

CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS STAFF REPORT

TO: Historical Affairs and Landmark Review Board (HALRB)
FROM: Serena Bolliger, Historic Preservation Planner
DATE: December 12, 2022
SUBJECT: CoA 22-20, 2501 North Underwood Street, Crossman House Local Historic District

Background Information

The George Crossman House is among the oldest surviving homes in the East Falls Church neighborhood and was associated with one of Arlington's most successful early-20th century dairy farms. The house was constructed in 1892. By 1901, George Crossman's dairy farm was well-established, and he often earned distinction for having top-producing cows within his herd. In May 1928, Crossman's award-winning herd produced 1,348 pounds of milk and 66.1 pounds of butterfat. The farm's dairy products were purchased by neighbors and sold to the Maryland and Virginia Milk Producers Association. The house remained in the Crossman family for three generations until 1954.

The Crossman House is a well-preserved example of a Late Victorian vernacular two-story farmhouse with a T-shaped plan and cross-gable roof. It clearly exhibits characteristics of both the Queen Anne and folk Victorian architectural styles. Such traits include its asymmetrical plan, dominant front-facing gable, and the use of patterned wood shingles, weatherboards, and projecting bays to give texture to the exterior walls and decorate the gable ends. The Crossman House also boasts simple wooden door and window surrounds and period stained-glass windows.

The Crossman House was designated as a Local Historic District (LHD) in 1986 before the Historic Preservation Program developed design guidelines for LHDs. As such, the Arlington County Zoning Ordinance dictates that staff and the HALRB use *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation* to guide rehabilitation work. The home was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 2003.

Proposal

The applicant is requesting to install approximately 190 linear feet of 4'-high aluminum metal picket fencing to enclose the southwestern corner of the property along 25th Street North and North Underwood Street. The fence would be set back 1' from the property line and have ball caps on the posts and quad finials on the pickets. The applicant proposes to install an arched gate a few feet to the left of the front porch stairs.

DRC Review

The Design Review Committee (DRC) considered this application at its December 7, 2022, hybrid meeting. Mr. Wenchel suggested that the fence be set back a few feet from the property line rather than just one foot. The owners mentioned they had considered setting the fence back only 1' to be even with the neighbor's fence line. The commissioners agreed that the project could be placed on the consent agenda for the December 21, 2022, hybrid HALRB public hearing.

Recommendation

The Historic Preservation staff recommends approval of the subject application. The proposed height and design of the metal picket fence will allow the historic home to remain visible from the public rights-of-way. Additionally, there is a record of this property having had a chain link fence in the past (CoA 01069036, September 22, 1993); therefore, a fence is not inappropriate. The material and design of the proposed metal picket fence are more suitable for a home of this era. Furthermore, the proposal conforms with Rehabilitation Standard #10 specified in *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards* as it is an alteration which could easily be reversed without an adverse effect to the historic property.

Standard #10: New additions and adjacent or related new construction will be undertaken in such a manner that, if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.