

**COMMISSION OF ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW
STAFF REPORT
September 26, 2017, Meeting**

4. **COA-022635-2017** (TGT Properties LLC)

**608 North 23rd Street
Union Hill Old and Historic District**

Project Description:

**Rehabilitate a single family home,
replace front steps.**

Staff Contact:

C. Jeffries

The applicant requests approval to rehabilitate this two-story frame Italianate home in the Union Hill Old and Historic District. The proposed work includes the following:

- Replace the existing Masonite siding on the front façade with smooth hardiplank siding in Light Mist.
- Replace the existing asphalt shingles on the front porch roof with TPO or EPDM membrane roof in gray.
- Rebuild the front porch stairs with a single run of steps, to match photographic documentation.
- Replace the porch railing with Richmond rail at the original height, and install a metal rail at 36" for safety.
- Restore the transom above the front door and replace the front door with a standard four-paneled fiberglass door.
- Replace the vinyl windows with wood 2/2 windows. Windows will be resized to fit the historic openings based on the interior framing.
- Construct a 12' by 14' deck in the rear of the structure. The deck will be constructed of pressure treated wood.

Staff recommends approval of the project with conditions.

Siding: *The Richmond Old and Historic District Handbook and Design Review Guidelines* state that fiber cement siding has limited application for use on historic structures and should be restricted to secondary elevations with limited visibility (pg. 58). The applicant has received administrative approval to install hardiplank siding on the side and rear elevations. The application states that no original wood siding remains. Staff recommends that if no wood siding is found beneath the Masonite siding, new wood siding be installed on the front façade.

Porch roof: The applicant states that the historic material of the front porch roof is no longer existing and has been replaced with asphalt shingles. The proposed gray membrane roof is similar in appearance to a flat-lock seam roof, which is typical of the district. The *Guidelines* state that substitute roof materials may be

used if the original material is not feasible (pg. 64, #1). As the original porch material is no longer present, staff supports the installation of a membrane roof.

Front door: The applicant proposes to restore the transom and replace the existing front door with a four-paneled fiberglass door. The *Guidelines* state that stamped or molded faux paneled doors are inappropriate substitutes for door types found in historic districts (pg. 69 #14). The applicant has submitted photographs that demonstrate that the door opening was altered to accommodate the current door. Staff believes that a 1977 photograph of the structure shows a double front door. Based on the photographic evidence and the proportions of the original door opening, staff recommends that a wood double door with a single light transom be installed, the design and dimensions to be administratively reviewed by staff.



HRF Church Hill Survey, 1977

Porch stairs: The applicant proposes to remove the existing porch stairs and replace them with a single run of steps, to match two photos of the property. The proposed steps project 6'8" from the edge of the porch and are 5' wide. Staff notes that the site plan does not demonstrate whether there is adequate space between the porch and the sidewalk to accommodate the proposed stairs as the front setback distance was not included. However the applicant is proposing to reconstruct a missing element using pictorial evidence which is consistent with

the Commission's Standards for Rehabilitation (pg. 57 #7). Staff recommends that the steps be constructed of wood and painted to match the existing porch and a final dimensioned site plan be submitted for administrative review prior to installation.

Porch railing: The applicant states that the current railings were installed to replace the original Richmond rail design at a higher height. This is evident by the two photographs submitted as well as the incompatibility between the current railing and the porch posts. The applicant proposes to install a Richmond rail style railing at the original height, 30". The applicant is also proposing to install a metal rail above the lower wood rail at a height of 36" for safety, due to the high height of the porch. The metal rail will be painted to blend in with the structure behind it. The *Guidelines* state that there may be difficulty in maintaining the original railing height while meeting building codes (pg. 48). The *Guidelines* recommend installing a backing rail at a height that meets code. As the applicant is proposing an unobtrusive railing due to safety concerns, staff recommends approval of the railing as proposed.

Windows: The applicant proposes to remove the replacement vinyl windows and replace them with wood 2-over-2 windows that fit the original openings, based on the interior framing. The older photographs of the structure show 2-over-2 windows that match the opening dimensions seen in the interior photographs submitted by the applicant. The *Guidelines* state that reconstruction of missing windows should be based on physical or pictorial evidence (pg. 67 #7). The applicant is proposing to install Anderson 200 Series double hung sash windows which do not meet the Commission's Guidelines for replacement windows as they are PVC clad and do not contain spacer bars (pg. 58, 67). Staff recommends that wood or aluminum clad wood windows with 2-over-2 true or simulated divided lights to include interior and exterior muntins and a spacer bar between the glass be installed to fit the original window openings. Staff recommends revised window specifications be submitted to staff for administrative review and approval.

The floor plans submitted by the applicant do not accurately reflect the existing window and door openings on the secondary elevations. Staff recommends that any changes to openings on the secondary elevations, including window replacement, be submitted as a new application for review by the Commission.

Deck: The applicant is proposing to install a 12' by 14' pressure treated wood deck at the rear of the structure, 30" above grade. The plans submitted do not indicate that a railing will be installed. Staff reviewed the deck through the lens of the "Standards for New Construction: Decks" on page 49 of the *Guidelines*. The proposed deck meets some of the guidelines as 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 decks should be painted or stained a neutral color that complements one or more of the colors found on the main structure (pg. 49, #2). Staff recommends the deck be painted or opaquely stained a color

to be administratively reviewed and approved and the sub-decking be screened with wood lattice. If the applicant wishes to install railing on the deck, staff recommends the railing include vertical picket balustrades or a contemporary railing that is in scale with the house and deck.

It is the assessment of staff that the application, with the conditions noted above, is consistent with the Standards for Rehabilitation outlined 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 page cited above, adopted by the Commission for review of Certificates of Appropriateness under the same section of the code.