



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 14, 2023
SUBJECT: 2415 Shirlington Road, CoA 21-30A, Green Valley Pharmacy Historic District

Background Information

The Green Valley Pharmacy, originally built in 1942 as a grocery store, was designated as an Arlington County Local Historic District (LHD) in 2013. The building is one-story in height with a rectangular-shaped plan. It is constructed of 12-inch cinder blocks faced in textured stucco. The large single-pane windows have aluminum surrounds and rest on brick rowlock sills; the sills on the smaller windows on the south elevation have been covered in stucco. The main entrance door at the southwest corner is solid glass within an aluminum surround and has a fixed glass transom above. The building's simple design has minimal architectural ornamentation, with the most distinctive feature now being the prominent corner entrance. The signage that had been centered underneath the roof line on both street-front elevations was removed at the same time as the mansard roof.

There have been minimal changes made to the building over time. The HALRB approved CoA 18-13 in July 2018 for: 1) the demolition of the false mansard roof (built ca. 1983) and restoration of the building's roofline to its original minimalist design; and 2) removal of a healthy tree (greater than 15" diameter at dbh) abutting the rear of the building. The HALRB later approved CoA 18-13A in September 2018 for the installation of a metal cap on the parapet and CoA 18-13B in December 2018 for the installation of a new HVAC system. Most recently, the HALRB approved CoA 21-30 in January 2022 to allow the installation of a walk-in cooler at the rear (with the provision that the original chimney be retained) and various hardscaping changes to allow access and parking around the building. The applicant submitted a CoA amendment for changes to the hardscaping and parking in September 2022 but chose to defer the application to finalize some details. In October 2022, the applicant proposed to remove the concrete pad and dumpsters at the northeast corner of the pharmacy noted in CoA 21-30 and instead have a 5' sidewalk between the building and the two-way driveway north of the building. The applicant also proposed to install a free-standing AlunoTec pergola adjacent to the building, which would provide shade over the restaurant's outdoor seating, along the south side of the building fronting 24th Road S.

The DRC considered the application again at its October 5, 2022, hybrid meeting. It should be noted that the plans now included a reference to an awning (since changed to a pergola), but without any detailed specifications. Mr. Wenchel asked for additional information about the awning, particularly materials, specifications, and installation methods. He recommended that the awning be installed below the building's roof cap to ensure that the roof line of the historic building would not be obstructed from the

street level. He also requested an elevation drawing showing how the installed awning would look against the massing of the building. After discussion, the HALRB agreed that they needed additional information and voted to “defer action on that part of CoA 21-30A, to allow installation of a proposed pergola, pending the receipt, evaluation, and HALRB approval of elevation drawings or renderings that specify the pergola’s material, construction, and its positioning against the historic building and its anchoring points.”

Proposal

Based on a recent stormwater requirement analysis of the site, the current application (CoA 21-30B) is for the installation of three bioretention planters in place of the ornamental planters originally approved in CoA 21-30. The proposed planters will be sunk into the sidewalk at three locations surrounding the building on the LHD parcel.

Bioretention planter A will be a 93 s.f. rectangular installation with one street tree on the west side along Shirlington Rd. Bioretention planters B and C will be along 24th St. S. These will be approximately 108 and 130 s.f. respectively and each will contain a street tree with other plantings. All the planters will have a low 2-4” curb on the side farthest from the building (between the planter and the public sidewalk) to maximize the capture site’s stormwater runoff. There will not be a curb along the edge closest to the building (between the seating space and the planter) to allow the water to drain into the planters properly.

The applicant also has returned with more details regarding the proposed pergola with a retractable awning on the south side of the building over the outdoor seating area. The quote from AlunoTec lists a motorized retractable awning roof system with solid aluminum profiles, 101.6 mm x 101.6 mm posts and two crossbars supporting the roof. The fabric will be white polyester and the coating for the frame will be powder coated “Anthracite white.” The dimensions listed in the quote, which are assumed to be in millimeters though the exact metric is not given, include: length of 7620, width of 4876, a maximum height of 3200 against the building sloping down to 2743. The quote lists two units, to be installed side-by-side for a total floor coverage of 74.31 meters squared. The pergola will have two linear LED lighting strips and six motorized side blinds. No information has been provided for the installation system, connection to the building, or how the pergola will appear against the historic building.

Design Review Committee (DRC) Review

The DRC considered CoA 21-30B at its June 7, 2023, hybrid meeting. The commissioners did not have questions or concerns about the bioretention planters. Mr. Wenchel reiterated his request from October 2022 for more information about the pergola and drawings of how it would appear against the building. Mr. Davis asked for details on installation methods and whether the pergola would be connected to the building. The DRC placed this item on the Discussion Agenda for the June 21, 2023, hybrid HALRB public hearing.

Staff Recommendation

At this time, the Historic Preservation Program (HPP) staff recommends approval of the proposed bioretention planters only. These proposed changes are minor to the landscape and will help the site meet stormwater management goals. Since the proposed planters will be located at-grade, they will not interfere with the view of the historic building. They will be installed along the sidewalk and do not damage or affect any historic site elements. Thus, the planters comply with Standards #9 and #10 of *The Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation*:



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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.
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.

The HPP staff appreciates the additional specifications provided on the proposed pergola and is supportive of outdoor seating for the new restaurant. A free-standing pergola would provide additional service space for this historically small building without impacting the building itself. Depending on how it is installed, a pergola could be removed in the future without any detriment to the historic materials or character of the building, thereby complying with Standard #10 of *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation*:

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.

The proposed location of the pergola along 24th Road S. means it would not impede the diagonal view to the historic doorway at the corner of the building, thereby retaining the character of the original corner store. Additionally, the proposed height would leave the sightline of the one-story building unbroken from the street, which is called out as character-defining in the *Green Valley Pharmacy Local Historic District Design Guidelines*:

The original massing of the building and arrangement of fenestration remains unchanged. Stylistically, the Green Valley Pharmacy is of non-descript architectural design and is a simple, mid-20th century commercial building without architectural detailing.

The significant features of the site include the rectangular-shaped commercial building, the adjacent paved parking areas, and the building's prominent location at the corner of Shirlington Road and 24th Road South. The priority for preservation of the site will involve maintaining the historic and architectural integrity and character of the entire building, mainly as a one-story commercial building with a corner entrance.

However, given the building's simplistic design and its prominent corner location, the introduction of a large pergola would be a major visual change to this characteristically simple landscape. Thus, the HPP staff supports Mr. Wenchel's request for an elevation or renderings showing the pergola against the building. This would allow staff and the HALRB to evaluate potential impacts on viewpoints of the building from the right-of-way, as well as allow the HPP inspector to confirm the installation details. Further, the HPP staff requests specifications on the anchor points into the ground, and also encourages the applicant to consider a transparent or opaque material for the rolling shades on the sides to avoid any safety concerns. For these reasons, the HPP staff recommends that the pergola element be separated from

application CoA 21-30B and return to the DRC and HALRB for a future review cycle to allow for further refinement of the proposal and submission of the requested additional information.