



HISTORICAL AFFAIRS AND LANDMARK REVIEW BOARD
ARLINGTON COUNTY, VIRGINIA

CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS STAFF REPORT

TO: Historical Affairs and Landmark Review Board (HALRB)
FROM: Serena Bolliger, Historic Preservation Planner
DATE: June 12, 2023
SUBJECT: CoA 23-14, 3929 N. Stafford St., Fort Ethan Allen Local Historic District (LHD)

Background Information

Fort Ethan Allen was built in September 1861 as a large bastion-style fort. Originally, the site was surrounded mostly by farmland and forests which were cut down to allow for clear lines of sight toward other fortifications and approaches to Washington, D.C. The fort was connected by a long series of trenches and earthworks to nearby Fort Marcy and the Potomac River. The fort consisted of four main faces, with additional salient angles built into the north and east faces. It maintained a perimeter of 768 yards with emplacements for thirty-four guns. Interior structures included two bombproofs, magazines, and other supporting structures. Today, Fort Ethan Allen retains several major aboveground features. These include large earthworks, one bombproof, gun platforms, and traces of magazines. One outlier trench (contributing site) remains to the southwest of the fort. Fort Ethan Allen's remaining interior structures remain clearly visible and understandable as distinct historic resources. Furthermore, the fort's south face, centrally located bombproof, and remaining north face structures work together to strongly convey an understanding of the fort's historic scale. A ca. 1944 pump house (non-contributing building) is located north of the fort.

Arlington County's Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) has participated in the Civil War Trails (CWT) program, a multi-state heritage program connecting Civil War sites across the East Coast, since at least the 1990s. The CWT program connects Arlington sites to a larger audience of Civil War enthusiasts and includes the County in its marketing and social media. The DPR pays annual fees to be included in the CWT program for five interpretive markers: one at Fort Ethan Allen; three at Fort C.F. Smith; and one at the Arlington Mill site. The existing CWT sign at Fort Ethan Allen was installed in a secluded part of the park circa 2003. In June 2013, the HALRB approved the installation of nine historic markers around the fort including four markers set in a circular plaza, as well as a bronze sculptural rendition of the fort site in the northern portion of the park.

Proposal

As the applicant, DPR staff is requesting to move the existing CWT marker from a less accessible location near the Fort Ethan Allen trench to one that is closer to the other markers dedicated to Fort Ethan Allen just off N. Old Glebe Road. The marker would be installed adjacent to the walkway connecting the circular plaza to the sidewalk. The applicant is also requesting to replace the existing language on the

marker with previously uninterpreted information about the African American soldiers who served in the United States Colored Troops (USCT) stationed at this and other Arlington forts during the Civil War.

The HALRB first reviewed this proposed historic marker at its April 19, 2023, hybrid public hearing. The HALRB considered the proposed site to be appropriate but requested that the draft marker return to the HALRB for a second review of the content.

Design Review Committee (DRC) Review

The DRC does not review historic markers so this proposal was not considered at either the April or June 2023 meetings of the DRC.

Recommendation

Staff recommends approval of this application as submitted. The area in which the marker will be relocated has been disturbed in the past for the development of the interpretive site. As such, the location meets the intent of Standard #8 of *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation*:

Standard #8: Archaeological resources will be protected and preserved in place. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures will be undertaken.

The new topic proposed for the marker is appropriate for this site. Staff believes this new location of the marker will make it more accessible for all visitors to Fort Ethan Allen.