

# COUNTY OF YORK

## MEMORANDUM

**DATE:** March 9, 2010 (HYDC Mtg. 3/17/10)

**TO:** Historic Yorktown Design Committee

**FROM:** J. Mark Carter, Assistant County Administrator

**SUBJECT:** Application No. HYDC-48-10: Robert D'Eramo – 211 Ambler Street (Windmill Point 1711 townhouses); Replacement of Front Door

### Issue

This application seeks authorization (Certificate of Appropriateness) for installation of a replacement front door for the townhouse unit at 211 Ambler Street. The unit is one of six (6) attached units in the Windmill Point 1711 townhouse development. The existing front door is a windowless six-panel door, matching the front doors of the five other units in the complex. The proposed replacement would include a fan-shaped window in the upper portion of the door as well as a sidelight on the left side.

### Background

Several months ago, the applicant requested and received approval to install single-sidelight doors in the units at 211 and 208 Ambler Street (HYDC 42-09; issued by administrative action – letter dated November 6, 2009). The request was reviewed and approved as an administrative action based on the conclusion that replacement of the doors on both units on either side of the central brick section of the complex would maintain the rhythm and balance of the architectural features. Conversely, when the owner of 208 Ambler decided not to replace his door, I informed Mr. D'Eramo that installation of a sidelight door on his unit alone would be considered a change significant enough as to warrant review and action by the HYDC (rather than administrative). Subsequently, Mr. D'Eramo submitted this application.

### Pertinent Design Guidelines

The subject structure is located in the *Historic Core*, as defined by the Yorktown Historic District and Design Guidelines. The Windmill Point townhouse complex was constructed in the early 1980s and, therefore, is considered a Non-Contributing Structure.

Under Section 24.1-377(h) of the Zoning Ordinance, the following guidance is provided for the evaluation of applications:

- (1) Generally, the following should be considered:
  - a. The relationship of the proposed changes to the historic, architectural or cultural significance of the structure and the surrounding district.
  - b. The appropriateness of the change in terms of architectural compatibility with the distinguishing historic and architectural features of the structure and the district. Architectural compatibility shall be judged in terms of a proposed structure's

mass, dimensions, materials, color, ornamentation, architectural style, lighting, and other criteria deemed pertinent.

There are no specific Design Guidelines relating to window replacement / alteration for a Non-Contributing structure. However, the following guidelines applicable to New Construction may be helpful in considering how to evaluate and determine the appropriateness of the window:

(4) Doors

- (a) Only one entry door should be provided on the front façade of the principal block or any outbuilding. The entry door should be a single, wooden, raised panel door with or without lights and should be painted.
- (b) Steel or composite doors may be used provided they have the appearance of a wooden, raised panel door.
- (c) All attached hardware should be simple in design and appropriate to the character of the building and the district.
- (d) Sliding glass doors should not be used on any elevation facing a public right-of-way unless they are of a type that is indistinguishable in appearance from an otherwise approvable divided-light French-door arrangement.

Considerations

1. The November administrative approvals for door and window work at Windmill Point were based on the premise that there is a certain balance and consistency in the design and layout of the complex and its front façade. Mr. D'Eramo has, however, correctly pointed out that the "wings" of the complex on either side of the center section (the two brick-faced units) are not identical. For example, he notes the difference in the footprints as well as appurtenances (such as the storm door on the unit at 208 Ambler).
2. The front façade of the center brick-faced units sits forward of the façade of 211 Ambler (the subject unit) and 208 Ambler. The sidelight on the proposed replacement door will be on the left side of the door (when viewed from the outside). Because the row of townhouse units is aligned slightly counter-clockwise of center, the proposed sidelight door will not be readily visible except when viewing Windmill Point from the side of the complex in front of 211 and 214 Ambler. In addition, the landscaping, both existing and that proposed by Mr. D'Eramo to address the condition of approval for the replacement window, will tend to minimize the visible differences between the proposed door and the others in the complex.
3. The proposed door itself (specification sheet attached) complies with the above noted guidelines which mention:
  - Raised panel design
  - With lights (window)
  - Composite material (fiberglass)
  - Painted

4. Mr. D'Eramo has noted that the primary motivation for the request is a desire to provide natural light (through the sidelight and door light) to a dark interior entryway/corridor/stairway.

### Conclusions

Staff is of the opinion that the change would be relatively inconspicuous and that the HYDC could determine it to be consistent with the Guidelines.

jmc

Copy to: Robert D'Eramo

Attachments:

- Application (including attachments)
- Vicinity Map
- Photographs of structure