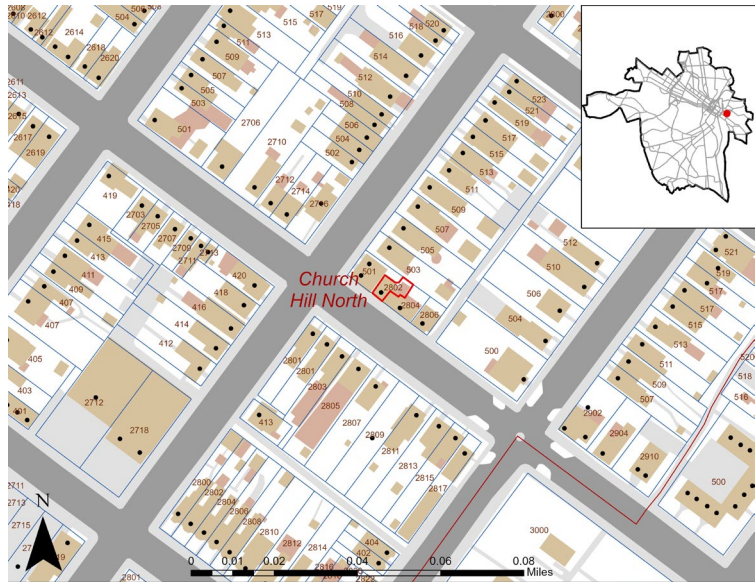




Staff Report
City of Richmond, Virginia



Commission of Architectural Review

6. COA-146156-2024	Final Review	Meeting Date: 7/23/2024
Applicant/Petitioner	Michael Fisher	
Project Description	Install fiber cement siding and perform various exterior repairs.	
Project Location		
Address: 2802 East Clay Street		
Historic District: Church Hill North		
<p>High-Level Details:</p> <p>This application is the result of a violation. On April 2, 2024, staff observed the removal of wood siding and the installation of new fiber cement siding on the façade of the building.</p> <p>The applicant did not apply for a permit or notify the Commission of Architectural Review.</p> <p>The property was built circa 1850.</p> <p>It has been discovered that much of the wood siding that was removed was not original to the property.</p>		
Staff Recommendation	Approval, with Conditions	
Staff Contact	Alex Dandridge, alex.dandridge@rva.gov ; (804) 646-6569	
Previous Reviews	<p>Staff issued an administrative approval for this property on May 7, 2024, for the following work: Remove newly installed wood grained HardiPlank siding on the side and rear of the home and replace with a smooth Hardiplank siding. Install smooth Hardiplank siding on the rear and sides of the building. Remove and repair damaged soffits, scrape, paint, and restore windows and door on the rear.</p> <p>The Commission reviewed this application at the April 2024 meeting. The Commission deferred this application to allow the applicant to work with the Historic Richmond Foundation, who has an easement on the property, and City Staff to further investigate appropriate solutions for the work that had been performed.</p> <p>A Notice of Violation was issued to the property on April, 4, 2024 for the replacement of wood siding with fiber cement siding that had a faux wood grain.</p>	

Conditions for Approval	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff recommends approval of the use of smooth hardiplank siding on the primary elevation. Staff recommends that the fiber cement siding match the width of the previous wood siding and that any wooden window trim be retained and repaired and not wrapped in another material like aluminum or vinyl.
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Staff Analysis

Guideline Reference	Reference Text	Analysis
Substitute Materials, page 60.	<p><i>As with other proposed exterior changes, the use of substitute materials within a designated Old and Historic District is subject to Commission review. The purpose of repairing damaged architectural features and of replacing lost or irreplaceable ones is to create a visual match to the original feature and prevent further deterioration. The use of synthetic materials that will alter the appearance, proportion and or details of an historic structure is strongly discouraged.</i></p> <p><i>Fiber cement siding is a siding option that has limited application for use on historic properties. Advertised as an alternative to vinyl or wood products, the application of these products in City Old and Historic Districts should be restricted to new freestanding buildings, secondary elevations with limited visibility from the public right-of-way, new additions with limited visibility from the public right-of-way and new outbuildings.</i></p>	<p>According to photographs of the house prior to this project, it was clad in wood siding. Although the siding was not in good condition, the siding on the façade should have been repaired.</p> <p>The owner mentioned that other buildings in the vicinity, including the attached house at 2804 East Clay Street have HardiPlank siding. Each project is reviewed separately, as houses have all been altered at different times. A siding project was presented to the Commission for 2804 East Clay Street in March 2013. This property did not have its original siding. The applicant requested to replace the hardboard siding with HardiPlank siding. The Commission made the exception for that property since the existing siding was inappropriate and non-historic.</p>
Substitute Materials, page 60. Synthetic Siding: Typical Problems- Loss of Historical Authenticity, page 92.	<p><i>The use of fiber cement siding products as a substitute for original wood trim and siding on historic structures is discouraged. Fiber cement siding is often thinner than wood siding, providing a narrower profile that makes the wall appear flat. Fiber cement siding should reveal a smooth surface, rather than a faux 'wood grain.'</i></p> <p><i>The architectural integrity of an historic structure may be severely compromised when its exterior surface is covered with a modern synthetic material. Vinyl, asphalt, and aluminum siding are not permitted for use in City Old and Historic Districts. Other synthetic siding materials with a smooth, untextured finish may be allowed in limited cases, but approval by the Commission is always required.</i></p>	<p>Based on documentation from the Historic Richmond Foundation, the wood siding on the primary elevation was not original to the property, being replaced in the 1980s.</p> <p>The guidelines state that the use of fiber cement siding in place of historic wood trim and siding is discouraged. There is no longer any original wood siding left on the property. Fiber Cement siding closely replicates the visual appearance of wood siding and is an appropriate substitute material when the original material is no longer present.</p> <p><u>Staff recommends approval of the use of smooth hardiplank siding on the primary elevation. Staff recommends that the fiber cement siding match the width of the previous wood siding and that any wooden window trim be retained and repaired and not wrapped in another material like aluminum or vinyl.</u></p>

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. View of the property with historic wood siding, August 2023.



Figure 2. View of the HardiPlank siding which had been applied to the majority of the façade in September 2023. The Commission of Architectural Review did not receive any notification of this work.



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Figure 3. View of the west elevation, before the application of new siding, March 2024.



Figure 4. View of the rear and west elevations, before the application of new siding, March 2024.



Figure 5. View of the rear of 2802 East Clay Street.



Figure 6. View of the rear elevation and the west elevation with new HardiPlank siding, April 2024.



Figure 7. View of the façade of 2802 East Clay Street with new HardiPlank siding, April 2024.

Figure 8. City Assessor Card indicates that some portions, if not all, siding was replaced in 1962.

ALTERATIONS				
DATE	PERMIT NO.	NATURE	EST. COST	AMT. ADDED
9-27-62	44305A	REPAIR - CORNICE, PLASTER, ROOF PATCH (INCL. #16)	1,500	500
9-13-76	75821A	FLOOR- REPL SIDING, STEPS, ETC.	200.-	NC
3-8-84	97742A	GEN. REPAIRS	3,600-	
		REHAB		