



HISTORICAL AFFAIRS AND LANDMARK REVIEW BOARD
ARLINGTON COUNTY, VIRGINIA

CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS STAFF REPORT

TO: Historical Affairs and Landmark Review Board (HALRB)
FROM: Serena Bolliger, Historic Preservation Planner
DATE: December 14, 2022
SUBJECT: CoA 22-21, 2709 Arlington Boulevard, Cambridge Courts Historic District

Background Information

Constructed in 1943, Cambridge Courts is a Colonial (Georgian) Revival-styled garden apartment complex contributing to the Lyon Park National Register Historic District. The complex became a Local Historic District (LHD) in 2016. The property abuts the northern side of Arlington Boulevard (US Route 50) at its intersection with North Fillmore Street. The complex is comprised of twenty multiple-family buildings that feature similar architectural elements but are slightly different in design and layout. The two- to three-story buildings are primarily arranged in a modified U-shaped configuration in a park-like setting, thus conforming to the typical garden apartment form and layout common in Arlington County and throughout the United States in the mid-20th century.

Originally named Leehigh Apartments, the property is one of only ten wartime rental housing complexes constructed in Arlington County. Even with documented rationing of materials for the war effort, Corning & Moore's design for Cambridge Courts had exceptional architectural depth. The Federal Housing Administration (FHA) insured the construction of the apartment complex and rationed construction materials were allocated to the project due to its location within a Defense War Housing Critical Area and proximity to the Pentagon and Fort Myer.

The property's most recent Certificate of Appropriateness (CoA) requests include a withdrawn application to install accessible ramps in 2017, two approvals for new windows through the Administrative CoA process in 2017, and the installation of a railing along a rear stairwell in 2020 (ACoA 20-10.)

Proposal

Due to an increase in car break-ins and theft from cars, the condominium board voted in 2021 to install security cameras throughout the complex as a deterrent since there is no on-site property management. The Cambridge Courts board is applying to install:

- Six (6) security cameras
 - two (2) on the rear of building 2709 facing east and west
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- Three (3) sets of antennae
- Two (2) License Plate Recognition cameras, one on each of the access entrances to the parking lot
- Four (4) network switches, one on each of the rear buildings
- One video recorder on building 2805.

All the proposed elements would be installed on the rear of the buildings, largely facing the parking area along the back side of the property. The Alibi Vigilant Dome outdoor cameras measure 4.3” in diameter by 3.2” tall. Any cables/conduits will run along the exterior walls and be tucked in along the mortar line. The wires will enter the buildings for power supplies through the mortar and not the brick.

Design Review Committee Review

The Design Review Committee (DRC) heard this application at its December 7, 2022, hybrid meeting. Ms. Meyer and Mr. Davis asked for confirmation that the conduit would run into the buildings through the mortar and not the brick and that any wires would be masked as much as possible. Based on the understanding that the conduit would be minimally visible, the DRC placed this item on the consent agenda for the December 21, 2022, hybrid HALRB public hearing.

Recommendation

The Historic Preservation staff recommends approval of the subject application. All the proposed security cameras and associated elements will be installed on the rear of the various residential buildings and will not be visible from the streetscape of the property as seen from Arlington Boulevard and its service road. 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 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.