



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: October 4, 2024
SUBJECT: CoA 24-23, 2215 N. Lincoln St., Maywood Local Historic District

Background Information

The 1956, non-contributing house at 2215 N. Lincoln St. was described in the 2003 *Maywood National Register Nomination Form* as follows:

“The wood-frame dwelling has four irregularly spaced bays and rests on a solid brick stretcher foundation. The lower portion of the façade is faced in stretcher bond brick, while the upper portion is clad in aluminum siding. It has a low-pitched, side-gable roof sheathed in asphalt shingles. The off-center entry is covered by a cantilevered hood capped by a small-recessed gable. Windows are 1/1 vinyl-sash. Other notable features include simulated paneled shutters, a header string course, an aluminum cornice, and projecting eaves.”

In October 2007, the HALRB approved CoA 07-31 for the partial demolition and rebuilding of the front steps and the installation of a new front storm door.

Proposal

The applicant is proposing to install multiple (a total of 20) solar panels on the main and secondary roofs of the house. The proposal includes the placement of 12 solar panels on the roof of the house’s rear addition and eight solar panels on the rear slope of the main roof. The solar panels would be black in color, measure 44.64” by 67.79”, and the height between the roof surface and the top or face of the panel would be 7”. The inverter and utility disconnect switch would be installed next to the existing meter and existing electrical panel on the west elevation of the house.

Design Review Committee (DRC) Review

The Design Review Committee (DRC) considered this application at its October 4, 2024, hybrid meeting. Ms. Foster asked if the panels would be on the back of the house; Ms. Tawney confirmed that they would. Mr. Wenchel asked for photos of the front of the house. Ms. Tawney pulled up Google Maps to show a streetview of the property. Mr. Wenchel asked if the house was contributing to Maywood; Ms. Tawney shared that it was a non-contributing building. Ms. Tawney clarified why the project needed review and noted that since the proposal included solar panels being placed on the main house, it required HALRB review as outlined in the *Maywood Design Guidelines*. Ms. Foster stated that she felt the proposal was appropriate because it was located on the back elevation and was on a non-contributing building. Mr.

Davis agreed and noted he felt the placement of the inverter was acceptable. Ms. Tawney asked if they were comfortable with the proposed height of the panels noting that normally 6” or less is considered appropriate and “low profile.” Ms. Foster felt it was appropriate because it was on the rear of the property and the difference of an inch in height would likely not be visually discernible because the panels were not being installed close to the edge of the roof. Mr. Davis and Mr. Wenchel agreed, but Mr. Davis wondered if the height could be 6”. Ms. Tawney said that she would ask the applicant if changing the height would be possible. Since the DRC commissioners felt comfortable with the design and its appropriateness for both the historic house and the historic district, they placed this application on the Consent Agenda for the October 16, 2024, hybrid HALRB public hearing.

Recommendation

The Historic Preservation Program (HPP) staff recommends approval of the subject application as submitted. Since the project proposes to place solar panels on the main roof of a historic house and have panels measuring 7” in height, the project requires HALRB review according to Appendix G of the *Maywood Design Guidelines* rather than the administrative review process via the HPP staff. However, the proposed panels would comply with the following Appendix G specifications:

- The panels would not be placed on the primary façade of the building;
- The panels would not require alterations to character-defining features of a historic resource;
- The panels would not obstruct views of significant architectural features;
- The panels would be set at angles consistent with the slope of the supporting roof;
- The panels would be arranged in an organized configuration; and
- Any inverters, storage units, or hardware would be located on the rear half of the dwelling or in areas with limited visibility from the public right-of-way.

The main objectives regarding solar panels noted in the *Maywood Design Guidelines* are to: 1) protect the historic character of the buildings; and 2) reduce the visual impacts of solar panels as seen from the public right-of-way. Since the panels will be installed on the rear of the house as recommended by the *Maywood Design Guidelines* and would not be visible from the main façade right-of-way on N. Lincoln St., HPP staff believes the proposal is appropriate. Staff believes the installation of the inverter adjacent to existing utility boxes is also appropriate and would not be largely visible. Additionally, this dwelling is non-contributing to the LHD and the HALRB has approved solar panels from more visible locations on non-contributing properties in Maywood previously (CoA 22-7 – 2836 23rd Rd. N.) as well as on contributing properties (CoA 24-07 – 3511 22nd St. N.).

Although the panels cannot be categorized as “low profile” given their overall height of 7”, a 1” difference with what is considered low profile in the *Maywood Design Guidelines*, this additional inch would not be discernible from the ground and would not have a large visual impact. HPP staff discussed if changing the height would be possible with the applicant. The applicant noted that they will try their best to keep the panels at a 6” height installation, but that the need for space for wire management and for clearance for leaves/debris often requires that the panels are installed at a height of 7”. HPP staff appreciate that the applicant is taking the request into consideration.