

Porch piers and posts

The applicant states that the porch piers were bowed and that the porch columns were rotten. The painted brick porch piers were replaced with shorter and slightly wider stone piers, and the tapered porch columns replaced with a similar tapered column that are a bit thicker and taller. The applicant is awaiting the Commission's decision before installing the final porch column where pressure-treated lumber is currently installed for support.

Removal of porch railing

The applicant states that the railing on three sides of the porch was rotten and was removed.

Staff recommends approval of the project with conditions. The *Richmond Old and Historic Districts Handbook and Design Review Guidelines* caution against the wholesale removal of historic or character-defining features of an historic structure, or in the cases where features are deteriorated beyond the point of repair, recommends their in-kind replacement. Specifically, the *Guidelines* state, "Do not remove or radically change entrances or porches in defining the building's overall historic character. Front and side porches are architecturally more ornate than utilitarian back porches" (p. 67 #4), and "Do not strip entrances and porches of historic material and details that should be retained in any repair or partial replacement" (p. 67 #8).

Staff does not take issue with the installation of the beaded siding and cedar shake siding, the replacement of the porch piers and columns, the uncovering of the side lites, or the painting of the structure. While most of these items do not constitute an in-kind replacement, they are similar enough in design and materials to remain compatible with the structure and the larger historic district.

However, staff does not recommend approval of the installed door, which is a molded panel door with a single beveled glass lite. The *Guidelines* state, "Do not remove original doors and door surrounds. Replacement doors and door surrounds with stamped or molded faux paneling or leaded, beveled, or etched glass are strongly discouraged and rarely permitted. Stamped or molded faux paneled doors are inappropriate substitutes for door types found in historic districts" (p. 67 #14).

Furthermore, staff does not recommend approval of the removal of the railing, as its repair or in-kind replacement would typically be recommended.

Therefore, staff recommends that approval of the project be conditioned on the installation of a Richmond style railing with similar dimensions as the original railing as well as the replacement of the existing door with a true-paneled, six-lite wood door with clear glass.

It is the assessment of staff that the application, with the conditions above, is consistent with the Standards for Rehabilitation outlined in Section 114-930.7(b) of the City Code, and 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.