

Historic District Review Committee

Staff Report
June 14, 2010

Action Item

CAPP 2009-0013 Loudoun County Office of Capital Construction: Playground Fence & Dumpster Screening in the Bluemont Historic District. PIN 632-15-4042.

Background

The applicant proposes to construct a playground fence and a dumpster enclosure at the Bluemont Community Center, 33846 Snickersville Turnpike, in the Bluemont Historic and Cultural Conservation District (Figure 1). The Bluemont Community Center was constructed in 1923 and served as the local school for the next four decades. In 1988, Loudoun County began using the building as the community center for the Village of Bluemont and the surrounding area. The building is deeply setback (187') from the road.

The Bluemont Community Center is programmed for renovations and upgrades to meet current code requirements for childcare facilities and accessibility. On September 14, 2009, the HDRC approved CAPP 2009-0009 for the rehabilitation/renovation of the historic building and a rear addition. This application is for additional structures required by County regulations. The proposed fence is necessary to meet Zoning Ordinance requirements for playgrounds associated with Child Care uses. In addition, the Facilities Standards Manual requires that dumpsters on County-owned properties be enclosed.

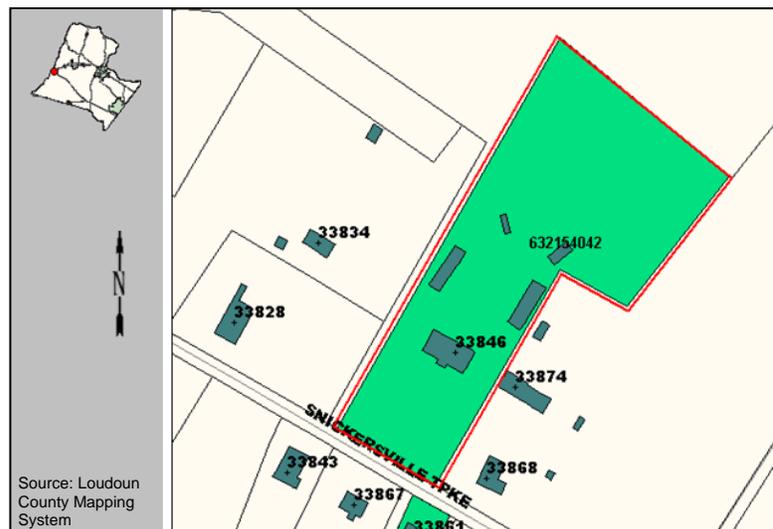


Figure 1: Subject property, Bluemont Community Center (33846 Snickersville Turnpike), in the Bluemont Historic District.

The Zoning Administration Referral dated July 6, 2009, stated that the proposed renovation and addition are subject to a Special Exception permit due to the community center and childcare center uses. A separate application to the County for the Special Exception is pending. There are no zoning issues specific to this application according to the Zoning Administration Referral letter dated June 4, 2010.

Analysis

The Guidelines for Site Elements (Chapter 3) in the Loudoun County Historic District Guidelines: Aldie, Bluemont, Oatlands, and Taylorstown (ABOT Guidelines) will be used to evaluate this application.

Playground Fence

New fences should be constructed to heights that conform to zoning regulations and should relate in scale, materials, color, and detail of design to the associated historic building. Simple designs are identified as most appropriate. The ABOT Guidelines state that wood picket fences are found in Bluemont. Wood fences should be painted as noted in the Guidelines for Materials and the photo caption for a picket fence in the Fences and Walls section (ABOT Guidelines, Guidelines for Site Elements: Fences and Walls, Text and Photo Caption, p. 46; Guidelines 1 and 5, p. 47; Guidelines for Materials: Wood, Maintenance 5).

The Zoning Ordinance requires that a 3' 6" high fence be constructed around a playground associated with a Child Care facility. The applicant proposes a fence that is 3' 6" high, a height that conforms to zoning regulations. The playground is located behind the Bluemont Community Center. The proposed fence surrounding the playground will be roughly rectangular (approximately 100' deep and 45' wide), with an ell in the southeast corner as shown in the site plan. The fence will not be visible from the road.

The proposed fence is a picket fence, constructed of 1" by 4" wood pickets with a dog-ear top and attached to 2" by 4" top and bottom rails and 4" by 4" wood posts. The fence will be painted white as depicted in the image submitted with the application. A painted wood picket fence meets the Guidelines for fence materials, design, and color.

Dumpster Enclosure

Appurtenances should be sited in inconspicuous areas, avoiding front yards, when possible and screened with appropriate plantings or fencing (ABOT Guidelines, Guidelines for Site Elements: Mechanical and Utilities Screening, Text, Inappropriate Treatment 2, Guidelines 1 and 2, p. 49).

The proposed dumpster location is in the front of the Bluemont Community Center, along the west side of the property and incorporated into a row of parking spaces. The applicant attempted to locate the dumpster to the rear or side of the building, but could not identify a feasible location that provided an adequate turning radius as noted in the Statement of Justification. The proposed location is highly visible from Snickersville

Turnpike (Photo 1). Therefore, care should be taken to screen the dumpster enclosure as sympathetically as possible.



Photo 1: Approximate location of the proposed dumpster and dumpster enclosure. Note to scale.

The proposed dumpster enclosure will be 10' deep, 12' wide, and 8' high. It will be constructed of wood and painted white. The sides of the enclosure will be made up of a 6' high section of board-on-board screen with $\frac{1}{2}$ " gaps between boards topped with a 2' high diagonal lattice panels. The posts will be 6" by 6" with simple pyramidal caps.

The materials and simple details of the screening design proposed for the dumpster enclosure meet the Guidelines and reduce the visual effect of its location in front of the Bluemont Community Center.

The dumpster enclosure will sit on a concrete pad. Although the HDRC does not have purview over concrete surfaces such as sidewalks or driveways, the ABOT Guidelines provide direction for appropriate treatments. The new paving material should be compatible with the character of the District and large expanses of bright white or gray

concrete surfaces should be avoided. Warm-toned concrete is identified as a common early-twentieth-century sidewalk material in Bluemont (*ABOT Guidelines, Guidelines for Site Elements: Walkways and Paths, Text, Inappropriate Treatment 1, Guideline 4, p. 54*). Therefore, staff recommends that the applicant consider using a warm-toned concrete when constructing the dumpster pad.

Findings

1. The height, style, materials, design, and color of the proposed playground fence meet the ABOT Guidelines.
2. The proposed location for the dumpster enclosure does not meet the Guidelines; however, the design and materials mitigate the visual effect of its location in the front of the historic Bluemont Community Center.
3. Using warm-toned concrete for the dumpster pad will also decrease the visual effects of the dumpster enclosure location in the front of the historic building.

Recommendation

Staff recommends approval of the application.

Suggested Motions

1. *I move that the Historic District Review Committee approve Certificate of Appropriateness 2010-0013 for a playground fence and dumpster enclosure at 33846 Snickersville Turnpike in accordance with the Loudoun County Historic District Guidelines for the Aldie, Bluemont, Oatlands, and Taylorstown Historic and Cultural Conservation District based on the findings included on page 4 of the staff report dated June 14, 2010.*
2. *I move that the Historic District Review Committee approve Certificate of Appropriateness 2010-0013 for a playground fence and dumpster enclosure at 33846 Snickersville Turnpike in accordance with the Loudoun County Historic District Guidelines for the Aldie, Bluemont, Oatlands, and Taylorstown Historic and Cultural Conservation District based on the findings included on page 4 of the staff report dated June 14, 2010...with the following conditions...*
3. *I move alternate motion...*