




**Staff Report**  
**City of Richmond, Virginia**



**Commission of Architectural Review**

|   |  |                         |
|---|--|-------------------------|
| 9.COA-150700-2024   | Final Review   | Meeting Date: 7/23/2024 |
| Applicant/Petitioner  | Sheila DeCastro  |                         |
| Project Description   | Replace an original barrel tile roof with a synthetic material and replace the existing windows.   |                         |
| Project Location  |   |                         |
| Address: 2720 West Grace Street   |  |                         |
| Historic District: West Grace Street  |  |                         |
| <p><b>High-Level Details:</b></p> <p>The applicant proposes various exterior repairs and alterations.</p> <p>Alterations will include replacement of deteriorated wooden architectural elements, roof replacement, replacement of four windows, replacement of gutters and downspouts, and the repainting of masonry.</p> <p>A composite tile and a clay tile have been submitted as options for the replacement of the existing clay tile portion of the roof.</p> |  |                         |
| Staff Recommendation  | Approval, with Conditions  |                         |
| Staff Contact   | Alex Dandridge, alex.dandridge@rva.gov, (804) 646-6569   |                         |
| Previous Reviews  | None.  |                         |
| Conditions for Approval   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Approval of the replacement windows, with the following conditions: that the new windows match the dimension, pane configuration, and muntin and sash width of the original; be installed without altering the existing opening; and that existing wooden window trim be retained or repaired and not wrapped in vinyl or aluminum.</li> <li>• Applicant retain as many of the green, tan, and yellow, and orange tiles from the existing roof as possible, and that any replacement tiles be a solid terracotta/orange color; the salvaged green, tan, and yellow, and orange tiles to be re-installed in a scattered fashion to replicate the existing pattern.</li> <li>• Staff recommends against the use of composite tile on the front portion of the roof.</li> <li>• Staff recommends that all wooden architectural elements be repaired, or replaced in kind to match the existing design, material, and dimension.</li> </ul> |                         |

|  |   |
|--|---|
|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff recommends that the new bronze-colored aluminum gutter match the existing dimensions and profile as closely as possible, and that all downspouts be rounded. Original decorative scuppers must be retained.</li> <li>• Repointing be done with a lime-based mortar that matches the color and composition of the existing mortar.</li> <li>• New mortar joints match the width and profile of the existing joints, and not be flush with the face of the brick.</li> </ul> |
|--|---|

## Staff Analysis

| Guideline Reference   | Reference Text   | Analysis  |
|---|--|---|
| Building Elements, Windows, Window Replacement and Reconstruction, pg. 69 | <p><i>7. Windows should only be replaced when they are missing or beyond repair. Any reconstruction should be based on physical evidence or photo documentation.</i></p> <p><i>10. The architectural appearance of original windows should be used as a model for new windows. Changes in the sash, depth or reveal, muntin configuration, frame or glazing is strongly discouraged. New glass should not be tinted or receive reflective coatings.</i></p> <p><i>11. Because the material cannot be manufactured to model effectively the appearance of historic windows, vinyl windows are not appropriate for historic buildings in historic districts.</i></p> | <p>The building features a variety of window sizes. The front projecting bays have eight-over-eight windows on the second and third stories, while the first story has casement windows.</p> <p>The applicant is proposing to replace four wooden windows: two on the facade, one on the west side elevation, and one on the rear elevation. The images submitted by the applicant indicate that the windows proposed for replacement are either deteriorated beyond feasible repair or are not original to the building.</p> <p>The new windows will be aluminum clad wood. <u>Staff recommends approval of the replacement windows, with the following conditions: that the new windows match the dimension, pane configuration, and muntin and sash width of the original; be installed without altering the existing opening; and that existing wooden window trim be retained or repaired and not wrapped in vinyl or aluminum.</u></p>  |
| Standards for Rehabilitation, Residential Construction,                   | <p><i>4. Retain original roof shape, size, materials and related elements including cupolas, chimneys and weather vanes; if replacement is necessary, consideration for use of slate, wood and metal, with respect to color and patterns, should be given.</i></p> <p><i>9. Do not remove or radically alter fundamental architectural features such as windows, roofs or porches.</i></p>   | <p>The existing roof is comprised of two main sections; a flat, standing seam metal portion, and a front, pitched, hipped portion with polychrome clay tiles. The flat portion is not visible from the public right-of-way; however, the front portion is.</p> <p>The applicant proposes to replace both portions of the roof with a new material. The metal on the flat portion will be replaced with TPO, and the front portion will either be replaced with a new <b>clay tile</b> of a similar design, or a <b>composite tile</b> of a similar design.</p> <p>The roof shape and size will not be altered; however, the original material will be. Staff finds that the original polychrome tile roof on the front portion of the building is a character defining feature and should be repaired or replaced in-kind to match the existing as closely as possible.</p> <p>The existing roof features several colors of tile including green, tan, yellow, and varying shades of orange.</p> <p>The clay tile option that the applicant is proposing varies in color; however, differs from the existing tile in that each tile of the existing roof is a single color, whereas</p> |

|  |  |   |
|--|--|---|
|  |  | each of the proposed tiles would have a gradient of color on each. Staff finds that the proposed "Jacobea" tile doesn't replicate the existing appropriately. <u>Staff recommends that the applicant retain as many of the green, tan, and yellow, and orange tiles from the existing roof as possible, and that any replacement tiles be a solid terracotta/orange color; the salvaged green, tan, and yellow, and orange tiles to be re-installed in a scattered fashion to replicate the existing pattern.</u>   |
| Building Elements, Roofs, Roof Replacement/ Reconstruction, pg. 66 | <i>3. Substitute materials may be used if the same kind of material is not technically feasible because the material is no longer being made. Substitute materials should match the original style and form as much as possible</i>  | The applicant has proposed two options for the front roof replacement. Staff finds that the composite tile is not able to accurately replicate the appearance of the existing polychrome roof. Furthermore, the original roof material is still being manufactured today. <u>Staff recommends denial of the use of composite tile on the front portion of the roof.</u>   |
| Maintenance & Repair, Roofs, Typical Materials, Tile, pg. 96       | <i>Clay and cement tile are both available in a number of shapes and sizes. Although clay tiles are expensive to install and add significant weight to a roof system, they do have a life span between 75 and 100 years, and they offer the benefit of enhanced fire resistance.</i>   | The applicant has provided a manufacture for new clay tiles. <u>Staff finds that as many of the existing tiles as possible be salvaged, specifically the colored tiles of green, tan, and yellow, to be reinstalled on the roof, any replacement tiles be a clay tile with a solid terracotta/orange color.</u><br><br>Given the visibility of the roof, unique coloring, and the availability of clay tile, staff finds replacement of the clay tile with a substitute/composite material to be inappropriate.   |
| Building Elements, Roofs, Cornices, pg. 67                         | <i>1. Do not remove or replace a cornice when it can be repaired. Materials must be completely rotted, rusted or otherwise beyond repair in order to justify replacement.</i><br><br><i>3. Do not remove elements of a cornice (such as brackets or blocks) that are part of the original composition without replacing them with new ones of like design.</i><br><br><i>7. Cornice repair should be accomplished using materials that match or are compatible with the existing cornice materials. 8. Decorative details and profiles of original cornice design should dictate repair details.</i> | The applicant proposes to replace all trim from the frieze board up including frieze board, soffit, fascia, OG molding, bed molding, and dentil blocks. The work will exclude the decorative trim, dentil blocks, and soffit on the arched portion of the cornice. 20 deteriorated rafter tails will also be replaced.<br><br>Based on documentation submitted by the applicant, these elements all appear to have areas of deterioration. <u>Staff recommends that all wooden architectural elements be repaired, or replaced in-kind to match the existing design, material, and dimension.</u> |
| Building Elements, Roofs, Gutter and Downspout Repair, pg. 66      | <i>7. Box or stop gutters catch water in a trough that is part of the roof or eave.</i><br><br><i>8. Leaky box or stop gutters should be lined with membrane roofing.</i><br><br><i>9. Suspended gutters are fastened at the eaves with spikes or straps. Loose downspout support brackets should be firmly reattached to the wall. Gutter support straps should be refastened</i>   | The building features original copper k-style gutters and downspouts, as well as non-original rounded downspouts.<br><br>The applicant proposes to replace the copper k-style gutters and downspouts with a "bronze-colored" aluminum, retaining the existing, decorative scuppers.<br><br><u>Staff recommends that the new bronze-colored aluminum gutter match the existing dimension and profile as closely as possible, and that all downspouts be rounded. Original decorative scuppers must be retained.</u>  |

|            |   |  |
|------------|---|--|
|            | <i>under roofing materials not on the roof surface.</i> |  |
| Repointing |   | Several areas on the building need repointing, specifically at the parapet walls and the five feet below on the outward facing portions of the wall. <u>Staff recommends that the repointing be done with a lime-based mortar that matches the color and composition of the existing mortar.</u> Staff recommends that the mortar joint match the width and profile of the existing joints, and not be flushed with the face of the brick. |

*It is the assessment of staff that, with the conditions above, the application is consistent with the Standards for Rehabilitation and New Construction outlined in Section 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 pages cited above, adopted by the Commission for review of Certificates of Appropriateness under the same section of the code.*

## Figures

Figure 1. Historic Photo, 1950s



Figure 2. 2720 & 2716 W. Grace Street. Identical buildigns with polychrome tile roofs on the façade.





Figure 3. View of 2720 W. Grace Street from the sidewalk looking east.



Figure 4. West projecting bay of 2720 W. Grace Street.

