

**CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS STAFF REPORT**

**TO:** Historical Affairs and Landmark Review Board (HALRB)  
**FROM:** Serena Bolliger, Historic Preservation Planner  
**DATE:** October 15, 2021  
**SUBJECT:** 2411 24<sup>th</sup> Street North, CoA 21-21, Fort C.F. Smith Historic District

**Background Information**

Fort C.F. Smith Park includes a 19-acre parcel and a late-19<sup>th</sup> and early-20<sup>th</sup> century estate with embedded Civil War-era ruins.

Between 1863 and 1865, Fort C. F. Smith served as a U.S. Army military installation. It was a second-generation fort, built mid-war to bolster the existing defenses of the nation's capital. Most of the fort's perimeter fits the typical Civil War fort profile of a flat central section, known as the terreplein, surrounded by a raised-earth rampart that enhanced views of the enemy. It was first called the Fort at Red House or Fort McDowell, but in June 1863 it was named to honor Major General Charles Ferguson Smith. The fort was abandoned and dismantled in the fall of 1865.

The estate currently comprises five non-contributing resources, including an eclectic main house (ca. 1877-1930s), a 1920s cottage, two outbuildings, and a modern tractor barn. The fort became a Local Historic District (LHD) in 1987 and was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 2000.

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 building and grounds.

**Proposal**

On September 12, 2020, the Arlington County Board adopted an amendment to the Code of Arlington County, Virginia Chapter 13, Missiles, to add Title II Sections 13-11 through 13-15 "relating to firearms, to prohibit the possession, carrying or transportation of any firearms in County buildings, facilities and certain public rights of way." DES staff was tasked to add these signs to all County facilities, including four County-owned LHDs. The County Board report language states "the ordinance requires the County to post signs at the entrance(s) to all buildings, parks, and park facilities."

Per these guidelines, DES staff proposes to install five (5) 12" x 18" signs on 4" x 4" white-painted wooden posts at the walkway entrances to the park and by the service parking space.

### **Design Review Committee Review**

The Design Review Committee (DRC) heard this application at its October 6, 2021, virtual meeting. The Committee had some concerns about the visibility of the various signs. Therefore, this item was placed on the discussion agenda for the October 20, 2021, HALRB hearing with the other three DES signage applications.

### **Recommendation**

The Historic Preservation Program staff recommends approval of the installation of the proposed signs as they are required by County Ordinance, and they will increase safety in the historic building. As the signs are made to be visible and are required to be at every entrance, there are few unobtrusive solutions for sign placement on the historic buildings and in the cultural landscapes. Staff understands that in this case, the signs will be more visible than they might be if they were being installed for a different use and could adhere to the visibility recommendations of the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards*.

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.