



HISTORICAL AFFAIRS AND LANDMARK REVIEW BOARD
ARLINGTON COUNTY, VIRGINIA

CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS STAFF REPORT

TO: Historical Affairs and Landmark Review Board (HALRB)
FROM: Mical Tawney, Historic Preservation Associate Planner
DATE: April 9, 2024
SUBJECT: CoA 24-10, 1758 N. Rhodes St., Colonial Village Local Historic District (LHD)

Background Information

Colonial Village was the first large-scale rental housing project in America insured by the Federal Housing Administration (FHA). It was once the most talked about architectural project in the nation, and in 1948 the Urban Land Institute described it as “one of the outstanding developments of its kind in America.”

Colonial Village had a major influence on apartment design in the 1930s. Intending it to be a national prototype for future projects, FHA officials worked with developers to create an apartment complex with exemplary site planning. Colonial Village was one of the first to apply innovative garden city planning concepts to a low- and middle-income apartment complex. These concepts included incorporating low-density superblock development, clustering apartment units into spacious and richly landscaped courtyards, separating pedestrian and vehicle traffic, and using an undeveloped interior greenbelt. Colonial Village was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1980, with a smaller portion designated as a LHD in 1978.

The *Colonial Village National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form* describes the complex as follows:

Buildings within the Colonial Village apartment complex conform to a uniform architectural style. All buildings are Colonial Revival in style and have a consistent scale of two and three stories, brick construction (six-course American bond), soldier course window heads, brick dentiled cornices, and a variety of such Colonial Revival details as pilaster and pediment door surrounds; multi-light, round-arched windows with raised keystones and springers; decorative relieving arches; false roof balusters; and brick quoins.

In December 1983, the HALRB approved a CoA for the replacement of shingles, gutters, and downspouts at 1758 N. Rhodes St. (along with other buildings in the LHD). In July 1987, the HALRB approved a CoA for the replacement of the existing mansard roofing shingles with SuperDur shingles. In September 1991, the HALRB approved a CoA to cover the existing roof at 1758 N. Rhodes St. with a PVC membrane. Between October and December 1991, the HALRB approved a CoA application for the relocation of downspouts at 1758 N. Rhodes St., along with several other units in the complex. That application included drawings of the different roofs, which showed the location of either a vent or a

skylight on the rooftop at 1758 N. Rhodes St; this indicates the presence of either a vent or a skylight by 1991. Additionally, it should be noted that in July 1999, the HALRB approved a CoA for the replacement of skylights at units along Wilson Boulevard and Queens Lane, as well as units 1727 and 1735 N. Rhodes St. This indicates the use of skylights within the LHD; however, no CoA application for the installation of skylights was found in the Historic Preservation Program (HPP) files.

Proposal

The applicant is requesting to replace an existing skylight, located in the hallway of 1758 N. Rhodes St., with a roof hatch. The roof hatch would be situated close to the center of the roof and measure about 3 feet in length by 2' 6" in width. The installation of the roof hatch would require the insertion of additional framing. Two 2 x 8' joists would be inserted on either side of the hatch along with two 2 x 8's as a boxout header. The application would also "sister" or add an additional joist to the existing along the top and bottom of the hatch opening.

Design Review Committee (DRC) Review

The DRC considered this application at its April 3, 2024, hybrid meeting. Mr. Wenchel asked if the roof hatch would be located inside an individual residential unit; Mr. Vaughan (the applicant) replied it would not be in a condominium unit but in the building's hallway/stairwell. Mr. Davis asked for the measurements of the opening which the applicant and HPP staff provided. Staff asked for the height of the roof hatch; Mr. Vaughan stated it would be no more than about 2' in height. The DRC members, having no other questions or concerns about the project, placed this item on the Consent Agenda for the April 17, 2024, hybrid HALRB public hearing.

Recommendation

The HPP staff recommends approval of this application as submitted. Although no records were found to help determine the age of the existing skylight, the *Colonial Village National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form* does not mention skylights and further only notes the different roof forms present in each phase of Colonial Village's construction; no historic or architectural significance is attributed to the complex's roof forms specifically. The *Garden Apartments, Apartment Houses and Apartment Complexes in Arlington County, Virginia 1934-1954 Multiple Property National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form (000-8825) (MPD)* notes that roof forms and their coverings are secondary features that contribute to the physical characteristics that define Colonial Village as a garden apartment. This pertains largely to the general form of the roof rather than features on the roof. Again, no mention of skylights is made. Since the roof form would not be changing in this proposal and no evidence of the historic significance of skylights at Colonial Village was found, the HPP staff agrees that the proposed change is appropriate.

The insertion of the roof hatch would not make a significant impact on the existing historic fabric or be a major visual change from the existing skylight. The roof hatch would not be visible from the public right-of-way and have no immediate visual impact on the LHD; 1758 N. Rhodes St. is situated on top of a moderate hill in Colonial Village which contributes to the limited visibility of the roof and therefore, the roof hatch. Staff supports the use of the roof hatch as it would allow Colonial Village staff safer access for maintenance and would aid in their continued upkeep of the historic building. Finally, the proposed roof hatch meets the intent of Standard # 10 of *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation*:



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10. New additions and adjacent or related new construction shall be undertaken in such a manner that if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.