



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:** June 12, 2024  
**SUBJECT:** CoA 24-16, 3412 21<sup>st</sup> Ave. N., Maywood Local Historic District (LHD)

### **Background Information**

The *Maywood National Register Nomination* describes the pre-1912 contributing dwelling at 3412 21<sup>st</sup> Avenue N. as follows:

The wood-frame dwelling rests on a solid foundation and is clad in weatherboard and has a compound gable roof sheathed in pressed metal sheets. It has a one-story, three-bay, wrap-around wood-frame front porch on turned posts supported by parged piers and featuring wood brackets. It has one-over-one wood-sash windows, and window and door surrounds feature molded lintels. Other notable features include fishscale wood shingles in the front gable end and gable returns, and additions on the east and south elevations.

The house underwent a substantial renovation and construction of a new addition prior to the establishment of the Maywood LHD. In May 1992, the HALRB approved the replacement of the tin-shingle roof with new coated steel shingles that matched the original in design. In October 1996, the HALRB approved the installation of a white picket fence around the property. In July 2009, the Historic Preservation Program (HPP) staff approved ACoA 09-18 for the removal of a dead black gum tree.

In July 2010, the HALRB approved CoA 10-16 which included the demolition of the rear addition and a non-contributing shed, the construction of a new one-story rear addition and garden shed, the renovation of the house, and various hardscaping changes. The 1½-story garden shed proposed in CoA 10-16 was to be situated in the back left corner of the lot (when looking at the house), measure 390 s.f., and feature Hardieplank siding, wood doors, and wood windows; however, it was never constructed. It should be noted that no setback modification request was included in the application. In February 2011, the HALRB approved CoA 11-04 for various revisions to the renovation and site work.

In July 2011, the HPP staff approved ACoA 11-18 for the installation of two new AC units along the left side of the property. In November 2018, the HALRB approved CoA 18-23 for the demolition of the existing shed, the construction of a new 1½-story garden shed, and the installation of a brick patio and gravel pathway. The project included the same garden shed design as proposed in CoA 10-16 and 11-04. Again, it was not constructed, and no setback modification was requested. In May 2024, the HPP staff issued ACoA 24-10 for the installation of a new fence, new gates, and the relocation of existing fencing on the property.

## **Proposal**

The applicant is proposing to construct an accessory building in the rear yard. The proposed 1½-story building would be 506 s.f. with a rectangular floor plan and a side-gable roof clad in architectural asphalt shingles. The front elevation (north) gable would feature two front-gable dormers clad with Hardieplank shake shingle siding. The structure itself would be clad in smooth Hardieplank siding and PVC trim. The north elevation would include two double-leaf, fully-glazed fiberglass doors. Other fenestration includes wood casement windows. A small HVAC unit would be situated along the west elevation and screened with a pressure-treated wood fence enclosure.

As part of their application, the owners are requesting that the HALRB utilize its setback modification authority. The proposed location of the accessory building would situate the rear eave of the building 2' from the rear lot line, an encroachment of 8' into the 10' setback required by zoning. All other setbacks for the building are by-right.

## **Design Review Committee (DRC) Review**

The DRC considered this application at its June 5, 2024, hybrid meeting. The HPP staff reminded the DRC about the HALRB's setback modification authority and provided some context for how it has been used in the past. Mr. Davis asked the applicant if it was possible to construct the building by-right on the property and wanted to know if the size of the lot prevented them from doing so. The applicant replied it would be possible, but that the location of the accessory building would be much closer to the house and could potentially make the building read less "secondary" to the main house.

Mr. Davis felt that the accessory building's design was harmonious with the main house and with Maywood. He noted a preference for wood doors and windows on the building. The applicant stated they could switch the windows to wood rather than clad, but that they preferred the fiberglass doors given their location and exposure to the elements. Staff asked Mr. Davis if he felt comfortable with the use of two sets of doors on the main elevation. He felt that it was appropriate because it was on a secondary building and would not need to "read" as a dwelling in which case he felt a single entrance would have been more appropriate.

Mr. Wenchel, who was unable to attend the DRC meeting, provided comments to staff via email in advance. Ms. Tawney shared his concerns about the rear elevation, and the potential for fire safety issues. The applicant said that fire safety concerns should be addressed with the current design because the rear elevation does not have windows and will have a double layer of drywall. Ms. Tawney redirected the conversation towards architectural compatibility since issues concerning fire safety will eventually be reviewed by other County staff.

Finally, Mr. Davis asked the applicant if they could produce renderings to show the new accessory building in situ. The applicant noted that the architect hired for this project could not do so and that they did not have measurements of the existing house, thereby making the creation of renderings challenging; this is the same answer that the HPP staff received via email prior to the DRC meeting when staff asked the same question of the applicant. Both the DRC and staff offered a few suggestions for how to show the scale of the new building in relation to the existing surroundings with the limitation of not being able to create renderings. The DRC placed this item on the Discussion Agenda for the June 20, 2024, hybrid HALRB public hearing.



### **Recommendation**

The HPP staff is supportive of the proposed accessory building. Its proposed location in the rear yard would allow it to be secondary to the primary dwelling which complies with Appendix G of the *Maywood Design Guidelines*. Furthermore, the proposed design is compatible with the architectural context of the LHD and meets the intent of Chapter 6: New Addition/Building of the *Maywood Design Guidelines*. Although this building would not be an accessory dwelling unit (ADU), it is similar in scale and styling; the HALRB has determined ADUs appropriate for the LHD in the past, most recently with the approval for a new ADU at 3310 21<sup>st</sup> Ave. N. (CoA 24-5) and the conversion of a garage into an ADU at 3307 21<sup>st</sup> Ave. N. (CoA 24-4).

Regarding the materials proposed, most are considered appropriate per the *Maywood Design Guidelines*. The wood windows, Hardieplank siding (both for the main structure and dormers), the architectural asphalt shingle roof, and the PVC trim are all appropriate materials per Chapter 5: Exterior Renovation and Appendices C, D, and G of the *Maywood Design Guidelines*.

Wood doors have typically been found to be most appropriate for Maywood. The *Maywood Design Guidelines* only indicate fiberglass doors as appropriate for sheds (pg. G-23); however, they do not list fiberglass as an inappropriate material in the LHD (Chapter 5: Exterior Renovation – pg. 14). The recent HALRB approval of a fiberglass door in a contributing house in Maywood was allowed because the door it was replacing was not historic and was in a specific location where wood was not well-suited and often deteriorated (CoA 23-13). For the most recent ADU projects, the HALRB approved the use of an aluminum-clad wood patio door in the ADU at 3310 21<sup>st</sup> Ave. N. (CoA 24-05) and a steel-clad wood door in the ADU at 3307 21<sup>st</sup> Ave. N. (CoA 24-04). The HALRB found these materials appropriate because either the ADU was not visible from the street or was an existing non-historic structure and because both incorporated a vernacular style that matched the district. Since other materials have been allowed for similar building types and the new subject building would be in the rear yard, the HPP staff finds the use of the fiberglass door appropriate but encourages the HALRB to discuss the proposed door material to determine its appropriateness for the district.

Regarding the setback modification request, the HALRB needs to determine if the use of its setback modification authority would be appropriate in this instance. As outlined in §15.7.4 of the County's Zoning Ordinance, the HALRB:

“may find that the proposed setback for buildings and structures is consistent with the existing streetscape and historic district design guidelines even though such setback is inconsistent with the requirements of the underlying zoning district.”

In the past, the HALRB has directed the Zoning Administrator to grant a setback modification a few times for properties in Maywood. However, most of those instances involved projects with either a front or side setback, as related to the streetscape, to maintain the historic architectural character of Maywood. Below is a summary of recent CoA projects that involved a setback modification request:

*Granted:*

- CoA 10-02, 3302 22<sup>nd</sup> St. N.: Construction of a front wrap-around porch (March 2010).
- CoA 13-04A, 2101 N. Kenmore St.: A previously approved window well located at the side of the house (May 2013).
- CoA 13-10B, 2821 23<sup>rd</sup> St. N.: Front porch and stoop (March 2014).
- CoA 16-04A, 3316 21<sup>st</sup> Ave. N.: Construction of a side addition (June 2016).
- CoA 22-14, 2317 N. Kenmore St.: Construction of a rear addition and stoop/stairs (May 2022).

*Other:*

- CoA 20-22, 3601 21<sup>st</sup> Ave. N.: The HALRB did not make a finding on the setback modification needed for the construction of a new garage and change of a curb cut but approved the garage subject to the final approval of certain items by appropriate Arlington government entities (December 2020).
- CoA 21-31, 3421 21<sup>st</sup> Ave. N.: The applicants withdrew their request for a setback modification for the construction of a new garage; therefore, the HALRB did not make a finding (January 2022).

Regardless of the setback modification request, the HALRB still needs to make a finding on the construction of this accessory building because it would be a newly constructed building in Maywood. It should be noted that there is a strip of land (measuring ~7' wide) at the rear of the property, owned by a neighbor on 21<sup>st</sup> Ave. N., that is undevelopable and provides spacing between the house in question and the neighboring property to the south of where the accessory building would be situated. If the HALRB decides not to use its setback modification authority, the applicant could pursue the setback modification request with the Board of Zoning Appeals.