

January 21, 2020

Ms. Margaret Gspurning
Building Director, Albert A. Capellini Community & Cultural Center
Town of Yorktown
363 Underhill Avenue
Yorktown Heights, New York 10598

Reference: Your November 21, 2019 Application for Certificate of Appropriateness for New Stairs, "Replace Unsafe Stairs with Unsafe Legal Staircase," at the Albert A. Capellini Community & Cultural Center

Dear Margaret,

The Yorktown Landmarks Preservation Commission (YLPC) is issuing a Certificate of Appropriateness (CoA), *conditionally*, for the replacement of the northwest stairs located at the Albert A. Capellini Community & Cultural Center, a recently landmarked and protected structure.

We support the Town of Yorktown's commitment to safety and making the entry stairs easier to navigate in conjunction with the Town of Yorktown Landmarks Preservation Code, Section 198.5-7.

Sincerely,

Linda R. Briggs
Chairman, Yorktown Landmarks Preservation Commission
Attachment

CC: Matt Slater, Town Supervisor
Alice Roker, Councilwoman
Patty Demarsh, Building Office Manager
Diana Quast, Town Clerk
John Landi, Building Inspector
John Tegeder, Planning Director
YLPC Members

Yorktown Landmarks Preservation Commission
1974 Commerce Street
Yorktown Heights, New York 10598

Whereas this is a resolution adopted by the Town of Yorktown Landmarks Preservation Commission (YLPC) on January 17, 2020; and

Whereas the property located at 1974 Crompond Road, Tax ID 37.15-1-21 is commonly known as the Albert A. Capellini Community & Cultural Center, the former kindergarten through sixth grade and high schools. It was designed by renowned school architects, Knappe and Morris in the 1920's, and now, the community and cultural center, is eligible for listing on the national and state registers of historic places, and one of fifteen officially designated landmarks, having received its formal designation on July 23, 2019, according to the Yorktown Code, Section 198. Landmark Preservation; and

Whereas the Yorktown Landmarks Preservation Commission must issue a Certificate of Appropriateness which approves the proposed replacement of the existing steps and rail and addition of adjoining sidewalks; and

Whereas the owner, the Town of Yorktown, has submitted an application on November 21, 2019, stating that the project description is to "replace unsafe stairs with new legal staircase;" the Town of Yorktown proposes the removal of the exterior stairs on the northwest side of the building facing Commerce Street and replacement with a new stair design which provides a safer method of entry and exit from the building; inasmuch as the necessary supporting materials were not included with the November 21, 2019 application, the Town of Yorktown Landmarks Preservation Commission, working with the Building Office Manager, created the supporting statement, obtained rough drawings from the maintenance department, secured color and material samples from vendors, produced photos of existing conditions, and obtained the list of abutting property owners, to proceed with the assessment for the proposed replacement steps; and

Whereas to evaluate the appropriateness of the application to alter the protected exterior of the landmarked structure, the Town of Yorktown Landmarks Preservation Commission 1) applied the Yorktown Landmarks Preservation Code, Certificate of Appropriateness, Section 198.6 - 7, including compatibility with the historic character, general design, character and appropriateness to the property, scale of proposed alteration, texture, materials, and color and their relation to similar features of other properties, visual compatibility with surrounding properties, including proportion with the property's front façade, and the importance of historic, architectural or other features to the significance of the property 2) conducted field research of other Knappe and Morris designed school entry stairs and rail systems (among the

three schools, seven out of eight entries are finished cement with institutional style railings), and 3) consulted with NY State historic preservation consultants to validate our assessment, and;

Whereas after reviewing the submitted application, supporting materials, field research findings, and input from preservation experts, the Yorktown Landmarks Preservation Commission voted to issue a Certificate of Appropriateness, (pursuant to Section 198.5-7, of the Town of Yorktown Code), for the proposed alteration of the northwest entry stairs at Albert A. Capellini Community & Cultural Center, ***with the following conditions:***

1) confirmation that the redesigned stair platform, step configuration and dimensions meet the project description goal, “replace unsafe stairs with new legal staircase;”

2) confirmation that the redesigned platform and stairs are finished concrete, compatible and consistent with the existing historic character of the former school entry stairs, and that the new stair design does not include any decorative style or material pavers, flagging or bricks in the platform, facing, risers or treads

3) confirmation of the rail components required by code for the redesigned platform and steps

4) confirmation that the rail will be fabricated with simple, institutional style (1 7/8 inch round steel hand and guard rails with 3 / 4 inch round steel spindles), compatible and consistent with the existing historic character and conditions at the former school, and that the new rail design does not include decorative wrought iron components;

5) providing the plans, including dimensions, materials and colors, for integrating the sidewalks into the redesigned stairs and repairing the damaged building entry façade stones, that demonstrate consistency and compatibility with existing conditions and the historic character of the school structure

Whereas as a safer design, compatible and consistent with the existing, historic structure, may be less costly; and

Whereas this resolution shall function as the Certificate of Appropriateness for said new construction; and

Whereas the Certificate of Appropriateness shall be valid for twelve (12) months, beginning on the date of this resolution, after which the owner must reapply if the owner still wishes to undertake the installation on the property.

Linda R. Briggs, Chairman
Yorktown Landmarks Preservation Commission

