

CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS STAFF REPORT

TO: Historical Affairs and Landmark Review Board (HALRB)
FROM: Serena Bolliger, Historic Preservation Planner
DATE: October 15, 2021
SUBJECT: 3550 Wilson Boulevard, CoA 21-20, Clarendon School Historic District

Background Information

The three-and-one-half-story Clarendon School was built in 1910 in the Classical Revival style and is the work of noted school architect Charles M. Robinson of Richmond. The design illustrates the architectural fashions of the period with projecting front bays capped by enclosed pediments, Palladian windows, limestone keystones, beveled stringcourses, and a prominent wood frame portico with paired Tuscan columns. The former classrooms and hallways have been converted to gallery and studio space for the Arlington Arts Center. The building became a Local Historic District (LHD) in 1984 and was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1999.

There are no design guidelines specifically approved for this LHD beside those for exterior temporary art exhibition; therefore, the HALRB refers to the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties* to evaluate any alterations to the building and grounds.

Proposal

On September 12, 2020, the Arlington County Board adopted an amendment to the Code of Arlington County, Virginia Chapter 13, Missiles, to add Title II Sections 13-11 through 13-15 “relating to firearms, to prohibit the possession, carrying or transportation of any firearms in County buildings, facilities and certain public rights of way.” DES staff was tasked to add these signs to all County facilities, including four County-owned LHDs. The County Board report language states “the ordinance requires the County to post signs at the entrance(s) to all buildings, parks, and park facilities.”

Per these guidelines, DES staff proposes to install six (6) 12” x 18” signs: three (3) signs on 2” x 2” galvanized steel posts and three (3) signs on the door glass.

Design Review Committee Review

The Design Review Committee (DRC) heard this application at its October 6, 2021, virtual meeting. The Committee had some concerns about attaching signs to the exterior of the building. Therefore, this item was placed on the discussion agenda for the October 20, 2021, HALRB hearing with the other three DES signage applications. Given the DRC feedback, DES staff has since agreed to install the signs on the interior of the glass, which does not require HALRB approval.

Recommendation

The Historic Preservation Program staff recommends approval of the installation of the proposed signs as they are required by County Ordinance, and they will increase safety in the historic building. As the signs are made to be visible and are required to be at every entrance, there are few unobtrusive solutions for sign placement on the historic buildings and in the cultural landscapes. Staff understands that in this case, the signs will be more visible than they might be if they were being installed for a different use and could adhere to the visibility recommendations of the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards*.

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.