

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 Planner
DATE: April 14, 2023
SUBJECT: 400 N. Manchester Street, Reevesland Renovation and Addition

Background Information

Constructed in c.1900, the historic Reeves Farmhouse is located in the Bluemont Park neighborhood. The property became a local historic district (LHD) in 2004 and a County-held easement protecting the exterior was recorded in 2018. Given its LHD status, the Historical Affairs and Landmark Review Board (HALRB) has authority to review and approve any major alterations being proposed. 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. The buildings associated with the period of significance—the farmhouse and milk shed—are historically significant.

Arlington County began searching for appropriate uses for Reevesland in 2010. The Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR), who manages this County-owned property, requested HALRB approval in August 2015 to demolish a non-contributing detached garage, as well as the reconfiguration and resurfacing of the existing driveway, the addition of new hardscape features, and removal of two trees (CoA 15-13). At that time, the HALRB also provided additional input regarding a proposed subdivision of the house lot via a Unified Residential Development (URD) within the LHD. The URD proposed an area for possible additions or additional construction of outbuildings within the subdivided lot. The HALRB chose to defer consideration of the entire CoA request and the URD, as it was made clear that the Planning Commission and/or the County Board could continue to act on the URD effort. In September 2015, the County Board approved a use permit to create the URD, with modifications from the Zoning Ordinance requirements for setbacks, lot width, lot coverage, and public parkland. In 2017, DPR returned to the HALRB to request the demolition of the garage, renovate the driveway, add parking spaces, and construct a grass paver access drive to the milk house, and the HALRB granted approval (CoA 17-11).

In 2017, Habitat for Humanity of Washington, DC and Northern Virginia (hereafter Habitat) approached Arlington County and proposed a rehabilitation and adaptive reuse of the farmhouse as a group home for residents with developmental disabilities. In February 2020, the County and Habitat reached a non-binding agreement for the project with a signed Letter of Intent (LOI). After the LOI was signed, the project stalled due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The specific conditions of the LOI must be met prior to County conveyance of the property to Habitat.

Since September 2022, Habitat and its project partner who will manage the group home, L'Arche, have been in active discussions with County staff across several programs and departments, including the Historic Preservation Program (HPP), Housing, Zoning, DPR, Department of Environmental Services, Real Estate Bureau, and the County Attorney's Office. In January 2023, DPR held a community meeting for the Bluemont Civic Association to update neighbors on the project and reintroduce the concept designs for the adaptive reuse of the historic farmhouse. The proposed design concept includes: 1) restoring the exterior of the farmhouse, 2) modernizing and renovating the home's interior, 3) constructing two new historically compatible additions, and 4) modifying some aspects of the grounds and landscaping.

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.

A detailed analysis of the evolution of the various construction phases of the historic farmhouse can be found in a 2004 report by John Milner Associates, Inc., "An Historical, Architectural, and Archaeological survey: Torreyson-Reeves Farm, Arlington, Virginia." The applicants provided an excerpted illustration from this report as part of their HALRB submission (see pages 4-8).

Proposal

Habitat is proposing a restoration of the farmhouse's exterior, a new two-story addition at the south elevation (rear), and a new one-story addition at the southwest elevation (side). These alterations will increase the house's bedroom count to seven bedrooms and provide ADA-compliant access and gathering spaces.

The applicant proposes to remove the existing wood double-hung windows and do an in-kind replacement with prefinished aluminum-clad wood, one-over-one double-hung windows with insulated low-e glazing, including argon gas fill. Habitat indicated their preference for the in-kind replacement of the existing windows because of cost, that restoring the existing windows could prolong the overall project timeline, and concerns about the window's long-term maintenance. In the 1878 section of the house, the applicant proposes to remove the existing windows and replace them with prefinished aluminum-clad wood, six-over-six, double-hung windows with insulated low-e glazing, including argon gas fill.

Concerning proposed exterior materials to be used, the applicant has provided the following details to date. The existing vinyl/aluminum siding and trim will be removed, and the condition of the underlying wood siding and trim will be inspected (if extant) to determine what can be restored or needs to be replaced. The current restoration plan for the wood siding and trim is to patch, repair, and/or replace to match as required, as well as paint the exterior. If the condition of the existing siding and/or trim is badly deteriorated, the applicant will install new wood clapboard siding to match the existing profiles.

The applicant proposes to remove the existing asphalt shingle roofing and install new dimensional asphalt shingles. Where there is existing metal roof cladding, such as on the 1911 section and side porch located on the east elevation, the applicant proposes to replace the existing metal roofing with new dimensional asphalt shingles. They also will install new gutters and downspouts where needed. On the house's north

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roof ridge (northwest), the applicant proposes a new shed-roof dormer with two small, fixed aluminum-clad wood windows. This dormer is necessary to accommodate interior clearances for a reconfigured main stairway.

In the 1904 section of the house (northeast), the applicant proposes to remove the existing brick chimneys down to the roofline and rebuild them with a flagstone cap.

Concerning the main entry door, the applicant proposes to remove the existing historic wood door, which will be salvaged for reuse within the interior. They will install a new 36"-wide, 4-panel solid wood exterior door with lites, paint the door, and install accessible hardware with a deadbolt.

The applicant plans to install an ADA-compliant ramp near the existing front porch to provide access to the parking area and walkways. The HALRB is being asked to consider three different configurations and location:

1. A U-shaped ramp at the porch's northwest corner;
2. An L-shaped ramp at the porch's northwest corner; and
3. A straight ramp near the porch's northwest corner that would run along the farmhouse's west (side) elevation.

The existing front porch also will need to have railings (design details forthcoming) as required by code for safety reasons. The applicant proposes to remove the porch flooring, inspect the existing joists, and repair/replace joists and flooring as required.

A new two-story, gable-roof rear addition is being proposed adjacent to the 1878 section (south) of the farmhouse. Although the gable roof of the proposed addition will be flush with the original farmhouse's roofline, the applicant has indicated that materials, color, and/or an additional seam on the dimensional asphalt shingles would help differentiate the new section from the old construction. The roof configuration accommodates needed interior clearance and an elevator that will be necessary for the second story to be ADA-compliant. The applicant met with the HPP staff to consider other options to allow for the elevator and the current proposal is the most efficient option. The gable roof's west side will be elongated, to recall the roof configuration of the 1911 section of the house. The addition's east elevation (side) will contain two, one-over-one double-hung windows at the first and second stories that will be arranged closer to the south elevation. The addition's south elevation (rear) will contain one, one-over-one double-hung window at the first and second story that will be arranged closer to the east elevation. At the southwest corner of the addition, an inset rear porch will be constructed to recall the existing 1911 rear porch in this section.

A new one-story, cross-gabled roof addition will be sited at the 1911 section of the farmhouse (west elevation). This new wing, which will have an east-west orientation, will provide multiple bedrooms and bathrooms. This addition will be two-bays wide by two-bays long, and the gable end will feature a closed return to correlate to the farmhouse's west gable end. The addition's roof cladding is proposed as dimensional asphalt shingles, and prefinished aluminum gutters and downspouts will be installed. Its exterior will be clad in prefinished fiber cement lap-siding with fiber cement or PVC trim. The proposed windows will be prefinished aluminum-clad wood, one-over-one, double-hung windows. The addition's

north elevation (front) will contain two windows, with two shed-roof dormers with smaller one-over-one, double-hung windows. These dormers will reflect the new shed-roof dormer proposed on the 1911 section of the farmhouse. The addition's south elevation (rear) will contain three double-hung windows, with one window arranged closer to the rear porch. There likewise will be two shed-roof dormers with smaller one-over-one, double-hung windows on the south roof ridge. The addition's west elevation (side) will contain a central entry flanked by windows. Above the entrance there will be two, side-by-side windows in the closed-gable peak. The entrance door, which will contain a 36"-wide, 4-panel solid wood exterior door with lites, will be accessed by a new walkway.

An existing tree (dimensions and species unknown) located southwest of the proposed two-story addition would need to be removed because the location of the addition will encroach upon the tree's critical root zone. The applicant will be meeting with the County's Urban Forester to determine the best approaches to mitigate the loss of this tree. Another tree located northwest of the parking area will remain.

Regarding alterations to ground surfaces and landscaping, the applicant proposes a storm water management bio-facility to be located northeast of the farmhouse (more details forthcoming). The paved area west of the farmhouse will be expanded to provide adequate parking and clearance for Metro Access vans that will be providing transportation for future residents of the home.

Design Review Committee (DRC) Review

The DRC considered the preliminary design proposal at its March and April 2023 hybrid meetings. During the March 1, 2023, DRC meeting, the project team, which consisted of Habitat, L'Arche, and project architects Scott Matties and Krutika Shah of Wiencek-Associates, provided an overview of the project. They explained how the County acquired the property in 2004, the architectural evolution of the farmhouse, and three design options for the proposed additions. The DRC members expressed support for one specific design option, as it was more sensitive to the historic farmhouse. The DRC requested that the project team refine their design details for this particular option, then return to the DRC. In general, the DRC made the following design recommendations:

- Consider lowering the two-story addition's roofline to show a definite line where the historic farmhouse's roofline ends;
- Consider ways to break-up the roof massing on the one-story addition;
- Refine the spacing of the fenestration on the one-story; and
- Provide multiple options for the location of the ADA-compliant ramp needed for access to the front porch and main entrance to avoid obstruction of the commanding views of the property from the front porch.

During the subsequent April 5, 2023, DRC meeting, the project team presented modifications to the DRC's preferred option for the additions. Although the architect was unable to lower the two-story addition's roofline because of needed interior clearance and the elevator, the team reiterated that materials and/or color would be used to help differentiate between the old and new construction. The DRC members acknowledged the programmatic needs in this area of the house and were comfortable with this design approach. The DRC also discussed the following aspects of the design:

- They provided their preference for the front porch ramp location to be along the west elevation as the most appropriate visually;
- They agreed the proposed shed dormers helped reduce the massing of the one-story addition's roof; and
- They agreed the spacing of the fenestration on the one-story addition section was appropriate.

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The applicant indicated that the location of the front porch ramp along the west elevation would require people to travel the longest distance and the removal of the side steps to the front porch would be necessary. Additionally, the HPP staff asked for confirmation that the historic wood main entry door on the front elevation would be replaced for ADA compliance. Since this original feature of the farmhouse is proposed to be removed, the HPP staff requested that it be reused as an interior door or at a secondary entrance and that the replacement door have a similar design to the historic door. The applicant agreed with this approach.

The DRC and HPP staff agreed that the proposed massing and overall design concepts should be presented to the full commission for its consideration on the Discussion Agenda at the April 19, 2023, hybrid HALRB public hearing.

Recommendation

At this time, the HALRB is being asked to review the proposed massing and overall design concepts for the restoration of the exterior of the historic farmhouse, the construction of two new additions, and various grounds and landscaping modifications. The applicant is seeking preliminary HALRB approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness (CoA) to satisfy one of the main conditions of the LOI signed in February 2020. The HALRB should consider all aspects of the current proposal and determine if a preliminary CoA can be granted at this time, or if further design refinements are needed. Upon receipt of a preliminary COA, the applicant will proceed with the preparation of construction drawings to be submitted for County permitting. The overall proposal will return to the HALRB later this Spring for a final CoA, which will include additional details on materials and specifications, stormwater requirements, landscape plan, etc.

The HPP staff recommends approval of the subject application as submitted. Since the Reevesland LHD does not have adopted historic district design guidelines, the HPP staff and the HALRB must consider all proposed alterations according to the guidance provided in *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation*. As such, the subject application complies with Standards #2, 5, 6, and 9 as follows:

Standard #2: The historic character of a property will be retained and preserved. The removal of distinctive materials or alteration of features, spaces and spatial relationships that characterize a property will be avoided.

Standard #5: Distinctive features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a historic property shall be preserved.

Standard #6: Deteriorated historic features shall be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature shall match the old in design, color, texture, and other visual qualities and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features shall be substantiated by documentary, physical, or pictorial evidence.

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.

The HPP staff remains enthusiastic about the proposal overall and is especially appreciative of the applicant's receptiveness to design feedback over the past several months. The HPP staff agrees that the proposed exterior restoration plan is both appropriate and sensitive to the character-defining features of the historic farmhouse, thereby complying with Standard #2.

The in-kind replacement of the wood windows with prefinished, aluminum-clad wood windows, in both the one-over-one and six-over-six configurations, follows Standards #5 and #6. The removal of the existing vinyl/aluminum siding and trim and restoration of any existing wood siding and trim likewise follows Standards #5 and #6. The removal of the existing asphalt shingles and/or existing metal roofing and replacement with new dimensional asphalt shingles complies with Standard #6, as does the in-kind replacement of the main entrance door and the removal/reconstruction of the brick chimney.

Following Standard #9, the proposed railings and new ramp on the front porch will not detract from the overall design, function, or aesthetics of this historic design feature, plus will allow the historic farmhouse to become ADA-compliant which is an essential requirement for the new residents.

The construction of a new shed-roof dormer on the farmhouse's north roof ridge follows Standard 9 and is compatible in design to an existing dormer located on the 1911 section of the house. The proposed one- and two-story additions will not detract from the scale or massing of the historic farmhouse, as their designs are compatible with the existing vernacular architecture and can be distinguished from what is historic and new construction, thereby meeting Standard #9. The proposed ground surfaces and landscaping changes, including the proposed walkway and stormwater management bio-facility, will not cause a negative effect to the environmental setting of the LHD. The potential tree removal could be mitigated with further consultation with the County's Urban Forester.

The proposal does not conflict with the intent/guidance in the recorded County-held exterior preservation easement. When the final CoA is completed, the HPP staff will seek additional approvals from the County Manager as per the easement process for these major modifications.

In conclusion, the HPP staff supports the proposed restoration/renovation plan for Reevesland.