

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

8. **CAR No. 16-036** (C. Keck) **512 West 20th Street
Springhill Old and Historic District**

Project Description: **Modifications to the front façade including
siding, attic vent, front door and elements of the porch.**

Staff Contact: **M. Pitts**

The applicant requests approval for modifications to this home in the Springhill Old and Historic District. This application is the result of enforcement activity for alterations to the front of the structure which included the removal of the original porch siding and the replacement of the siding, front door and porch posts and columns.

Below is a brief history of the Commission's activity related to this property:

- 03/04/2010 CAR staff sent Mr. Keck letter apprising him of his responsibilities as a new owner of property in a City Old and Historic District
- 08/27/2010 Mr. Keck applied to CAR to remove aluminum siding and install unbeaded Hardie Plank siding with a smooth finish
- 09/28/2010 CAR approved the application for the removal of aluminum siding and the installation of smooth-finish, unbeaded Hardie Plank siding
- 01/16/2015 In response to a call, CAR served Mr. Keck with a Notice of Violation for the replacement of porch piers and columns, removal of picket porch rail, replacement of clapboard siding, removal of attic vent, and painting without the required Certificate of Appropriateness.
- 02/20/2015 Mr. Keck applied for CAR review to address the violations at the property.
- 03/24/2015 CAR deferred action on the application in order to give the applicant, who was not present, the opportunity to provide additional information and clarification to the CAR.
- 05/29/2015 Mr. Keck provided supplemental information for CAR review
- 06/23/2015 CAR denied the application because features that should have been retained and repaired or replaced in kind were removed or replaced with new features of different form and materials. The CAR recommended the installation of smooth unbeaded siding on the front elevation of the building, including the gable, the installation of a simple wooden Craftsman-style door, and the rebuilding of the front porch posts, columns and railings to match the form and materials present at the house in September of 2010.

- 07/08/2015 Mr. Keck filed an appeal with the City Clerk's Office to appeal the CAR's June 23, 2015, decision.
- 09/21/2015 City Council affirmed the CAR's decision as Council failed to modify or reverse the decision of the CAR within 75 days from the date the appeal was filed.
- 10/27/2015 The CAR reviewed an application from Mr. Keck for the installation of porch railings. The Commission deferred the application and requested the applicant submit a comprehensive application which will address all of the violations on the property. At the meeting, the Commission expressed concerns regarding the changes to the appearance of the porch including the materials and proportions, the door with the beveled glass, and the removed attic vent.

Since the October meeting, the applicant has met with staff several times to discuss a plan for abating the violations at the property and addressing the Commission's concerns. With the application currently before the Commission the applicant requests approval for the following alterations:

- Maintain of the smooth beaded cementitious siding that is currently on the house
- Replace the cedar shake on the gable with smooth beaded cementitious siding to match the siding that is on the rest of the home
- Reinstall an attic vent in the front gable.
- Install wood railings to match the railing which were removed in materials and design.
- Maintain the Therma-tru craftsman style 1-lite door. The applicant is requesting approval for the door that is currently installed, but he is proposing to replace the leaded glass with clear glass.
- Maintain the porch columns which are currently on the house. The original tapered porch columns, which the applicant states were severely deteriorated, were replaced with a similar tapered column that are a bit thicker and taller.
- Maintain the stone porch piers. The painted brick porch piers were replaced with shorter and slightly wider stone piers. The applicant stated that the porch piers were bowed and were not original to the structure. The applicant is proposing to paint the stone a solid grey color to attempt to replicate the appearance of the columns in 2010.

Staff recommends approval of the project as submitted. The *Richmond Old and Historic Districts Handbook and Design Review Guidelines* caution against the wholesale removal of historic or character-defining features of an historic structure, or in the cases where features are deteriorated beyond the point of

repair, recommends their in-kind replacement. Specifically, the *Guidelines* state, “Do not remove or radically change entrances or porches in defining the building’s overall historic character. Front and side porches are architecturally more ornate than utilitarian back porches” (p. 67 #4), and “Do not strip entrances and porches of historic material and details that should be retained in any repair or partial replacement” (p. 67 #8).

The application before the Commission attempts to return several character defining features of the front façade of the home back to their appearance as seen in the photograph from 2010. The applicant is proposing to remove the cedar shake from and reinstall the attic vent in the front gable and reinstall the porch railing to match the previous craftsman style railing. As the siding does not have a faux wood grain which is specifically discouraged by the *Guidelines* (pg. 56), staff does not take issue with beaded siding as it is compatible with siding in the neighborhood though typically not approved in Old and Historic Districts.

The previous front door on the structure was not the original front door but was an internal door which was relocated to the front façade. As the *Guidelines* note that beveled glass is strongly discouraged (pg. 67, #14), the applicant is proposing to remove the beveled glass and install clear glass.

The *Guidelines* note that when replacing damaged elements, materials that match the original in type or convey the same appearance as the original should be used (pg.55, #7). Though the proportions of the front porch have been changed, the applicant is attempting to replicate the appearance of the materials by painting the stone piers to give the appearance of the previously painted brick piers. For this reason, staff supports the changes to the front porch piers and columns

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