



## CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS STAFF REPORT

**TO:** Historical Affairs and Landmark Review Board (HALRB)  
**FROM:** Lorin Farris, Historic Preservation Principal Planner  
**DATE:** May 8, 2024  
**SUBJECT:** 400 North Manchester Street, CoA 24-11, Reevesland Local Historic District

### **Background Information**

The Reevesland farmhouse is a two-story dwelling with a stone foundation. Reevesland has the distinction of being the last operating dairy farm in Arlington. Originally known as the Torreyson Farm, the land was purchased in 1863 by William H. Torreyson, who built a house around 1865 and used it as a tenant house. In 1898, it became the home of Torreyson's daughter, Lucy and her husband, George Reeves. The last owner of the original property and farmhouse was Nelson Reeves, son of George Reeves. Arlington County designated the property as a LHD in 2004.

Since 2020, Habitat for Humanity of Washington, DC, and Northern Virginia (Habitat) has been negotiating with the County to acquire the Reevesland Farmhouse property for renovation and operation as a home for adults with developmental disabilities. In January 2024, the County Board approved a use permit amendment to the Reeves Farmhouse Unified Residential Development, allowing for historically sensitive renovations, in keeping with the intended purpose as a residential building, and site improvements by Habitat. Further steps by the County Board occurred in April 2024 with the approval of a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) between the County, Habitat, and the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, which is a preliminary action required to allow for the future allocation of Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding to the project. The County Board still needs to undertake multiple actions prior to Reevesland being conveyed to Habitat, and it is anticipated that this will occur in early summer 2024.

Since 2011, the Reevesland Learning Center has focused on working with school-aged children to grow plants on the property. Construction and maintenance of the garden is managed by volunteers. The garden is in an area that historically was used as a garden by the former owner. The HALRB approved eight initial beds in 2011 (CoA 11-01) and an additional thirteen in 2014 (CoA 14-07). The HALRB approved CoA 20-23 to provide water service to the raised beds in December 2020. Most recently in July 2023, the HALRB approved Habitat's proposed rehabilitation project as CoA 23-16.

In early-2024, the Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) staff informed Habitat and the Historic Preservation Program (HPP) staff that Reevesland was having issues with vandalism and people attempting to gain access inside the house. This has been a recurring site issue for DPR and the HPP staff asked DPR for improvements to secure the property. After considering many options, the HPP and DPR staff determined that motion-detecting security lighting would be an appropriate first step and installation should occur as soon as possible. If not successful, other options to secure the property would be considered by the County.



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There are no design guidelines specifically approved for this LHD; therefore, the HALRB refers to *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties* to evaluate any alterations to the house and grounds.

**Proposal**

On behalf of Arlington County, the DPR staff is requesting a retroactive approval for the installation of four (4) motion-detecting lights, one positioned on each roof eave at each elevation. Each security light is solar powered and is white in color. Each light is secured by 1" screws that are 1/8" thick and installed 8" apart. A boom lift was used to access each area for the installation.

**Design Review Committee Review**

The Design Review Committee (DRC) considered this project at its May 1, 2024, hybrid meeting. The DRC members expressed concerns about the overall safety of the Reevesland property. Mr. Wenchel asked if Habitat had been informed of the recent security risks and installation of the security lighting. The HPP responded that Habitat had been informed. Mr. Wenchel stated he did not feel that these lights were a good long-term security measure for the property. Mr. Davis asked about the placement of the lights and if they were solar powered. The DRC agreed to place this application on the Consent Agenda for the May 15, 2024, hybrid HALRB public hearing.

**Staff Recommendation**

The HPP staff recommends approval of the subject application as submitted. Staff finds that the installed motion-detecting security lights meet the intent of *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation*, specifically Standards #9 and 10, which state the following:

9. New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction shall not destroy historic materials that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible with the massing, size, scale, and architectural features to protect the historic integrity of the property and its environment.

10. New additions and adjacent or related new construction shall 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.

The motion-detecting security lights will not detract from the architectural integrity of the house and will have a minimal impact on any historic material. The lighting fixtures can be easily removed, and the existing material repaired. Once the property is conveyed to Habitat, they intend to undertake a comprehensive analysis of long-term on-site security needs.