



CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS STAFF REPORT

TO: Historical Affairs and Landmark Review Board (HALRB)
FROM: Serena Bolliger, Historic Preservation Planner
DATE: May 9, 2023
SUBJECT: CoA 22-21A, 2709 Arlington Boulevard, Cambridge Courts Historic District

Background Information

Constructed in 1943, Cambridge Courts is a Colonial (Georgian) Revival-styled garden apartment complex contributing to the Lyon Park National Register Historic District. The complex became a Local Historic District (LHD) in 2016. The property abuts the northern side of Arlington Boulevard (US Route 50) at its intersection with North Fillmore Street. The complex is comprised of twenty multiple-family buildings that feature similar architectural elements but are slightly different in design and layout. The two- to three-story buildings are primarily arranged in a modified U-shaped configuration in a park-like setting, thus conforming to the typical garden apartment form and layout common in Arlington County and throughout the United States in the mid-20th century.

Originally named Leehigh Apartments, the property is one of only ten wartime rental housing complexes constructed in Arlington County. Even with documented rationing of materials for the war effort, Corning & Moore's design for Cambridge Courts had exceptional architectural depth. The Federal Housing Administration (FHA) insured the construction of the apartment complex and rationed construction materials were allocated to the project due to its location within a Defense War Housing Critical Area and proximity to the Pentagon and Fort Myer.

Due to an increase in car break-ins and theft from cars, the condominium board voted in 2021 to install security cameras throughout the complex as a deterrent since there is no on-site property management. In December 2022, the HALRB approved CoA 22-21 to install a security layout monitoring the parking area and service road around the buildings. The HALRB approved the installation of:

- Six (6) security cameras
 - two (2) on the rear of building 2709 facing east and west
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- Three (3) sets of antennae
- Two (2) license plate recognition cameras, one on each of the access entrances to the parking lot
- Four (4) network switches, one on each of the rear buildings
- One video recorder on building 2805.

All the proposed elements were to be installed on the rear of the buildings, largely facing the parking area along the back side of the property. The Alibi Vigilant Dome outdoor cameras measure 4.3" in diameter

by 3.2” tall. Any cables/conduits would run along the exterior walls and be tucked in along the mortar line. The wires would enter the buildings for power supplies through the mortar and not the brick.

Proposal

A CoA amendment is now needed since the contractor for the project made some minor field changes during installation. The Historic Preservation inspector identified the changes in the field, and the property manager submitted an updated property map indicating the following modifications to the originally approved security layout:

- All the antennae proposed for the rear elevations of Buildings 2803, 2711, 2705, 2609, 2603 and 2511 actually were installed on the rear corners of the north facing buildings with the dome cameras (2805, 2709, 2707, 2607, 2605 and 2509)
- The network switches were not installed
- The video recorder box proposed for the rear of the 2805 building has not been installed
- Both license plate camera locations also changed – they remained on the same elevation but were installed in different locations on the elevation
- The dome camera on the rear of 2605 was installed on the opposite side of the chimney than originally proposed

Design Review Committee Review

The Design Review Committee (DRC) heard this application at its May 3, 2023, hybrid meeting. The commissioners had no questions and placed this item on the consent agenda for the May 17, 2022, hybrid HALRB public hearing.

Recommendation

The Historic Preservation staff recommends approval of the subject application. All the proposed security cameras and associated elements have been installed on the rear of the various residential buildings and will not be visible from the streetscape of the property as seen from Arlington Boulevard and its service road. Furthermore, 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.