

ISSUE: Certificate of Appropriateness for alterations

APPLICANT: Lauren Oliphant

LOCATION: Old and Historic Alexandria District
714 South Alfred Street

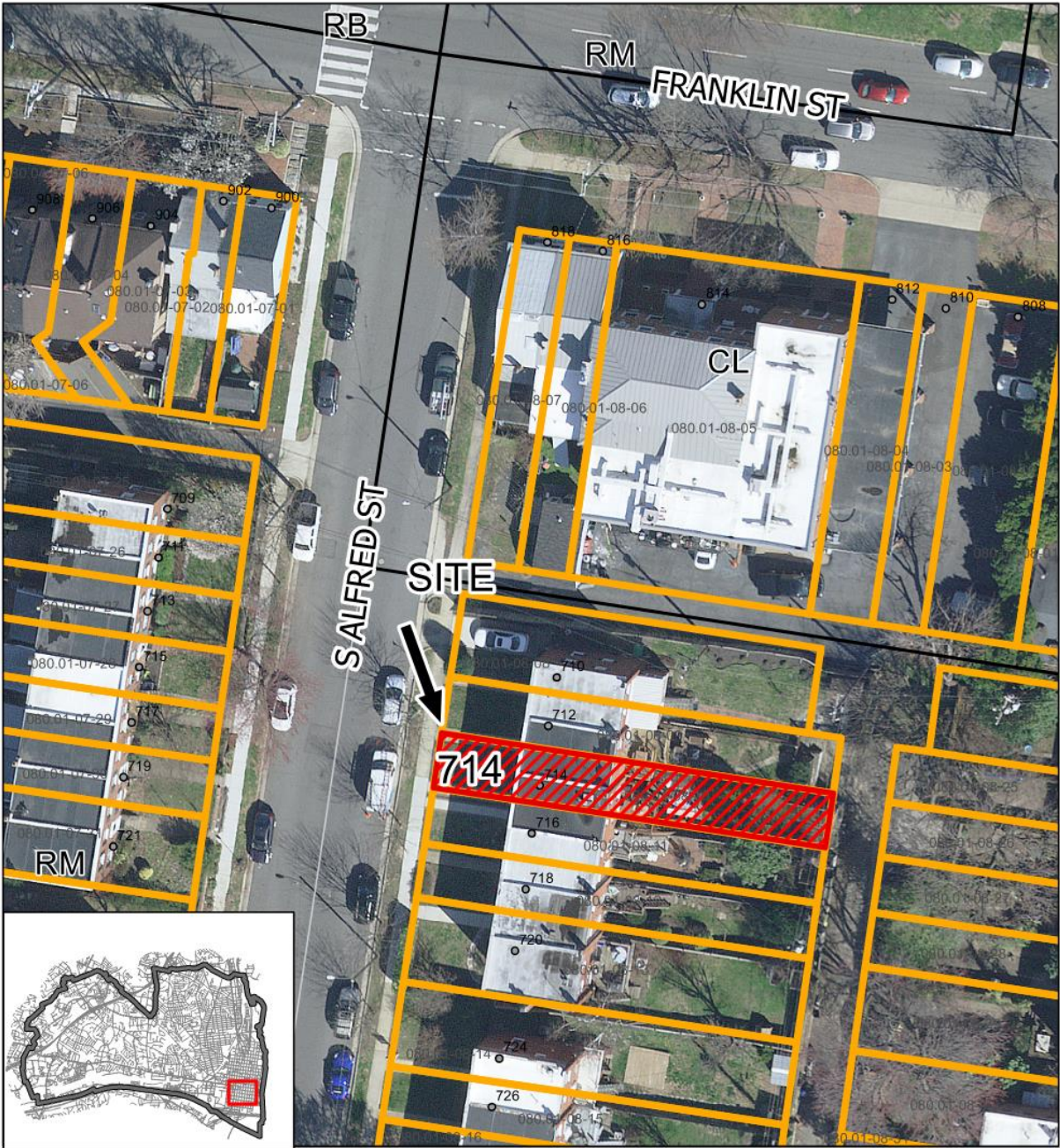
ZONE: RM/Residential Townhouse Zone

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends approval of the Certificate of Appropriateness for alterations, as submitted, with the recommendation that any future replacement windows comply with Board of Architectural Review *Design Guidelines*.

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 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 #2021-00158
714 South Alfred Street



I. APPLICANT'S PROPOSAL

The applicant requests an after-the-fact Certificate of Appropriateness for a previous owner's replacement of windows on the west/primary elevation.

Certificate of Appropriateness

The applicant requests approval for the replacement of one picture window on the first floor and two double hung windows on the second floor of the primary/west elevation.

II. HISTORY

714 South Alfred Street is a two story, two bay brick attached rowhouse constructed in 1941/42; it is therefore considered a LATE building, constructed more than 20 years after the 1920 creation of the Old and Historic Alexandria District. The brick clad cinderblock rowhouses with steel casement windows were built in a minimalist modern style as part of the Patrick Henry Homes development, consisting of approximately 53 homes on the 700 block of South Patrick, South Alfred, South Columbus, and the 800 and 900 blocks of Jefferson Street. The "new brick homes" were advertised for sale in the Alexandria Gazette on June 16, 1942 and were part of a massive expansion of Alexandria's housing stock in the years leading up to and during World War II.

Like many early 20th century housing developments in Alexandria, Patrick Henry Homes was developed as the result of a severe housing crunch. Population in the region expanded significantly, and a housing shortage led to an increase in residential construction, even in the middle of World War II. According to a December 1939 article in the Alexandria Gazette, the city's population had increased to 36,000 from a 1930 total of 24,000, yet between 1934 and 1939 less than 2,000 homes had been built.¹ In the 1940s, therefore, developers built mass-produced homes rapidly and economically, to provide housing for as many people as possible in the shortest time possible. One indicator of how inexpensively these were built is the fact that these buildings are constructed of cinder block; the brick is a veneer only.

Previous BAR Approvals

Staff found no prior BAR approvals.

III. ANALYSIS

Certificate of Appropriateness

Today, the houses appear much as they did when constructed, although nearly all have had the original steel casement windows replaced. The lack of overall architectural ornament and detailing, taken with the simple appearance, was an intentional architectural characteristic to express the modernity of the buildings. Of course, it also served to lower the costs of construction; as noted above, such economies were essential to the effort to provide as much affordable housing as

¹ "Statistics Released by Mrs. Harper," *Alexandria Gazette*, 14 December 1939.

possible as quickly as possible. These simple rowhouses feature little architectural detailing and serve as background buildings to the more historic structures in the city.

Per the *Design Guidelines*, windows are a principal character defining feature of a building and the size, location, type, and trim of windows are defining elements of historic architectural styles. As originally constructed, the steel casement windows set flush with the wall surface in the unadorned punched openings of the Patrick Henry Homes expressed ideals drawn from the International Style. The windows retain their character-defining punched openings, size, location, and lack of window trim. The only change is the type of window. Like almost every house in the development, this one no longer has steel casements. The current simple one-over-one pattern of the upstairs windows and the single-pane on the first level fit in well with the original minimalist and unadorned design. The interior shutters give the impression of window muntins. See Figure 1. Staff notes that the Board approved one-over-one second-level windows at 712 North Alfred Street, next door, at the April 7, 2021 hearing.



Figure 1: 714 South Alfred Street

Staff would like to point out that upon receipt of the complaint regarding these windows, we requested the window specifications from the owner. The owner was unable to locate those specifications from previous owners. The complainant indicated that he/she has photographic evidence that this property had its original steel casement windows as late as 1979, but by 1987 the current windows were in place. If the complainant is correct, the current windows have been in place for over thirty years. Staff could not locate photos that old, but a 2005 Virginia Department of Historic Resources 2005 reconnaissance survey depicts these windows. See Figure 2.



Figure 2: 714 S. Alfred in VDHR 2005 reconnaissance photo

As the BAR can see from Figure 2, the masonry has been painted since at least 2005. Pictometry photos, which only go as far back as 2003, indicate that the masonry was painted then as well. Pictometry also appears to show the current windows, but the photo is too blurry to definitively determine that. Staff does not recommend removing the paint.

Staff recommends approval as submitted, with the recommendation that any future replacement windows comply with Board of Architectural Review *Design Guidelines*.

STAFF

Susan Hellman, Historic Preservation Planner, Planning & Zoning
Tony LaColla, AICP, Land Use Services Division Chief, Planning & Zoning

IV. CITY DEPARTMENT COMMENTS

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

Zoning

F-1 The proposed window alterations comply with zoning.

Code Administration

C-1 A building permit and plan review are required 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, 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)

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)

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

- F-1 No archaeological oversight will be necessary for this undertaking.

V. ATTACHMENTS

- 1 – Application Materials*
- 2 – Supplemental Materials*