

Historical Affairs and Landmark Review Board

Arlington County, Virginia

HALRB Case 15-27 (HP1500045)



A request by Nicholas & Moley Evans, owners of 3435 8th Street South in the Alcova Historic District, to remove a 72-inch (diameter) white oak tree.

For DRC (*circle those present*): **Robert Dudka**, Charles Craig, Charles Matta, **Andrew Wenchel**,
Tova Solo, Joan Lawrence

For Arlington County (*circle those present*): **Cynthia Liccese-Torres, Rebecca Ballo, John Liebertz**

Case # 15-27 Agenda Item # 1

Application Complete

Application Incomplete

Applicant(s): Moley Evans

For Applicant(s):

(See attached application for applicant, address, name of property and property description, drawings, photographs, and proposed scope of work.)

Design Recommendations:

1. Photo documentation
2. Site plan with tree placement

Findings:

- Return to next DRC meeting
- Send to HALRB

If sent to HALRB, recommended action is:

- Place on consent agenda
- Place on discussion agenda:
- Recommend approval of CoA, with DRC design recommendations and/or additional information provided
 - Recommend deferral of ruling on CoA (explanation):
 - Recommend denial of CoA (explanation):
 - No recommendation.

To: HALRB
From: John Liebertz, Historic Preservation Planner
Date: January 11, 2016
Subject: 3435 8th Street South, CoA 15-27, Alcova Historic District

Proposal

This is a request to remove a 72-inch diameter White Oak tree at 3435 8th Street South in the Alcova Historic District. Pruning was performed on this tree with the intention to remove it, but work was stopped and the owners have applied for a Certificate of Appropriateness to remove the tree. In consultation with the County Forester, the applicants have agreed to plant three replacement canopy trees.

Background Information

The tree is located adjacent to the Greek Revival-style frame house built ca. 1850. The *Reconnaissance Level Architectural Survey Form* describes the house as follows:

The original section consists of a 2-story, side gable, Greek Revival dwelling with an interior chimney. This section was clad in wood shiplap siding and contains 2-over-2, double-hung wood sash windows. The present Italianate cornice with decorative wood brackets on the east elevation was added at a later date. The second section of the house, erected sometime in the late 19th century is a 2½-story, side gable frame building clad in wood German siding. An exterior end brick chimney adorns its west gable end.... The 2-story, pedimented portico supported on fluted Tuscan columns was added in the 1920s along with the decorative wrought iron balcony over the new front entrance on the north elevation.

The subject 72-inch tree predates and abuts the two-story portico added in the 1920s.

The tree was recognized as a “notable tree” in Arlington County (an honorary listing).

Independent Arborist and County Forester Evaluation

The home owners hired Keith Pitchford (independent arborist and owner of Pitchford Associates) who rated failure as “probable,” which means that it could fail under normal weather conditions.

Vincent Verweij, Arlington County Forester, stated the following regarding the tree:

I concur with Keith Pitchford’s assessment. The tree is at a much higher chance of failure. Its size and apparent disease condition is cause for concern. However, the likelihood of failure is not imminent. It is not imperative that this tree be removed immediately [under the emergency removal provision]. Given the [potential failure] impact it would have, and the level of decline, we should err on the side of caution. I would not be surprised if this tree would start failing within 5 years, at the latest. It has run out of soil space, and has a severe fungal infection. Given the fair health (about 55%), species rating (80%), and size, replacement comes out to $72 * 0.5 * 0.8 = 28.8$.

Removal of this tree would require 6 tree replacements per our guidelines.
<http://topics.arlingtonva.us/building/tree-replacement-guidelines/>

That being said, that might be onerous for the size of the site. I would be fine with a reduction to 3 trees, with an inspection after planting by an urban forester. Coordinate species with urban forestry before sourcing the replacements.

DRC Review

The DRC heard the subject proposal at its meeting on January 6, 2016. The DRC recommended additional documentation of the tree and requested a site plan be shown to discuss the proposed locations of the three replacement trees. The committee also requested the applicant study planting a canopy flanking the house. There were also questions regarding the appropriate number of trees. The DRC recommended the application be placed on the discussion agenda for the January 20, 2016, HALRB meeting to evaluate the locations of the replacement trees, but agreed that the subject tree should be removed.

Site Visit (HPP Staff, County Forester, and Property Owner) and Staff Recommendation

HPP staff photographed the tree for our records as requested by the DRC. The property owner has agreed to inform the County Forester of the date of the tree removal. Mr. Verweij will analyze the base of the tree and tree rings to estimate its age. Any information obtained will be placed in our property file.

The HPP staff and the County Forester do not recommend planting any of the replacement trees to the north or south of the portico (flanking the entrance). There is no suitable location to the south of the portico and the area to the north is a lawn utilized for recreation as stated by the property owner. Staff supports the location and species selection of the three replacement trees as outlined by the County Forester in the application.

The HPP staff recommends the approval of the application. The priority of the HALRB is to preserve the house in perpetuity. The White Oak tree poses a significant threat to the house and should be removed. Staff finds that this application meets Standards #2 and #9 of the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation.