

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

14. **CAR No. 16-021** (T. Peters)

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

Project Description: **Modify previously approved plans for the construction of a trellis at the rear of the property**

Staff Contact: **M. Pitts**

The applicant requests approval to modify the design of a previously approved a wooden trellis at the rear of a home in the Union Hill Old and Historic District. On February 23, 2016, the Commission reviewed an application for the construction of a triangular trellis structure which abutted the existing deck. The application reviewed by the Commission was a result of enforcement activity as the structure was constructed without a Certificate of Appropriateness. The Commission approved the construction with the condition that the structure be painted or stained a neutral color that complements one or more of the colors found on the main structure.

Since the time of the approval, the applicant has constructed three levels of planters with 2" by 4" on two sides of the trellis, installed brick pavers beneath the trellis, and installed three levels of planters attached to the deck and adjacent to the alley. The applicant is proposing to install trellis surrounding the structure on the inside of the planters with two doors to enter the structure. Additionally, the applicant is proposing to install 2" by 2" runners to the top of the trellis perpendicular to the existing rafters. At the side of the deck, the applicant is proposing to install trellis behind the planters up to the level of the third row of planters.

Though the trellis is located at the rear of the property, it is visible from the public right of way. The structure can be seen from the adjacent alley and East Leigh Street.

The applicant has not provide a site plan for the structure. For this reason, zoning staff was unable to provide guidance as to whether the structure meets the requirements of the Zoning Ordinance.

Staff recommends approval of the project as submitted with conditions.

Though the *Richmond Old and Historic Districts Handbook and Design Review Guidelines* note that deck sub-decking should be screened with wood lattice work or brick piers, the proposed lattice does not function as a screening for the sub-decking as the posts of the trellis are exposed and the lattice attached to the deck does not extend to the floor of the deck. The lattice, planters, and the runners instead function to enclose the patio area. For this reason, staff has reviewed this element as a building addition rather than an auxiliary structure under which the previous application of the more open trellis was reviewed. The

Guidelines note that building additions should be subordinate in size to their main buildings and as inconspicuous as possible (pg. 44, Siting #1). The proposed structure is subordinate to the primary structure and located to the rear of the property. The Guidelines note that new construction should use a building form compatible with that found elsewhere in the district (pg. 44, Form #1). While examples of more open pergolas can be found throughout the District, staff was unable to locate examples of attached enclosures as proposed. For these reasons, staff recommends approval of the trellis with the conditions that the proposed lattice, doors, and upper two levels of the planters not be installed in order to maintain the open and transparent appearance of the structure and that the structure be painted or stained a neutral color, to be reviewed and administratively approved by staff, that complements one or more of the colors found on the main structure. Additionally, the Guidelines note for site improvements, brick or granite pavers are the most appropriate for the historic district (pg. 72, Sidewalks & Curbs #4); and therefore staff supports the installation of the brick patio area.

It is the assessment of staff that the application is consistent, with the above conditions, with the Standards for New Construction outlined in Section 30-930.7(c) and the Standards for Site Improvements outlined in Section 30-930.7(e) 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.