

**COMMISSION OF ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW
STAFF REPORT
December 9, 2014 Meeting**

7. **CAR No. 14-145** (J. Gross) **2402 East Clay Street**
Church Hill North Old and Historic District

Project Description: **Replace original wood windows on sides
and install storm windows on facade**

Staff Contact: **K. Chen**

The applicant requests approval to replace the first- and second-story windows on the side elevations and to install storm windows on the front windows at this Classical Revival two-family residence in the Church Hill North Old and Historic District. No information has been provided regarding the number or condition of the windows to be replaced, the type of replacement window to be installed, or the type of storm window proposed.

Staff recommends approval of the project with the following conditions.

The *Guidelines* address the issue of replacing windows on page 90:

It is generally not appropriate to replace historic windows. Replacements are often made as a result of poor maintenance of the original materials, or from a belief that original windows do not provide sufficient energy efficiency; such replacements are considered inappropriate if the new windows do not duplicate the historic character of original windows in size, materials or design. Vinyl replacement windows are strongly discouraged and rarely permitted.

Additional references to handling historic windows appear in the standards for residential rehabilitation included in the *Richmond Old and Historic Districts Handbook and Design Review Guidelines* on page 51, "Retain original windows including both functional and decorative elements such as frames, sash, muntins, [and] glazing," and in more detail in the guidelines for windows on page 59-60:

- Original windows should be repaired by patching, splicing, consolidating or otherwise reinforcing them. (The presence of rotted or decayed wood can be determined by jabbing an ice pick into wet wood at an angle and prying up a small section of the wood or by inserting an ice pick perpendicular to the wood. Sound wood will separate in long splinters, decayed wood in short irregular pieces, and penetration of less than one-eighth of an inch means the wood is solid.)
- Windows should be replaced only when they are missing or beyond repair. Any reconstruction should be based on physical evidence or photographic documentation.
- Changes to existing windows or the addition of new windows along a secondary elevation will be considered by the Commission on a case-by-case basis.

- The architectural character of windows should not be altered by inappropriate materials or finishes that radically change the sash, depth of reveal, muntin configuration, the reflective quality or color of the glazing or the appearance of the frame.
- Do not replace multi-paned sash windows with new thermal sash windows that use false muntins.

For these reasons staff does not recommend the replacement of the three forward-most second-story windows on the west elevation because they are visible from the public right-of-way and further recommend the retention and repair of these windows. The remainder of the side windows are not visible. The owner should submit product information about the proposed storm windows to staff for administrative review and approval.

It is the assessment of staff that, with the conditions noted above, the work outlined in the proposal complies with the Standards for New Construction outlined in Section 114-930.7(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.