted.

#### **STAFF**

Amirah Lane, Historic Preservation Sr. Planning Technician, Planning & Zoning  
Al Cox, FAIA, Historic Preservation Manager, Planning & Zoning

#### **IV. CITY DEPARTMENT COMMENTS**

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

##### **Zoning Comments**

C-1 Proposed rear stoop (less than 2' above grade) and trellis (at least 80% open) comply with zoning.

- R-1 Per section 7-202(B), in all yards except a front yard closed fences that do not exceed 6.00 feet in height is permitted; however, under Section 7-202(C) because the property located in the Old and Historic District, the fence requirement may be waived or modified if it is found that the proposed fence would be architecturally appropriate and consistent.

Staff has noted that the other fences adjacent and around the property are in 7.00 feet in height and higher.

### **Code Administration**

- C-1 A building permit, plan review and inspections are required for alterations prior to the start of construction.

### **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 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)
- 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 Any work within the right-of-way requires a separate permit from T&ES. (Sec. 5-2) (T&ES)
- C-5 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**

- C-1 Call Alexandria Archaeology immediately (703/746-4399) if any buried structural remains (wall foundations, wells, privies, cisterns, etc.) or concentrations of artifacts are discovered during development. Work must cease in the area of the discovery until a City archaeologist comes to the site and records the finds. The language noted above shall be included on all final site plan sheets involving any ground disturbing activities. (Archaeology)
- C-2 The applicant shall not allow any metal detection and/or artifact collection to be conducted on the property, unless authorized by Alexandria Archaeology. Failure to comply shall result in project delays. The language noted above shall be included on all final site plan sheets involving any ground disturbing activities. (Archaeology)
- F-1 The property at 207 N. Columbus is situated within what was once a large hospital complex during the Civil War. Known as Old Hallowell Hospital, period maps show that the complex occupied the south half of the block between N. Columbus and N. Washington, north of Cameron Street. The subject property is located in the immediate vicinity of one of the hospital wards and a short distance south from a “Dead House,” a temporary morgue.
- F-2 The proposed undertaking does not appear as if it will have an impact on below-ground resources. Nevertheless, because of the archaeological sensitivity of this location, two modest archaeological conditions are appended to this project.

### **V. ATTACHMENTS**

*1 – Supplemental Materials*

*2 – Application for BAR2016-00325: 207 N Columbus Street*