



## Commission of Architectural Review

1. COA-173550-2025	Final Review Meeting Date: 10/28/2025
Applicant/Petitioner	Brian Spencer
Project Description	Enclose a rear porch on the second floor.
Project Location	
Address: 17 N Arthur Ashe Boulevard	
Historic District: Boulevard	
<p>High-Level Details:</p> <p>The application proposes enclosing the existing second-floor rear porch. The new enclosure will be clad in wood siding and include a skylight. The project also includes unearthing and restoring the previously infilled basement door and concrete stairway leading to grade. Repairs or in-kind replacement of the stairs will match the original material and dimensions.</p>	
Staff Recommendation	Approval, with Conditions
Staff Contact	Yara Iwaz, Yara.Iwaz@RVA.gov, (804)646-6031
Previous Reviews	In the July 2025 meeting, the commission approved an application to construct a new front porch
Staff Recommendations	<p>Staff recommends approval of the application, with the following conditions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Approve the proposed enclosure; all construction to be done in a manner that minimizes damage to the historic fabric</li> <li>• Approve the proposed board-and-batten siding; final paint colors to be submitted for administrative review</li> <li>• Approve the skylight as proposed, ensuring it remains flush with the roof</li> <li>• Approve the restoration of the basement access; final basement door design to be compatible with the existing building; details to be submitted for administrative review</li> <li>• All construction be undertaken using best preservation practices during excavation and masonry removal</li> <li>• Incorporate a faux railing element along the base of the enclosed wall using wood trim and panels.</li> </ul>

# Staff Analysis

Guideline Reference	Reference Text	Analysis
Building Elements, p.71	<i>12. Do not enclose porches on primary elevations.</i>	<p>The proposed rear porch enclosure is located under the existing roofline, and will not increase the footprint of the structure. It is consistent with the location of other enclosed rear porches on this block.</p> <p><u>Staff recommends approval of the proposed enclosure, as its siting and massing are compatible and subordinate to the main structure. Staff further recommends that all construction be done in a manner that minimizes damage to the historic fabric.</u></p>
Standards for Rehabilitation, p.5	<i>3. Each property shall be recognized as a physical record of its time, place and use. Changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding conjectural features or architectural elements from other buildings, shall not be undertaken.</i>	<p>The proposed board-and-batten siding distinguishes the new enclosure from the original brick structure, which aligns with preservation best practices by avoiding false historicism.</p> <p><u>Staff recommends approval of the proposed board-and-batten siding, with final paint colors to be submitted for administrative review.</u></p>
Building Elements, p.66	<i>4. New elements such as vents or skylights should not be added to the front façade of a roof. These elements should be located in roof areas hidden from primary views.</i>	<p>The new skylight will be located on the rear roof slope. While skylight features are not typically found in the historic district, this addition will be located at the rear of the building and not visible from Arthur Ashe Boulevard. It will also be minimally visible from the alley due to the roof's soft slope.</p> <p><u>Staff recommends approval of the skylight as proposed, ensuring it remains flush with the roof and minimally visible.</u></p>
Standards for Rehabilitation, p.5	<i>6. Deteriorated historic features shall be repaired rather than replaced. When the severity of deterioration requires replacement or a distinctive feature, the new feature shall match the old in design, color, texture and other visual qualities and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features shall be substantiated by documentary, physical or pictorial evidence.</i>	<p>The project will restore a previously infilled basement door and unearth a concrete stair. Any repair or replacement will be in-kind with matching dimensions and materials.</p> <p><u>Staff recommends approval of the restoration of the basement access. Final basement door design to be compatible with the existing building; details to be submitted for administrative review.</u></p> <p><u>Staff further recommends that all construction be undertaken using best preservation practices, ensuring the protection of historic fabric during excavation and masonry removal.</u></p>
Building Elements, p.71	<i>13. Porch enclosures to aid in energy conservation are only appropriate on secondary elevations. Solid materials are not recommended for use in enclosure projects since they can radically alter the historic appearance of a porch. Glass enclosures which</i>	<p>The guidelines specify that porch enclosures are appropriate on secondary elevations and should typically use transparent materials, such as glass, to retain visibility of original porch features. This can be seen in the similar porch enclosures on 15 and 19 North Arthur Ashe Boulevard.</p> <p>In this application, the enclosure is being converted to an interior living space (bathroom and closet), which would make the installation of windows or other</p>

	<p><i>reveal decorative porch elements are strongly preferred.</i></p>	<p>transparent materials challenging. However, the current design eliminates all indication of the former porch. A faux railing treatment could help reference the appearance and proportions of the original porch without compromising the new functional use.</p> <p><u>Staff recommends that the applicant incorporate a faux railing element along the base of the enclosed wall using wood trim and panels.</u> This feature would visually reference the original railing line.</p>
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*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: rear porch to be enclosed



Figure 2: Infilled basement door

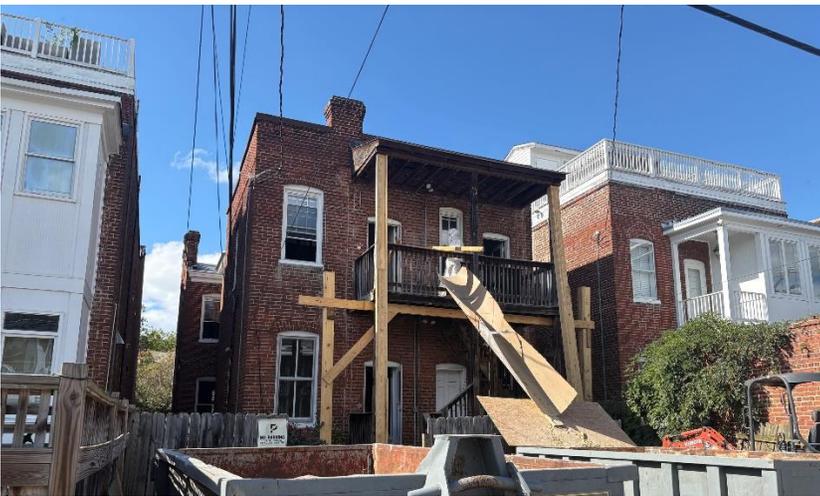


Figure 3



Figure 4: Front porch



Figure 5: Back porch enclosure at 15 N AA Blvd.



Figure 6: Back porch enclosure at 19 N AA Blvd.



Figure 7

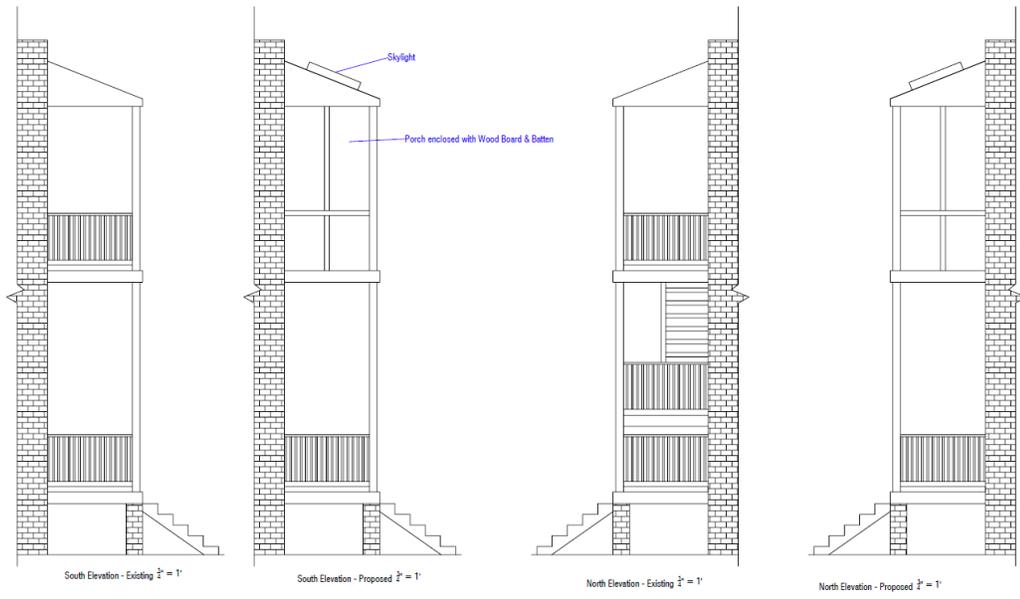


Figure 8