



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: August 8, 2024
SUBJECT: CoA 24-10A, 1762 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 September 1991, the HALRB approved a CoA for the roof replacement at 1762 N. Rhodes, along with other addresses. In a photo submitted for the project, a portion of the skylight is visible indicating that a skylight was already in place at this property. Additionally, a drawing for the work indicates the presence of a skylight. The skylight was not replaced as part of the work. In November 1991, the HALRB also approved a CoA for the relocation of downspouts at 1762 N. Rhodes St. Finally, 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 subject application is an amendment to CoA 24-10 which was approved by the HALRB in April 2024. A change in location of the roof hatch was required and is the reason the applicant is returning. The conversion of a skylight to a roof hatch will no longer be occurring at 1758 N. Rhodes St., as originally proposed, but instead at 1762 N. Rhodes St. Like in the original proposal, the applicant is requesting to replace an existing skylight, located in the hallway of 1762 N. Rhodes St., with a roof hatch. The roof hatch would be situated close to the center of the roof and measure about 35” x 42” and 18” tall. The installation of the roof hatch would require the insertion of additional framing. Support framing, in the way of 2” x 8’ joists cut to size, would be inserted on all sides of the opening and “sister” with existing joists. The roof hatch would have a polycarbonate dome cover and an aluminum frame.

Design Review Committee (DRC) Review

The DRC considered this application at its August 7, 2024, hybrid meeting. The commissioners did not have any questions but did request the inclusion of a roof plan with the project materials for record keeping. The applicant stated they would share that document with HPP staff prior to the HALRB meeting. The DRC members, having no other questions or concerns about the project, placed this item on the Consent Agenda for the August 21, 2024, hybrid HALRB public hearing.

Recommendation

The HPP staff recommends approval of this application as submitted. The proposed project does not include any major changes from the original proposal that was approved by the HALRB in April 2024 aside from the relocation of the roof hatch to a different building in the LHD. As in the original proposal, 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. 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*:

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.

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 still agrees that the proposed change is appropriate.