



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: October 13, 2022
SUBJECT: 2415 Shirlington Road, CoA 21-30A, Green Valley Pharmacy Historic District

Background Information

The Green Valley Pharmacy, originally built in 1942 as a grocery store, was designated as an Arlington County Local Historic District (LHD) in 2013. The building is one-story in height with a rectangular-shaped plan. It is constructed of 12-inch cinder blocks faced in textured stucco. The large single-pane windows have aluminum surrounds and rest on brick rowlock sills; the sills on the smaller windows on the south elevation have been covered in stucco. The main entrance door at the southwest corner is solid glass within an aluminum surround and has a fixed glass transom above. The building's simple design has minimal architectural ornamentation, with the most distinctive feature now being the prominent corner entrance. The signage that had been centered underneath the roof line on both street-front elevations was removed at the same time as the mansard roof.

There have been minimal changes made to the building over time. The HALRB approved CoA 18-13 in July 2018 for: 1) the demolition of the false mansard roof (built ca. 1983) and restoration of the building's roofline to its original minimalist design; and 2) removal of a healthy tree (greater than 15" diameter at dbh) abutting the rear of the building. The HALRB later approved CoA 18-13A in September 2018 for the installation of a metal cap on the parapet and 18-13B in December 2018 for the installation of a new HVAC system. Most recently, the HALRB approved CoA 21-30 in January 2022 to allow the installation of a walk-in cooler at the rear (with the provision that the original chimney be retained) and various hardscaping changes to allow access and parking around the building. The applicant submitted a CoA amendment for changes to the hardscaping and parking in September 2022 but chose to defer the application to finalize some details.

Proposal

After additional analysis of the landscape, the applicant proposes to modify the parking and access patterns for the building and is returning for HALRB review of the updated plans. The applicant initially had proposed to use the rear alley for access; however, the rear alley will no longer be used and only the loading area access facing 24th Road S. will be retained on that side. Parking access is now proposed from Shirlington Road rather than 24th Road S., via a two-way access route located entirely on private property mostly on the adjacent 2411 Shirlington Road parcel situated to the north of the pharmacy lot. This

adjacent parcel also is owned by the subject applicant, but it is outside the LHD zoning overlay and therefore outside of the HALRB's scope of review.

The applicant proposes to remove the concrete pad and dumpsters at the northeast corner of the pharmacy as was noted in CoA 21-30 and instead have a 5' sidewalk between the building and the two-way driveway north of the building. Finally, the applicant proposes to install a free-standing AlunoTec pergola adjacent to the building over the seating along the south side of the building fronting 24th Road S. The proposed height will be approximately 10' tall (lower than the building), and the ground coverage will be approximately 50' x 16'. The roof will be of a retractable motorized waterproof fabric. The sides will be motorized rolldown zipper semi-blackout shade screens in white or clear. The unadorned aluminum frame will be secured to the concrete ground surface with columns every 10' for structural stability.

Design Review Committee Review

The Design Review Committee (DRC) first considered an amendment to CoA 21-30 to change the hardscaping at its September 7, 2022, hybrid meeting (the pergola element was not part of this application at that time). Mr. Davis asked if the existing tree would be retained. Ms. Bolliger explained that the HALRB approved removal of the tree in CoA 18-13, which was still active; therefore, the applicant still has the right to remove the tree. Mr. Wenchel said he believed the DRC could recommend approval of the application. Given that the project has received public interest, the DRC placed this item on the discussion agenda for the September 21, 2022, hybrid HALRB public hearing. However, the application was not considered by the HALRB in September because the applicant requested deferral to the October review cycle to have extra time to finalize the application.

The DRC considered the application again at its October 5, 2022, hybrid meeting. It should be noted that the plans now included a reference to an awning (since changed to a pergola), but without any detailed specifications. Mr. Wenchel asked for additional information about the awning, particularly materials, specifications, and installation methods. He recommended that the awning be installed below the building's roof cap to ensure that the roof line of the historic building would not be obstructed from the street level. He also requested an elevation drawing showing how the installed awning would look against the massing of the building. The DRC placed this item on the discussion agenda for the October 19, 2022, hybrid HALRB hearing.

Staff Recommendation

At this time, the Historic Preservation Program (HPP) staff recommends approval of the proposed modifications to the hardscaping and parking plan only. These proposed changes are minor and will allow appropriate traffic flow for customers based on the current zoning regulations for parking. Most of the proposed changes are located on the adjacent parcel to the north, a parcel that is not included in the LHD zoning overlay, which allows for greater access to the historic building with less impact on the historic property. Moving the concrete pad and dumpsters to the adjoining site will reduce the likelihood of damage to the pharmacy building by the dumpsters and trash collection vehicles.

The HPP staff appreciates the specifications provided about the proposed pergola and its installation and is supportive of outdoor seating for the restaurant. A free-standing pergola would provide additional service space for this historically small building without impacting the building itself. The pergola could be removed in the future without any detriment to the historic materials or character of the building, which complies with Standard #10 of *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation*:



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10. New additions and adjacent or related new construction shall 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.

The proposed location of the pergola along 24th Road S. means it would not impede the diagonal view to the historic doorway on the corner of the building, thereby retaining the character of the original corner store. Additionally, the proposed height would leave the sightline of the one-story building unbroken from the street, which is called out as character-defining in the *Green Valley Pharmacy Local Historic District Design Guidelines*:

The original massing of the building and arrangement of fenestration remains unchanged. Stylistically, the Green Valley Pharmacy is of non-descript architectural design and is a simple, mid-20th century commercial building without architectural detailing.

The significant features of the site include the rectangular-shaped commercial building, the adjacent paved parking areas, and the building's prominent location at the corner of Shirlington Road and 24th Road South. The priority for preservation of the site will involve maintaining the historic and architectural integrity and character of the entire building, mainly as a one-story commercial building with a corner entrance.

However, given the pharmacy's simplistic design and its prominent corner location, the introduction of a large pergola would be a major visual change to this characteristically simple landscape. Thus, staff supports Mr. Wenchel's request for an elevation or renderings showing the pergola against the building. This would allow staff and the HALRB to evaluate potential impacts on viewpoints of the building from the right-of-way, as well as allow the HPP inspector to confirm the installation details. Further, the HPP staff requests specifications on the anchor points into the ground, and also encourages the applicant to consider a transparent or opaque material for the rolling shades on the sides to avoid any safety concerns. For these reasons, the HPP staff recommends that the pergola element could be separated from application CoA 21-30A and return for the November design review cycle to allow for further refinement of the proposal.