



CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS STAFF REPORT

To: Historical Affairs and Landmark Review Board (HALRB)
From: Serena Bolliger, Historic Preservation Planner
Date: August 9, 2022
Subject: 2326 North Jackson Street, CoA 21-05A, Maywood Historic District

Background

The single-family residence at 2326 North Jackson Street was a 1.5-story minimal traditional vernacular dwelling (called Colonial Craftsman in the *Maywood National Register Historic District Nomination Form*) built before 1923. The nomination form describes the contributing building as follows:

The two-bay-wide, wood-frame dwelling rests on a solid rock-face concrete-block foundation. It is clad in lapped wood siding and has a hipped roof sheathed in diamond-shaped asphalt shingles. It has a one-story, three-bay, wood-frame front porch on Tuscan columns and both one-over-one and six-light wood-sash windows. Window and door surrounds are unmolded with a projecting sill. Other notable features include a hip-roof front dormer with flared eaves, wide, overhanging flared eaves, and a wood soffit.

In 2007 and 2008, the owners took steps to satisfy the requirements of both Section 31A.F.6 (current Section 15.7.11) of the Arlington County Zoning Ordinance (ACZO) and Code of Virginia Title 15.2-2306.A.3 to list the property for sale for a period of one year, and filed for a County building permit to demolish the house. On July 31, 2008, the County's Acting Zoning Administrator made a final determination that the owners had met the letter of the law and fulfilled the requirements as expressed in then Section 31A.F.6 (current Section 15.7.11) of the ACZO, thereby establishing permission to raze the contributing house. In December 2020, the Historic Preservation staff confirmed with the County Attorney and the current Zoning Administrator that this demolition approval from 2008 was indeed still valid.

In July 2021, the applicant submitted a plan to build a new single-family two-story house with a front shed dormer in a modern vernacular style inspired by the contributing dwelling (CoA 21-05). After multiple meetings with the board, approval was granted to demolish the historic building and construct a new dwelling. The applicant has started construction and is requesting some mid-construction amendments.

Proposal

The applicant is proposing three changes to the previously approved drawings. First, the applicant is requesting a retroactive approval for an added 17" already applied to the height of the structure due to grade issues. Secondly, based on the height change, the applicant would need to add a painted wooden banister with 1 1/4" x 1 1/4" square-edged spindles to the front porch, per the Virginia Uniform Statewide Building Code. Finally, the applicant would like to insert a 5'4" x 3' wooden simulated divided lite Jeldwen window to the basement level of the south elevation in the front half of the dwelling.



Design Review Committee

The DRC reviewed this project at their August 3, 2022, virtual meeting. Discussion mostly centered on the added height. The applicant explained that the height was all coming from the area between the first floor and the grade as the house was sitting up higher on the ground than initially proposed. As a result of the added height, the railing on the front porch was a needed addition to adhere to the code requirements of the new height above grade. The applicant explained that the window was not an egress window, but merely a request from the architect. The commissioners took issue that this somehow escaped our attention and that the permit was issued for the building with these changes without getting HALRB involvement. Staff offered to confer with permitting staff to understand why the permitting had been allowed without consultation with the HALRB. Beyond the issue of notification, the commissioners did not take issue with the other changes and placed the project on the Discussion Agenda so that neighbors could come forward with comments. Mr. Dudka clarified that he would say the DRC recommends approval if pressed for an opinion, but with the caveat that HPP needed to be looped into discussions with permitting going forward. The DRC placed this item on the Discussion Agenda for the August 17, 2022, HALRB virtual public hearing.

Recommendation

Staff find that the proposed window is larger than a typical basement window, but it is not inappropriate for historic homes to have a light source for interior staircases or windows installed at the basement level.

When the applicants proposed their first design in April 2021, there were concerns about the proposed height of the new house, given how it deviated from the low height of the original dwelling on the site, comments from the neighbors, and comparisons with the neighboring rooflines. The applicants lowered the roofline by 7' in response to this concern. The originally approved building was still an entire story taller than the original dwelling, and given the past concerns about height, staff cannot state that any additional height is appropriate for this home or in this neighborhood.

The original dwelling on the site was a minimal traditional home without a porch railing. However, railings are typical on modern structures, and while this is a minimal traditional-inspired home, it is new construction, so a railing could be considered typical for construction of its time. The proposed banister and spindles are more typical of the Craftsman and Colonial Revival homes in Maywood and less appropriate for a minimal traditional-inspired home. Staff suggests that the applicant explore design options which will minimize the visibility of the porch railing, such as spacing the spindles farther apart.