

To: HALRB
From: John Liebertz, Historic Preservation Planner
Date: November 10, 2015
Subject: Revised Colonial Village Window Design Guidelines

At the October 21, 2015, Historical Affairs and Landmark Review Board (HALRB) meeting, representatives of the Colonial Village Board of Directors, Legum & Norman (general manager of the condominiums), and Revolution Windows met with the HALRB to discuss revisions to the *Guidelines for Replacement Windows in the Colonial Village Historic District*. The applicants requested the consideration of a vinyl replacement window, followed guidance provided by the HALRB, and worked with staff on the revised design guidelines.

Background Information

The oldest windows at Colonial Village II (CVII) and III (CVIII) date from the conversion of the complex from apartments to condominiums in the late-1980s. The windows from this period are single-hung, aluminum-sash. Several other window types were installed prior to the approval of the current window guidelines.

The current CVII and CVIII *Guidelines for Replacement Windows in the Colonial Village Historic District* were ratified by the HALRB on July 17, 2002. The Historic Preservation Program (HPP) staff and the CVII and CVIII Board of Directors collaborated on the guidelines. All parties shared concerns regarding the appropriateness of synthetic materials due to the relative novelty of vinyl windows and a general lack of quality craftsmanship and design. Vinyl windows had only surpassed wood windows with 40 percent of the new construction window market in 2001. Similar to today, the Condominium Board then had concerns about the ongoing maintenance (painting) of replacement wood windows located on the second and third stories of the buildings. Therefore, the existing window guidelines required an aluminum-clad wood window. This window called for less ongoing maintenance and assured an appropriate exterior appearance. Before agreeing to the existing guidelines, the CVII and CVIII Board of Directors consulted with a number of window manufacturers who produced a variety of windows that adhered to the guidelines. Thereby, the guidelines offered owners a number of options at different price points.

Since 2002, window replacement requests in CVII and CVIII have been reviewed and approved by HPP staff. Over the last 14 years, however, the number of window manufacturers that sell windows that adhere to the design guidelines have decreased and the price of such windows has increased. This situation has contributed to an overall lack of replacement of the deteriorating single-hung, aluminum-sash window units. As a result, the CVII and CVIII Board of Directors approached the HPP staff to reevaluate the existing window guidelines to allow owners different material choices while keeping the overall aesthetic intact. The Board of Directors has requested the use of synthetic window materials, specifically vinyl, due to its ease of maintenance and improved appearance.

The HPP staff sought guidance from the Federal and state levels regarding the replacement of non-historic windows in garden apartments. The *Multiple Property Documentation Form for Garden Apartments, Apartment Houses, and Apartment Complexes in Arlington County: 1934-1954* (revised and accepted by

the National Park Service in 2011) states that windows are secondary characteristics of garden apartment complexes. The document states the following:

Replacement of the original sash or casement windows is typical for this particular housing type, which was commonly a rental property requiring regular maintenance. Although some properties retain the original windows, the majority have replacements that are in-kind to the original sash in type but generally not in materials and division of lights (true muntins). The fenestration pattern, sill, lintel or arch, and opening size must remain intact because they are significant to the historic context and, thus, are necessary to our understanding of garden apartments. If the sash or casement has not been restored but was replaced in-kind with regard to window type and number of dividing lights, the building continues to meet the eligibility requirements. Many of the apartments have undergone tax credit rehabilitation and inappropriate replacement windows have been removed, supplanted by a window more in keeping with the original sash in type but not always similar in material for maintenance purposes.

The Virginia Department of Historic Resource (VDHR) and the National Park Service (NPS) have reviewed and approved historic tax credit applications for vinyl-sash windows with simulated divided lights at three of the most important garden apartment complexes in Arlington County: Colonial Village (apartments), Buckingham, and Fairlington. Similar to Colonial Village II and III, these complexes retained none of the original historic window fabric. Therefore, the replacement of the 1980s-era aluminum windows and the more recent aluminum-clad wood window with vinyl-sash windows follows precedent set by the state and Federal government.

Staff Recommendation

For the reasons outlined above, staff recommends approval of the proposed revisions to the *Guidelines for Replacement Windows in the Colonial Village Historic District* to allow for staff approval through the ACoA process of vinyl-sash windows that meet the following conditions:

Criteria for Replacement Windows

- The replacement window should be made of virgin polyvinyl chloride (PVC).
 - *The HALRB also encourages home owners to install wood windows. These windows must meet the same specifications as the vinyl windows in order to ensure a uniform exterior appearance. Any wood window proposal will require a Certificate of Appropriateness reviewed by the HALRB.
- The exterior color of the replacement window must be white.
- Replacement technique must be “complete frame” not “replacement frame” or “sash pack.”
- The dimensions of the replacement window must match the dimensions of the existing window.
 - The window opening will not be expanded or infilled.
 - The rails and stiles must be between 7/8” to 1.25” (this is the visible width from the exterior).
 - The width from the edge of the glass to the edge of the frame will not exceed 2 7/8”.
- Replacement windows must have the same number of lights (glass panes) as the existing window.
- The replacement window must have either true or simulated divided lights and the division of lights must be identical to that of the existing window.
 - The replacement window must have narrow muntin bars (external grids) no less than 3/4” and no more than 7/8” wide and a minimum of 1/4” depth.
- Bathroom window may be lined with white or beige colored opaque film only.

- Capping must be done with a pre-finished protruded aluminum with a squared profile that matches the dimensions and design of the existing capping (brick mould and mullion).

The use of vinyl windows in local historic districts should be limited to garden apartment complexes. Other local historic districts in Arlington County are primarily significant due to their architectural value derived from the retention of original historic fabric (siding, windows, door materials, etc.) and design. In these historic districts, the replacement of existing synthetic windows with wood windows augments the overall integrity of the district as a whole. This also adds to the sense of a unified streetscape.

In comparison, the historic significance of garden apartments is derived from a distinct set of parameters. Garden apartments are historically significant due to: their overall form, massing, height, and setting; their continuation of the ideals of the Garden City Movement; and their adherence to guidelines stipulated by the Federal Housing Administration. At Colonial Village, no historic window fabric exists and the architectural integrity of such individual components is of less importance. In addition, other sections of Colonial Village outside of the local historic district already have replacement synthetic windows. For that reason, the proposed guidelines coalesce with other sections of the complex outside of the HALRB's purview.