



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: July 14, 2023
SUBJECT: 2415 Shirlington Road, CoA 21-30C, 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 Certificate of Appropriateness (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 CoA 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. In October 2022, the applicant proposed to remove the concrete pad and dumpsters at the northeast corner of the pharmacy noted in CoA 21-30 and instead have a 5' sidewalk between the building and the two-way driveway north of the building. The applicant also proposed to install a free-standing AlunoTec pergola adjacent to the building, which would provide shade over the restaurant's outdoor seating, along the south side of the building fronting 24th Road S.

The DRC considered the application again at its October 5, 2022, hybrid meeting. It should be noted that the plans 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. After discussion, the HALRB agreed that they needed additional information and voted to "defer action on that part of CoA 21-30A, to allow installation of a proposed pergola, pending the receipt, evaluation, and HALRB approval of elevation drawings or renderings that specify the pergola's material, construction, and its positioning against the historic building and its anchoring points."

In June 2023, the applicant submitted updated pergola and awning drawings for consideration along with three bioretention planters (CoA 21-30B). At the June 7, 2023, hybrid DRC meeting Mr. Wenchel asked for elevations of the proposed pergola against the building and Ms. Bolliger asked for installation information. The commissioners had no concerns about the bioretention planters. At the June 21, 2023, hybrid HALRB public hearing, the HALRB voted to approve the bioretention planters but deferred decision on the pergola because the applicant stated during the meeting that he wanted a different design than what he had submitted.

Proposal

The applicant has submitted two pergola options for consideration.

Option 1: The applicant proposes to install a pergola with a retractable awning on the south side of the historic building along 24th Road S. The proposed pergola would be 50' x 14' with a sloped retractable awning supported by 12 wooden beams on concrete footers and 28 wooden rafters supported by a central joist. The pergola and awning would begin beneath the building coping and terminate at 7.67' high. The structure would begin at the outer (eastern) edge of the rear service door and terminate beyond the south storefront window adjacent to the main corner entrance doorway.

Option 2: The applicant proposes to install a pergola with a retractable awning on the south side of the historic building along 24th Rd. S. The proposed pergola would be 45'10" x 14' with a sloped retractable awning supported by 10 wooden beams on concrete footers and 23 wooden rafters supported by a central joist. The pergola and awning would begin beneath the building coping and terminate at 7.67' high. The structure would begin at the outer (eastern) edge of the rear service door and terminate before the south storefront window adjacent to the main corner entrance doorway.

Design Review Committee (DRC) Review

The applicant had only submitted Option 2 for the July 5, 2023, hybrid DRC meeting. However, the applicant was not present at the meeting, so the commissioners were not able to fully discuss the proposal. Mr. Wenchel recommended that the pergola and awning be kept freestanding to prevent any damage to the historic building, and that the awning not cover the window on the south side of the building. Mr. Wenchel explained that with the [prior] removal of the false mansard roof, the simple building was defined by its corner storefront elements, which would be obscured by a pergola running the full length of the building. The DRC placed this item on the Discussion Agenda for the July 19, 2023, hybrid HALRB public hearing.

Staff Recommendation

The HPP staff is supportive of outdoor seating for the new restaurant. A free-standing pergola would provide additional service space for this historically small building without impacting the building itself. Depending on how it is installed, a pergola could be removed in the future without any detriment to the



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historic materials or character of the building, thereby complying with Standard #10 of *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation*:

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 following elements were 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.

Staff wants to ensure that the proposed pergola complies with Standard #9 of *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation*:

9. New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction will not destroy historic materials, features, and spatial relationships that characterize the property. The new work will be differentiated from the old and will be compatible with the historic materials, features, size, scale and proportion, and massing to protect the integrity of the property and its environment.

Staff recommends pursuing Option 2 and keeping the pergola free-standing from the building. The size of the pergola proposed in Option 1 would block one of the only architectural elements of the small building and would detract from the historic corner store frontage. The proposed location and size of the pergola in Option 2 would impede the diagonal view to the historic corner entrance of the building less visibly than Option 1, thereby retaining the character of the original corner store. The proposed height of the pergola would be secondary to the main roofline of the one-story building and would leave the sightline of the building unbroken from the street.