



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 23-14A, 3829 N. Stafford St., Fort Ethan Allen Local Historic District (LHD)

Background Information

Fort Ethan Allen was built in September 1861 as a large bastion-style fort. Originally, the site was surrounded mostly by farmland and forests which were cut down to allow for clear lines of sight toward other fortifications and approaches to Washington, D.C. The fort was connected by a long series of trenches and earthworks to nearby Fort Marcy and the Potomac River. The fort consisted of four main faces, with additional salient angles built into its north and east faces. It maintained a perimeter of 768 yards with emplacements for thirty-four guns. Interior structures included two bombproofs, magazines, and other supporting structures. Today, Fort Ethan Allen retains several major aboveground features. These include large earthworks, one bombproof, gun platforms, and traces of magazines. One outlier trench, the Fort Ethan Allen Trench, remains to the southwest of the fort. Fort Ethan Allen's remaining interior structures are clearly visible and understandable as distinct historic resources. Furthermore, the fort's south face, centrally located bombproof, and remaining north face structures work together to strongly convey an understanding of the fort's historic scale. A ca. 1944 pump house (non-contributing building) is located north of the fort. In June 2013, the HALRB approved the installation of nine historic markers around the fort including four markers set in a circular plaza, as well as a bronze sculptural rendition of the fort site in the northern portion of the park.

Arlington County's Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) has participated in the Civil War Trails (CWT) program, a multi-state heritage program connecting Civil War sites across the East Coast, since at least the 1990s. The CWT program connects Arlington sites to a larger audience of Civil War enthusiasts and includes the County in its marketing and social media. The DPR pays annual fees to be included in the CWT program for five interpretive markers: one, formerly, at Fort Ethan Allen Trench; three at Fort C.F. Smith; and one at the Arlington Mill site.

In June 2023, the HALRB approved the relocation of the CWT marker at Fort Ethan Allen Trench, which was installed in a secluded area in 2003, to Fort Ethan Allen proper via CoA 23-14. The project proposed that the marker be reinstalled adjacent to the walkway connecting the circular plaza of Fort Ethan Allen to the sidewalk along N. Old Glebe Road. Additionally, the HALRB approved different content for the marker which will include previously uninterpreted information about the African American soldiers who served in the United States Colored Troops (USCT) stationed at Fort Ethan Allen and other Arlington forts during the Civil War. CoA 23-14 covered only preliminary details of the marker and it was established that DPR staff would return to the HALRB when the marker's design was finalized.

Proposal

As requested, DPR staff are bringing forward the final design of the CWT marker which includes information about the 107th USCT. The proposed location of the marker, adjacent to the walkway connecting the circular plaza to the sidewalk along N. Old Glebe Road, is to remain the same.

Design Review Committee (DRC) Review

The DRC does not review content of historic markers, so this application was not considered at the February 7, 2024, hybrid DRC meeting.

Recommendation

The Historic Preservation Program staff recommends approval of this application as submitted. The area in which the marker will be relocated already has been disturbed for the development of the interpretive exhibits. As such, the location meets the intent of Standard #8 of *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation*:

Standard #8: Archaeological resources will be protected and preserved in place. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures will be undertaken.

The new content proposed for the marker is appropriate for this site and will capture underrepresented military history. Staff believes this new location for the marker will make it more accessible for all visitors to Fort Ethan Allen.