



HISTORICAL AFFAIRS AND LANDMARK REVIEW BOARD
ARLINGTON COUNTY, VIRGINIA

CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS STAFF REPORT

TO: Historical Affairs and Landmark Review Board (HALRB)
FROM: Lorin Farris, Historic Preservation Section Supervisor
DATE: August 12, 2026
SUBJECT: 400 N. Manchester Street, Reevesland Renovation and Addition

Background Information

Constructed in 1878, the historic Reeves Farmhouse is located in the Boulevard Manor neighborhood. The property became a Local Historic District (LHD) in 2004 and a County-held easement protecting the exterior was recorded in 2018. Reevesland is noted for its architectural history and its association with the rural and agricultural history of Arlington, as it was the last operating dairy farm in the County. The period of significance for the LHD encompasses the years that the Reeves family operated their dairy farm. The buildings associated with the period of significance—the farmhouse and milk shed—are historically significant.

This is a brief architectural description of the historic farmhouse:

The Reevesland farmhouse is a two-story building with a stone foundation. The original tenant farmhouse of 1865 featured a gabled roof and a modified T-plan. The wood framing remains as underlying physical evidence of a number of additions and remodeling undertaken over more than 100 years, with the major changes occurring from 1878 to 1911. The earliest sections of the house have a simple box cornice with gable returns, a plain frieze, and double corner boards. There is a bracketed one-story porch on the east side and a small open porch at the rear.

In 2020, Habitat for Humanity of Washington, D.C. & Northern Virginia (Habitat) and the County Board signed a Letter of Intent (LOI) to convey and make improvements to the County-owned property. Post-renovation and construction, Habitat will transfer the property to L'Arche Greater Washington D.C. (L'Arche), a non-profit residential service provider for adults with intellectual disabilities. In 2024, Habitat proposed the rehabilitation and adaptive reuse of the historic Reevesland Farmhouse as a group home for adults with developmental disabilities. The County Board undertook multiple actions prior to the Reeves Farmhouse being conveyed to Habitat, including allocation of Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding to the project. The CDBG funding allocation contained certain Federal compliance requirements, such as a NEPA Environmental Review and Section 106 historic preservation review, before the County Board could approve the allocation. Through this process, the County, Habitat, and the Virginia Department of Historic Resources (DHR), which serves as the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), and consulting parties, agreed to a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) that details mitigation efforts related to the rehabilitation and adaptive reuse project. These efforts include, but

are not limited to, architectural and archaeological surveys, a historic marker, oral history, and a learning library.

The Reeves Farmhouse project team consists of L'Arche, HomeAid National Capital Region (HomeAid NCR), Habitat, and Toll Brothers. L'Arche will be the owner and operator of the Reeves Farmhouse upon completion, providing housing and services to up to four adults with intellectual disabilities. Habitat serves as the project manager responsible for managing the predevelopment process, securing all necessary approvals, and assembling project financing. HomeAid NCR is the construction manager and coordinates with their long-time community partner and general contractor, Toll Brothers, to complete the construction project. HomeAid connects vetted local nonprofits with building experts and trade partners who provide donated and/or significantly discounted construction services and materials.

On April 19, 2023, the HALRB reviewed the proposed massing and overall design concepts for the restoration of the exterior of the historic farmhouse and the construction of two new additions. The applicant sought preliminary HALRB approval of a CoA to satisfy one of the main conditions of the signed LOI. The HALRB considered all aspects of their proposal and determined that a preliminary CoA could be granted with further design details being needed prior to issuance of a final CoA. Upon receipt of the preliminary CoA, the applicants proceeded with the preparation of construction drawings to be submitted to the County for a Use Permit Amendment. The applicants returned to the HALRB for their final CoA, which included additional details on materials and specifications, and on July 19, 2023, received their final CoA from the HALRB (CoA 23-16).

On July 15, 2026, HPP staff notified Habitat, L'Arche, HomeAid, and their cultural resources consultant, ~Circa, that elements of the project did not match the design approved by DHR or the HALRB, and necessitated an amendment to CoA 23-16. The HPP staff presented the design changes to DHR on July 24, 2026, per notification was pursuant to Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, and the MOA that was executed for the project. DHR provided an official response on July 31, 2026, to the HPP and the project team stating that the design changes did not constitute an increase to the previously determined adverse effect, that no additional mitigation was necessary, and the changes were allowed to proceed pending HALRB approval.

Proposal

The applicant is proposing the following adjustments to the project design. These elements are retroactive:

1. The two-story, rear addition roof changed from a continuous ridgeline to a hyphen roofline, causing a height increase of approximately 12 inches.
2. One (1), second-story window on the west (side) elevation is smaller due to the new interior stair configuration.

Design Review Committee (DRC) Review

The DRC considered the proposed modifications at its August 5, 2026, hybrid meeting.

Concerning the changes to the roof from a continuous ridgeline to a hyphen roofline, the project team explained to the DRC that the ridge beam where the new roof section joined to the existing roof section, was shown located over the elevator and was supposed to be in line with the existing roof ridge beam. This seamless transition between the two roof lines would have allowed for a large bedroom under the new section with two usable closets. However, during construction, the on-plan location of the ridge beam

as drawn on the architectural plans was determined to be incorrect. If built as originally proposed, it would have lowered the bedroom ceiling height, would have caused conflicts with the corridor doorway, created unusable closets, and created a well on the roof that would have trapped water, as the heel height was no longer high enough at the corner to meet the addition. By shifting the ridge beam up and to the side, while also keeping the existing roof pitch, it removed any issues with the bedroom height, the closets, the corridor doorway, and prevented the trapping of water on the roof.

The DRC was generally supportive of the design changes to the rear addition's roof and its height, although the commissioners questioned how the on-plan location of the ridge beam was incorrect. The project team shared that once it was apparent that the on-plan location of the ridge beam was not feasible and it would be necessary to modify it, they made the decision to do so in the field to avoid leaving the actively opened up farmhouse exposed and vulnerable. They acknowledged that when this change occurred on-site that the County should have been consulted before making the changes. The DRC noted that the roof design change from a continuous ridgeline to a hyphen roofline allowed for better differentiation between the historic house and the new rear addition. Although the rear addition was increased in height, the DRC acknowledged that the height difference was minor and was not readily noticeable.

Concerning the changes to the second-story window on the west elevation, the project team explained to the DRC that the window in question was at the second story where the interior staircase leads to the third floor, which was designed with the maximum riser height allowed per code to minimize impact to the window location. However, to structurally support the staircase stringer, a smaller window was necessary for it to still be operable with a stair tread at this location. The project team investigated whether the staircase could be shifted away from the exterior wall to allow for the original window size, but shifting the second run of the stairs would then cause a loss of head-height clearance at the third-floor landing where the new dormers were added solely for that purpose.

Mr. Robert Dudka asked the project team whether they could adjust the framing of the stairs or the framing below the window to allow for the original window size and provide the necessary structural support for the staircase stringer. The project team explained that many options were considered and that a smaller window was the best approach. Ms. Alex Foster and Ms. Rebecca Meyer did not have concerns about the smaller window. At the close of the meeting, the DRC requested that the applicant investigate these proposed options more prior to the HALRB hearing and placed the project on the Discussion Agenda for the August 19, 2026, hybrid HALRB public hearing.

However, Mr. Dudka later determined that implementing measures to protect the full-size window could be an issue and a source of concern for the house given the use of the facility. He expressed this opinion via an email to HPP staff and to the other DRC commissioners. Given this update,, the DRC decided to recommend approval for the proposed CoA amendment to the HALRB. It was still determined that the project should be on the Discussion Agenda given the importance and interest in the project by the HALRB.

Recommendation

The HPP staff recommends approval of the modifications to the design. The HPP staff believe that the roof design and additional height are minor changes, as the hyphen roofline from a continuous ridgeline helps differentiate between the historic house and the new addition. Although the addition has increased in height, staff believe the rear addition remains subservient to the main historic house and it does not have an adverse effect to the historic farmhouse. Concerning the smaller, second-story window located on the west (side) elevation, staff believe this is a minor change as well to the design. The window fenestration pattern remains the same, follows the material requirements that were previously approved by the HALRB, and although the smaller window is visible, its location on a secondary elevation has a lesser impact to the overall historic design of the farmhouse.

Since the Reevesland LHD does not have adopted historic district design guidelines, the HPP staff and the HALRB must utilize the guidance provided in *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation* when considering all proposed alterations and CoA projects. HPP staff find that the subject application complies with Standards #9 and #10, as follows:

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

Standard #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.