



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:** May 7, 2024  
**SUBJECT:** 2415 Shirlington Road, CoA 21-30D, 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. More 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 noted in CoA 21-30 at the northeast corner of the building and instead have a 5' sidewalk between the building and the two-way driveway to the north. The applicant also proposed to install a free-standing AlunoTec pergola adjacent to the south side of the building, which would provide shade over the restaurant's outdoor seating fronting 24<sup>th</sup> Road S. No detailed specifications about the pergola, such as material, construction, or its positioning against the historic building, were included in the application so the HALRB at that time requested additional information and voted to defer action on that part of CoA 21-30A.

In June 2023, the applicant submitted updated pergola and awning drawings for consideration along with three bioretention planters (CoA 21-30B) each measuring 108.45 sq. ft., 93.18 sq.ft., and 129.60 sq.ft. respectively. Again, the HALRB deferred action on the pergola because the applicant stated during the meeting that he wanted a different design than what he had submitted. The HALRB instead approved only the three bioretention planters since they had no concerns about them. The applicant returned in July 2023 with two options for the outdoor pergola. The HALRB approved the installation of Option 2 which included a 45'10" x 14' pergola 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. Underneath the pergola would be a concrete slab measuring the same as the pergola.

### **Current Proposal**

The applicant is proposing a change to their previously approved bioretention planter plan. Instead of three planters, the applicant now requests the construction of one bioretention planter at the corner of the property lot near the intersection of Shirlington Road and 24<sup>th</sup> Road S. The planter box would measure 22.4' x 8.9' x 16.3' x 5.9' with a height above ground of 10" (24" underground). The plantings in the box would be small bushes and flowers reaching between 12" to 15" tall.

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

The DRC considered this application at its May 1, 2024, hybrid meeting. The members had some reservations about the proposed location of the bioretention planter near the front building entrance. They had questions about the height of the planter and the reasoning behind its proposed location. Since the applicant was not in attendance, these questions could not be answered.

Mr. Wenchel expressed concerns that the accessibility ramp (located at the crosswalk to the south of the proposed planter) and the sidewalk would not have enough space between them and the planter for there to be an allowable turning radius. The Historic Preservation Program (HPP) staff noted that this element of the project would be reviewed by the appropriate entities in the County as part of the building permit review process. The DRC members agreed that a planter not exceeding 12" in height would be most appropriate. Due to their outstanding questions and concerns, the DRC placed this item on the Discussion Agenda for the May 15, 2024, hybrid HALRB public hearing.

### **Staff Recommendation**

The HPP staff recommends approval of the subject application. The proposed change to the bioretention planter plan was made in response to comments received from other County entities while permitting for the broader renovation project has been under review. As such, the current proposal allows the project to comply with other County requirements and stormwater management goals. Since the proposed planter will measure 10" in height, it will not interfere with the view of the historic building. The planter will be installed along the sidewalk, thereby not damaging or affecting any historic site elements. Thus, the planter complies with Standards #9 and #10 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.



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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.