

**COMMISSION OF ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW
STAFF REPORT
November 22, 2016, Meeting**

3. **CAR No. 16-158** (J. Hardy)

**2220-2222 Jefferson Avenue
Union Hill Old and Historic District**

Project Description: **Rehabilitate a multi-unit building to include the installation of fiber cement siding, replacement of all windows, enclosure of rear porches, and construction of new decks.**

Staff Contact: **M. Pitts**

The applicant requests approval to rehabilitate a residential structure in the Union Hill Old and Historic District to facilitate the conversion of the structure from four units to two attached single family dwellings. The Italianate structure is a 2-story, 6-bay frame double house constructed ca. 1895. The structure has been altered over the years to include the installation of vinyl and aluminum siding on portions of the structure and improperly sized vinyl replacement windows.

The applicant is proposing the following changes to structure:

- In-kind repair and replacement of elements of the front porch. As the proposed repair work will match the existing in materials and form, this repair work does not require Commission review.
- All existing siding is to be removed and replaced with smooth, unbeaded fiber cement siding in Country Lane Red.
- All existing windows are to be replaced with new PVC windows (Legacy Products) or aluminum clad wood windows (Trimline). The windows will be sized to fit in the existing openings.
- The existing two story rear porches are to be demolished. The applicant proposes to enclose the area of the existing porches. On the side elevations, the applicant proposes to install a 6/6 window with a transom above and vertical siding below on both the first and second floors. On the rear elevation, the applicant proposes to install multi-lite French doors with a transom above to access a balcony on the second floor. On the first floor, the applicant proposes to install a single door (details not provided) and vertical siding with a transom above. The door will access a landing with stairs leading down to the rear yard and stairs leading up to a wooden deck. The proposed deck will project 18 feet into the rear yard. The applicant proposes identical modifications to each single family home to include the porch enclosures and decks.

Staff recommends partial approval of the project with conditions.

Siding: The *Richmond Old and Historic Districts Handbook and Design Review Guidelines* note that fiber cement siding is a product with limited applications which includes being used on secondary elevations with limited visibility from the public right of way (pg. 56). Staff believes the first floor of the façade retains historic fabric including the windows, doors, siding, and porch details. Staff does not know if any historic wood siding remains under the vinyl siding on the 2nd story of the façade or on other elevations. Staff recommends the siding on the first floor of the façade be retained as it does not appear to be deteriorated beyond repair and the condition of the wood siding under the vinyl siding be assessed in coordination with CAR staff and if possible, a sufficient amount of existing wood siding be salvaged and installed with the historic reveals on the 2nd story of the façade. Staff supports the installation of fiber cement siding on the secondary elevations with the condition that the siding be smooth, unbeaded, and installed with a reveal consistent with the historic reveal. Staff recommends approval of the proposed siding color as the rich red color is appropriate for the Italianate structure.

Windows: The *Guidelines* state that all original windows should be retained and repaired and should only be replaced when the windows have deteriorated beyond the point of repair (pg. 65, #1, 6, 7). Staff believes the first floor windows on the façade are original windows and that the applicant has not presented adequate evidence that these windows have deteriorated beyond the point of repairs, and therefore staff recommends these windows be retained and repaired. The photograph of the home from the Historic Richmond Foundation's 1977 Survey shows windows with a 2/2 lite configuration on the façade. As the guidelines note that vinyl windows are not appropriate for historic buildings and that the architectural appearance of original windows should be used as a model for new windows, staff recommends approval of the replacement windows on the other elevations and on the 2nd floor of the façade with the conditions that the windows be 2/2, true or simulated divided lite, aluminum clad wood windows. Therefore, staff recommends approval of the use of the Trimline aluminum clad wood windows and denial of the use of the Legacy PVC windows.

Porch Enclosure: The *Richmond Old and Historic Districts Handbook and Design Review Guidelines* state porch enclosures are only appropriate on secondary elevations and glass enclosures which reveal decorative porch elements are strongly preferred as solid materials radically alter the historic appearance of a porch (pg. 67, #13). The applicant is proposing to demolish the existing 2 story porches as they have are not original to the structure and are in poor condition. Staff has reviewed the 1905 Sanborn maps for the property which show the existence of 2 story covered porches in the location of the existing porches. The applicant has attempted to model the appearance of the porch enclosure on the existing porch by installing windows to add transparency and vertical siding to resemble porch railings. Staff has concerns about the proportion of the windows, transoms, and siding. Staff recommends the proportions be modified as to better relate to the existing porch railing to open

space proportions. Staff also recommends the siding area surrounding the windows be minimized by increasing the window size. Staff believes the transparency of the existing porches should be maintained for the entire footprint of existing porches. Staff recommends the installation of windows, transoms, and vertical siding be extended to encompass the footprint of the existing porches. As details of the proposed rear door and colors have not been provided, staff recommends these details be provided for administrative review and approval.

Deck: Staff reviewed the decks through the lens of the “Standards for New Construction: Decks” on pages 48 of the Guidelines. The proposed deck meets some of the guidelines because it is located at the rear of the dwelling and does not alter, damage or destroy significant site elements of the property. The *Guidelines* note that deck should be painted or stained a neutral color that complements one or more of the colors found on the main structure and that sub-decking should be screened with wood lattice work or with brick piers (pg. 48, #2, 4). Staff recommends the deck be painted or opaquely stained a color to be administratively reviewed and approved and the sub-decking be screened with lattice to be painted or opaquely stained a color to be reviewed by staff or the proposed wooden piers be replaced with brick piers.

It is the assessment of staff that, with the conditions above, the application is partially consistent with the Standards for Rehabilitation and New Construction outlined in Sections 30-930.7(b) and (c) of the City Code, as well as with the *Richmond Old and Historic Districts Handbook and Design Review Guidelines*, specifically the page cited above, adopted by the Commission for review of Certificates of Appropriateness under the same section of the code.