

Certificate of Appropriateness
BAR #25-0074
712 Ridge Street, TMP 250067000
Ridge Street ADC District
Owner: Chinh Le & Vanita Gupta
Applicant: Chinh Le
Project: Driveway

Mr. Le,

The CoA for the above referenced project was approved by the City of Charlottesville Board of Architectural Review on April 15, 2025. The following action was taken:

Mr. Schwarz moved to approve the Consent Agenda, and this was seconded by Mr. Bailey. The motion passed 7-0. Please note that approval of the Consent Agenda results in approval of the following:

Having considered the standards set forth within the City Code, including the ADC District Design Guidelines, approval of a CoA for the driveway at 712 Ridge Street satisfies the BAR's criteria and is compatible with this property and other properties in the Ridge Street ADC District, and that the BAR approves the request.

For specifics of the discussion, the meeting video is on-line at:

https://youtu.be/jr3_AvtVr-U?list=PLSKqYabjF44UhoEZrMWdDF9znV1CnINUUV

Per the provisions of City Code, this CoA is valid for 18 months from the date of BAR approval; upon written request and for reasonable cause, the director of NDS or the BAR may extend that period by one year; and this CoA does not, in and of itself, authorize any work or activity that requires a building permit or compliance with other provisions of the City Code.

If you have any questions, please contact me or Jeff Werner (wernerjb@charlottesville.gov).

Sincerely,
Kate



Kate Richardson
Historic Preservation & Design Planner II
Neighborhood Development Services
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**City of Charlottesville
Board of Architectural Review
Staff Report
April 15, 2025**



Certificate of Appropriateness Application

HST # 25-0074

712 Ridge Street, TMP 250067000

Ridge Street ADC District

Owner/Applicant: Chinh Le

Project: Construct driveway



Background

Year Built: 1922. Harris-Carter House

District: Ridge Street ADC District

Status: Contributing

Two-story, three bay, American Four Square, low hipped, standing seam metal roof with deep eaves. The one-story porch features a low hip roof and four stucco piers. The house has a variety of single and double hung windows across the four elevations. Historic survey is attached.

Prior BAR Reviews

(See Appendix.)

Application

- Applicant submittals:
 - *Existing Conditions – Survey & Proposed Plan*, 712 Ridge Street, April 8, 2025, Sheets 1 and 2.
 - *Illustrative Section* – 1 sheet.

CoA for proposed driveway and related site improvements, including paved walkways. From the applicant's narrative:

This project would entail puncturing the existing concrete retaining wall running along the Ridge Street property boundary to provide off-road access to the residence. New concrete

retaining walls will wrap into the site along both sides of the new asphalt drive. The new concrete retaining walls would match the height, material, and character of the existing walls at the street, and taper or step down to meet grade. A cobble curb would wrap the edges of the asphalt drive and provide a clean edge and transition between materials. Other proposed site improvements include re-grading the front portion of the property to ease the overall slope and to meet newly proposed top of wall grades at the driveway, as shown in plan. The existing front concrete walkway may also be updated and replaced with natural stone material including a new stone landing at the front porch. Secondary pathways on the site will be stone dust or pea gravel material with steel edging.

Discussion

Staff recommends approval. Staff reviewed with zoning and engineering, and there are no issues with allowing wall breach and driveway.

The proposed driveway will be asphalt, with a concrete apron at the sidewalk and curb. The property is within Sub-area A of the Ridge Street ADC District. Five of the 16 properties in this sub-area have driveways. Of those, four are asphalt.

Additionally, at Staff's request, the applicant extended the driveway (approx. 20-ft) into the side yard. To extend it further toward the rear would disturb the dripline of the existing maple (18" dbh).

Suggested Motions

Approval [with approval of the consent agenda]: Having considered the standards set forth within the City Code, including the ADC District Design Guidelines, I move to find the proposed driveway and related site improvements at 712 Ridge Street satisfy the BAR's criteria and are compatible with this property and other properties in this ADC District, and that the BAR approves the application as submitted.

Criteria, Standards and Guidelines

Note re: BAR authority: Per Code, the BAR is charged only with the authority to approve or deny a design review CoA, following an evaluation applying the criteria under Code Sec. 34-5.2.7. *Major Historic Review*. The BAR does not evaluate a proposed use. Additionally, per Code Sec. 34-5.2.7.E.2., the issuance of a CoA "cannot, in and of itself, authorize any construction, reconstruction, alteration, repair, demolition, or other improvements or activities requiring a building permit. Where a building permit is required, no activity authorized by a [CoA] is lawful unless conducted in accordance with the required building permit and all applicable building code requirements."

Review Criteria Generally

Per Chapter 34, Div. 5.2.7. C.2:

- a. In considering a particular application the BAR will approve the application unless it finds:
 - i. That the proposal does not meet specific standards set forth within this Section or applicable provisions of the City's design guidelines; and
 - ii. The proposal is incompatible with the historic, cultural or architectural character of the district in which the property is located or the IPP that is the subject of the application.
- b. The BAR will approve, approve with conditions, or deny applications for Certificates of Appropriateness in accordance with the provisions of this Section.

- c. The BAR, or City Council on appeal, may require conditions of approval as are necessary or desirable to ensure that any new construction or addition is compatible with the scale and character of the Architecture Design Control District, Individually Protected Property, or Historic Conservation District. Prior to attaching conditions to an approval, due consideration will be given to the cost of compliance with the proposed conditions as well as the goals of the Comprehensive Plan. Conditions may require a reduction in height or massing, consistent with the City's design guidelines and subject to the following limitations: [not germane to this request].

Standards for Review and Decision

Per Chapter 34, Div. 5.2.7. D.1:

- a. Review of the proposed construction, reconstruction, alteration or restoration of a building or structure is limited to exterior architectural features, including signs, and the following features and factors:
 - i. Whether the material, texture, color, height, scale, mass, and placement of the proposed addition, modification or construction are visually and architecturally compatible with the site and the applicable District;
 - ii. The harmony of the proposed change in terms of overall proportion and the size and placement of entrances, windows, awnings, exterior stairs, and signs;
 - iii. The Secretary of the Interior Standards for Rehabilitation set forth within the Code of Federal Regulations (36 C.F.R. §67.7(b)), as may be relevant;
 - iv. The effect of the proposed change on the adjacent building or structures;
 - v. The impact of the proposed change on other protected features on the property, such as gardens, landscaping, fences, walls, and walks;
 - vi. Whether the proposed method of construction, renovation, or restoration could have an adverse impact on the structure or site, or adjacent buildings or structures;
 - vii. When reviewing any proposed sign as part of an application under consideration, the standards set forth within Div. 4.11. Signs will be applied; and
 - viii. Any applicable provisions of the City's design guidelines.

Links to ADC District Design Guidelines

[Chapter 2 Site Design and Elements](#)

Pertinent Design Guidelines for Site Design and Elements

C. Walls and Fences

- 1) Maintain existing materials such as stone walls, hedges, wooden picket fences, and wrought-iron fences.
- 2) When a portion of a fence needs replacing, salvage original parts for a prominent location.
- 3) Match old fencing in material, height, and detail.
- 4) If it is not possible to match old fencing, use a simplified design of similar materials and height.
- 5) For new fences, use materials that relate to materials in the neighborhood.
- 6) Take design cues from nearby historic fences and walls.
- 7) Chain-link fencing, split rail fences, and vinyl plastic fences should not be used.
- 8) Traditional concrete block walls may be appropriate.
- 9) Modular block wall systems or modular concrete block retaining walls are strongly discouraged but may be appropriate in areas not visible from the public right-of-way.
- 10) If street-front fences or walls are necessary or desirable, they should not exceed four (4) feet in height from the sidewalk or public right-of-way and should use traditional materials and design.

- 11) Residential privacy fences may be appropriate in side or rear yards where not visible from the primary street.
- 12) Fences should not exceed six (6) feet in height in the side and rear yards.
- 13) Fence structures should face the inside of the fenced property.
- 14) Relate commercial privacy fences to the materials of the building. If the commercial property adjoins a residential neighborhood, use a brick or painted wood fence or heavily planted screen as a buffer.
- 15) Avoid the installation of new fences or walls if possible in areas where there are no fences or walls and yards are open.
- 16) Retaining walls should respect the scale, materials and context of the site and adjacent properties.
- 17) Respect the existing conditions of the majority of the lots on the street in planning new construction or a rehabilitation of an existing site.

E. Walkways and Driveways

- 1) Use appropriate traditional paving materials like brick, stone, and scored concrete.
 - 2) Concrete pavers are appropriate in new construction, and may be appropriate in site renovations, depending on the context of adjacent building materials, and continuity with the surrounding site and district.
 - 3) Gravel or stone dust may be appropriate, but must be contained.
 - 4) Stamped concrete and stamped asphalt are not appropriate paving materials.
 - 5) Limit asphalt use to driveways and parking areas.
 - 6) Place driveways through the front yard only when no rear access to parking is available.
 - 7) Do not demolish historic structures to provide areas for parking.
- [...]

APPENDIX

Prior BAR Reviews

August 20, 2019 – (19-08-09) BAR accepted (9-0) applicant’s request for deferral.

September 17, 2019 – (19-08-09) BAR approved (9-0) a CoA for a proposed light fixture, storm door, and the replacement of the two missing sashes [to be reviewed by staff and submitted for the record] and the BAR accepted the applicant’s request to defer action re: replacing the remaining windows; however, the BAR expressed a recommendation to repair the windows, not replace them. Link to applicant’s submittal and staff report (submittal includes photos of windows): [712 Ridge Street - BAR - Sept 2019](#)

March 19, 2024 – (24-01-01) BAR approved window replacements, chimney removal, and door replacement [note: the BAR omitted the proposed driveway]. [Staff report and CoA](#).

From the March 19, 2024 BAR meeting minutes. Excerpts re: the proposed driveway.

Mr. Gastinger – I don’t feel there is sufficient information to approve a driveway. I don’t think it is a driveway. It is a parking space. This property is one of the southernmost in the ADC District. I feel that we need more information about where there is precedent. What I am concerned about is creating a situation where there starts to be parking in the front yards of this district. My quick cursory look is that there are drives and curb-cuts. They are all leading to the rear of property or

parking structures. I know that south of here, outside of the district, it looks like there is more parking on the street. Together with the crude information, we don't have enough information.

Ms. Lewis – I was going to ask what the applicant did submit on this. The only thing I saw on the driveway looked to have been prepared by staff.

Mr. Werner – It is just a sketch that I offered in the conversation.

Ms. Lewis – Were we provided any materials. I didn't see any in the packet. What would the drivable surface be? You are cutting through a volume. It is not just a flat surface.

Mr. Zehmer – We have a marked-up photograph. There was a reference to, in terms of a paving surface, what we typically go for with driveways and walkways in the guidelines. Mr. Gastinger's point is well taken. There was no formal site plan submitted, which would show us the driveway potential parking area. It may be acceptable if it was in the rear and details of the retaining wall that would need to be installed.

Mr. Bailey – I would like to bring the Board's attention to the fact where the picture of the driveway is. It is on an abutting piece of land (229 Lankford Avenue) where 2 cars are parked in a driveway right by that house. There is precedence.

Mr. Zehmer – Part of what I am hearing is that whereas we may not be fully opposed. We don't have enough information to make this decision.

Mr. Schwarz – If anybody is doing a straw poll, I am fine with that driveway. It is off to the side. It seemed simple.

Mr. Zehmer – Some of us may not be opposed but may want more information.

Mr. Whitney – Are there site trees that would be removed for the driveway?

Mr. Werner – There is a large dead tree. I did tell the applicant that the tree looks dangerous, and it should be removed ASAP. The last time we had a big front yard driveway discussion was that house on Park Street. By code, you are allowed to use 25 percent of the front yard for parking. You can't turn it into a parking lot. You can constrain things with a no 3-point turn place. If it is paved, someone can put a car there. With the extent that that would maybe go into the front yard, you can look at that. A drawing of some type that you would like to see would be helpful to express to me and the applicant what it is that we would like to see. He can then prepare that. If it is just unacceptable to do it, that would be helpful for him to know before he hired a contractor to develop some drawings.

Mr. Birle – I don't think it is unacceptable. I would like to get more information.

Mr. Zehmer – I would like to see a site plan with details regarding the retaining wall.

Mr. Birle – The retaining wall is pretty character defining.

Date: April 8, 2025



