



HISTORICAL AFFAIRS AND LANDMARK REVIEW BOARD
ARLINGTON COUNTY, VIRGINIA

CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS STAFF REPORT

TO: Historical Affairs and Landmark Review Board (HALRB)
FROM: Mical Tawney, Historic Preservation Associate Planner
DATE: February 12, 2024
SUBJECT: CoA 24-04, 3307 21st Avenue N., Maywood Local Historic District (LHD)

Background Information

The *Maywood National Register Nomination* describes the pre-1929 contributing dwelling at 3307 21st Avenue N. as follows:

The two-bay-wide, wood-frame dwelling rests on a solid, brick stretcher foundation, partially parged. It is clad in asbestos siding and has a front-gable roof sheathed in asphalt shingles. It has one-over-one wood-sash windows. Window and door surrounds are unmitered with a projecting sill and lintel. Other notable features include a wood cornice with a robust cyma molding, a black frieze, and gable returns. A single-cell vestibule has been added to the front elevation, and a shed-roof addition to the east elevation.

In July 2006 and November 2008, the HALRB approved two Certificates of Appropriateness (CoAs) for exterior changes to the house. In May 2011, the HALRB approved CoA 11-20 for the construction of a new, gable roof with gable-end wood windows on top of the existing one-story shed roofed garage as well as the change of siding on the garage to Hardiplank. In August 2011, the HALRB approved CoA 11-30 which amended CoA 11-20; the applicant requested a change in the door and an approval for the setback variance for the garage.

Proposal

The applicant is proposing to convert the existing detached one-story garage to an Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU). The proposal includes inserting three new windows along the west elevation; two windows would be aluminum-clad wood and double-hung and one would be a vinyl sliding window in a bathroom. The north and east elevations would have no openings per code requirements. There are two options for the south elevation where the applicant is proposing to remove both the single-leaf door and garage door. Option one includes the installation of a double-leaf, steel-clad wood door in the area where the garage door is currently located and the installation of one aluminum-clad wood window to the side of the door. Option two, which is the applicant's preference, includes the installation of a steel-clad wood door at the center of the elevation flanked by two aluminum-clad wood windows. The applicant would use Hardiplank siding to infill the areas where an opening used to be located; the siding would match the existing on the garage.

Design Review Committee (DRC) Review

The DRC considered this application at its February 7, 2024, hybrid meeting. Mr. Wenchel questioned if it was appropriate for a garage to be converted into an ADU, particularly one situated so close to the lot line. He expressed concerns about lighting and ventilation and was unsure if it was appropriate for some elevations to have no openings. Both the applicant and staff explained that those elevations cannot have openings per code requirements and reiterated that the Arlington County Zoning Ordinance (ACZO) allows for existing garages to be converted into ADUs. Mr. Davis asked for clarification about the material selections for the proposed fenestration and questioned the appropriateness of the proposed use of non-wood windows. He also suggested that the applicant align the heights of the fenestration on the south and west elevations. Mr. Davis was not concerned about the garage being converted to an ADU and felt it was appropriate. The applicant informed the DRC that significant interior improvements will need to be made to make the garage habitable (i.e., insulation of the floor, ceiling, and walls). The applicant further stated that the conversion is being undertaken for private use by their family rather than for a rental unit. The DRC members placed this item on the Discussion Agenda for the February 21, 2024, hybrid HALRB public hearing.

Recommendation

The Historic Preservation Program (HPP) staff recommends approval of this application, in particular, option two for the proposed fenestration on the south elevation. According to the *Maywood National Register Nomination*, the contributing garage was built around 1936; however, in 2011, the HPP staff determined that the garage was not historic or original to Maywood and therefore did not have historic integrity per their research associated with CoA 11-20 and CoA 11-30. Given that the garage is not historic, staff does not believe the insertion of new fenestration to make it a livable space would negatively impact the structure or its integrity. Furthermore, staff supports the adaptive re-use of outbuildings in the LHD. The HPP staff agrees that the conversion of this existing structure into a livable space is appropriate and the ACZO allows for such conversions. Thus, the HALRB may consider the design aspects of conversions and the appropriateness of exterior alterations and materials; whether ADUs are permissible within the LHD or how outbuildings are used remain outside of the HALRB's purview.

To date, there have been only two CoA applications for ADUs in the LHD, both of which the HALRB determined as appropriate, and which were approved. The HALRB approved the construction of an ADU at 2314 N. Kenmore St. (CoA 19-16) and at 3504 21st Ave. N. (CoA 20-20) (note the latter was never constructed). Since many houses in Maywood have accessory buildings, such as garage and sheds, the conversion of the subject garage to an ADU would not be largely noticeable aside from the insertion of new fenestration. Additionally, the proposed project would not increase the existing building footprint, thereby allowing the structure to remain secondary to the primary dwelling which complies with Appendix G of the *Maywood Design Guidelines*.

Regarding windows, the *Maywood Design Guidelines* state that aluminum-clad and vinyl windows are not appropriate for the LHD in Chapter 5: Exterior Alterations (pg. 19). However, it should be noted that Chapter 5 largely pertains to the main houses of Maywood rather than outbuildings or accessory buildings. There have been select instances in which the HALRB has approved the use of these types of windows in the district, particularly vinyl windows in high moisture spaces such as bathrooms. A few examples are 3301 22nd Street N. (CoA 18-01), 3607 22nd Street N. (CoA 21-11), and 2900 22nd Street N. (CoA 24-01). Additionally, the HALRB has approved different window types for ADUs in Maywood. While the ADU at 2314 N. Kenmore St. has wood windows, the ADU at 3504 21st Ave. N. was approved



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to have vinyl-clad windows. Both ADUs were approved for wood doors. It should be noted that the existing window on the subject garage's south elevation is wood (an alteration made in 2011).

While an ADU is not a shed or a garage, it is an accessory dwelling and Appendix G offers guidance for both types of structures. According to Appendix G, sheds in the LHD are permitted to have wood, aluminum-clad, or vinyl windows and garages are permitted to have wood windows. Regarding doors, wood doors have typically been found to be most appropriate for Maywood. The current proposal includes a steel-clad wood door. Appendix G allows for sheds to have either wood, steel, or fiberglass doors and garages to have wood doors.

In conclusion, staff encourages the HALRB to discuss the proposed materials for the windows and the door in the subject application to determine their appropriateness for the district. It will be important for the HALRB to consider the placement of the proposed fenestration, previous approved alterations to the existing structure, and the history of the subject garage (including its non-historic status). Based on all these factors, the HPP staff finds that the use of non-wood materials would not be inappropriate in this specific case.