

**COMMISSION OF ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW
STAFF REPORT
April 26, 2016 Meeting**

7. **CAR No. 16-048** (J. Romano) **607-609 North 29th Street
Church Hill North Old and Historic District**

Project Description: **Modify previously approved plans for two attached single-family residences to use wood grain textured siding rather than the approved smooth siding.**

Staff Contact: **M. Pitts**

The applicant requests approval to install wood grain textured cementitious siding on two new attached single family dwellings in the Church Hill North Old and Historic District. This application is the result of enforcement activity. On February 24, 2015, the Commission approved with conditions an application for the construction of these two attached single-family residences. The applicant was approved to clad the structures in smooth Hardie Plank fiber cement lap siding. During construction of the approved project, the structures were unintentionally clad with wood grain textured fiber cement siding. The applicant is seeking approval of the textured siding which currently clads the attached homes.

Staff recommends denial of the project. The *Richmond Old and Historic Districts Handbook and Design Review Guidelines* note that though fiber cement siding is acceptable for use on new freestanding buildings, the siding should reveal a smooth surface, rather than a faux “wood grain” (pg. 56). The Guidelines are consistent with the National Park Service Preservation Brief #8 which states that “New substitute siding with embossed wood graining intended to simulate the texture of wood is visually inappropriate. Exaggerated graining would have been undesirable on real wood siding and is generally found only after sandblasting which is a destructive and totally unacceptable treatment for wood.” As textured wood grain siding is inappropriate in the Old and Historic District, staff cannot recommend approval of the application as submitted.

It is the assessment of staff that the application is not consistent with the Standards for New Construction in Section 30-930.7(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.