

CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS STAFF REPORT

TO: Historical Affairs and Landmark Review Board (HALRB)
FROM: Serena Bolliger, Historic Preservation Planner
DATE: April 8, 2021
SUBJECT: 3205 23rd Street North, CoA 21-02, Maywood Historic District

Background Information

3205 23rd Street North

This contributing property is a pre-1923 Bungalow/Craftsman dwelling. The *Maywood National Register Nomination* describes the house as follows:

The three-bay-wide, wood-frame dwelling rests on a solid parged foundation with a raised basement. It is clad in lapped wood siding on the first story and wood shingles on the dormers and has a side-gable roof sheathed in asphalt shingles. It has a one-story, three-bay, wood-frame front porch on Tuscan columns and one-over-one wood-sash windows. Window and door surrounds are unmitered with a projecting backband. Other notable features include a shed-roof dormer with a low balustrade, wide, overhanging eaves, and a vinyl cornice and soffit.

In November 2019, the HALRB approved CoA 19-23 to allow the owners to demolish the existing rear deck on the property and to construct a new rear addition, deck, and driveway. The proposed rear addition would have had a footprint of 399 square feet in area with a deck that would have been an additional 330 square feet in area (approximately). The addition proposed to include a basement level, a first floor, and a second floor. The applicants were not able to start work on their addition before their property was damaged in a fire in March 2020.

The owners submitted preliminary design concepts to the HALRB in March 2021 to discuss potential options for their property.

Design Guidelines and Standards

The *Maywood Design Guidelines* were not developed to manage devastating damage to historic buildings and provide only approximate guidance for this situation. Therefore, staff used the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties*, specifically the *Standards for Rehabilitation*, as directed in the Arlington County Zoning Ordinance (ACZO) and *Maywood Design Guidelines*. Rehabilitation is defined by the Secretary of the Interior as "the process of returning a property to a state of utility, through repair or alteration, which makes possible an efficient contemporary use while preserving those portions and features of the property which are significant to its historic, architectural, and cultural

values." While the rehabilitation process may not be possible in this instance, the standards outlined remain the guiding principles for design decisions made within the Maywood Local Historic District (LHD).

State Code of Virginia and Arlington County Zoning Ordinance

Section 15.2-2306 of the State Code of Virginia provides the legal governing authority for localities to conduct historic preservation activities. The statute allows any locality to adopt an ordinance to protect buildings and structures that have historic, architectural, archaeological or cultural interest.

The introductory paragraph of Section 15.7, Historic Preservation Overlay District of the ACZO states:

A. Unless otherwise provided by adopted historic district design guidelines, after the designation of an historic district, no exterior portion of any building or other structure (including walls, fences, light fixtures, steps and pavement, or other appurtenant features) nor above ground utility structure nor any type of outdoor advertising sign shall be erected, altered, restored, moved or demolished within such district until after an application for a certificate of appropriateness (CoA) has been submitted to and approved, in accordance with the provisions of this §15.7 as being architecturally or historically compatible with the historic district, buildings, or structures therein.

The *Maywood Design Guidelines* outline that all demolitions are required to go through the CoA process, but further guidance is not established.

Precedent Demolition Cases in Maywood

Since the establishment of the Maywood LHD in 1990, only two property owners within the district have received CoAs for demolition of a contributing or non-contributing dwelling. CoA 3-01, which approved the demolition of the contributing house at 3209 Old Dominion Drive after substantial damage from a fallen tree, was condemned, demolished, and replaced with a new single-family home. CoA 15-01 approved the demolition of the non-contributing house at 2322 North Fillmore Street which, because of its steep topography, could not be appropriately renovated while retaining the historic fabric.

Preliminary Review

In March 2021, the applicants of the subject property presented some options to the HALRB for preliminary consideration. To ensure clarity in discussion when reviewing the preliminary drawings, the Historic Preservation staff outlined the possible appropriate treatments as described by the Secretary of the Interior:

- Reconstruction, or identical replication of what is missing with new construction;
- Restoration, or repair of what is extant; or
- Demolition with New Construction, which would involve the removal of the remaining historic house and construction of a new house of a similar or different style.

Staff then identified four possible treatments for consideration:

- 1) Reconstruction and restoration of the pre-fire condition of the existing house;
- 2) New construction in a bungalow vocabulary similar (but not identical) to the original historic home with traditional styling appropriate for a bungalow;
- 3) New construction in a style that would be considered appropriate for the Maywood LHD but not necessarily the same style as the original historic house; or

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4) New construction in a 21st century contemporary style to differentiate it from the historic homes in the neighborhood.

The applicant presented several new construction options in an architectural style considered contributing to the Maywood LHD, but not the style historically associated with the property. They did not present an option to reconstruct and restore their existing home as numerous professionals had stated that it was not feasible given the health and safety risk of using the existing structure. Staff has asked the applicant to provide a document from the fire marshal, insurance company, or structural engineer certifying that the structure is unsafe to use.

After much discussion, the HALRB members overwhelmingly favored treatment option 2 as detailed above, or new construction in a bungalow vocabulary similar (but not identical) to the extant historic house. The applicants indicated the bungalow option likewise was their preference. Given their tight timeline for their insurance claim, the owners anticipated finalizing their design proposal as soon as possible.

Proposal

The applicants are proposing to demolish their fire-damaged existing pre-1923 home and replace it with a new two-story Craftsman-inspired dwelling with a basement built into the slope of the rear of the house. The front facade would include a half-length porch with brick and wood columns and a gable dormer on the second level. The windows would be a mixture of 3-over-1 and 2-over-1 wood Jeldwen windows. The basement level would be encased in brick, the upper levels would have smooth composite Hardie siding, and the roof would be clad in asphalt shingles.

DRC Review

Due to the public health crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, the Design Review Committee (DRC) has not been able to convene since the owners submitted their CoA application. The item has therefore been placed on the April 21, 2021, HALRB agenda as a discussion item.

Discussion and Recommendation

Summary Recommendation

The Historic Preservation staff recommends the approval of the demolition of the fire-damaged historic dwelling at 3205 23rd Street and the construction of the proposed new home. Construction professionals have stated that the fire damage was too severe and extensive to allow the structure to be used as a foundation for proper rehabilitation. Therefore, staff cannot recommend keeping the extant home.

After receiving preliminary design feedback from the HALRB, the applicants have returned with a proposal inspired by the massing and architectural style of their original dwelling that suits the historic streetscape, but with materials which indicate that the building is new construction. The historic dwelling footprint was 30.4' wide x 32.4' long (with an approved unbuilt rear addition 29' long bringing the approved length to 61.4' long) and a roof height of roughly 26' from grade. The proposed footprint of the replacement dwelling

would be 34' x 64' with a roof height of 31'. Therefore, the proposed dwelling is not substantially larger than the historic footprint and height, maintaining its harmony with the historic homes on the street. The proposed house fulfills the massing and sizing requirements outlined in Chapter 6 'New Construction' of the *Maywood Design Guidelines*.

The historic house was a Sears mail-order catalog home, and the design of the proposed dwelling is a plan set developed by an architect who lived in a catalog home neighborhood. The porch columns evoke the Craftsman style of the original house, which had a single front dormer; the dormer element would be repeated in the new house. While the windows on the historic dwelling were 1-over-1 at the time of the fire, the proposed 2-over-1 and 3-over-1 wood windows are not inappropriate for a Craftsman home and Jeldwen wood windows are frequently used in Maywood additions (most recently in CoA 18-03). Since the proposed screened porch would be at the rear of the house, it is not considered inappropriate for Maywood per the *Design Guidelines* and is similar to many that have been approved in the LHD in the past few years. Likewise, the wood handrail is considered appropriate for Maywood and the screening would be installed on the interior of the rail as has been required in many recent CoA applications.

Smooth cement fiberboard is appropriate siding for new construction and additions in the *Maywood Design Guidelines*. Similar faux shake shingles were approved most recently at 2314 North Kenmore Street (CoA 18-03), having been outlined as appropriate for gable ends in the *Design Guidelines*. Asphalt roof shingles are routinely approved in the LHD and listed in Appendix G of the *Maywood Design Guidelines* as appropriate replacement materials for other architectural shingles.

Therefore, the Historic Preservation staff recommends approval of the subject application.