



Commission of Architectural Review

1. COA-179902-2026	Final Review	Meeting Date: 2/24/2026
Applicant/Petitioner	Matt Jarreau	
Project Description	Reconstruct a previously removed front porch	
Project Location		
Address: 2807 East Clay Street		
Historic District: Church Hill North		
<p>High-Level Details:</p> <p>The applicant proposes to reconstruct a full-width front porch at 2807 East Clay St, a Greek Revival building that retains many of its defining architectural features. The house features a prominent front-facing gable with a defined pediment, wide frieze, and an oculus window at the attic level. The original window openings remain intact, and the primary entrance retains its transom and sidelights. The project proposes to reconstruct a simpler full-width porch.</p>		
Staff Recommendation	Approval, with Conditions	
Staff Contact	Yara Iwaz, Yara.Iwaz@RVA.gov, (804)646-6031	
Previous Reviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> N/A 	
Staff Recommendations	<p>Staff recommends approving this proposal with the following conditions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revise the porch roof to a flat or very low-slope hipped configuration; final roof design and materials to be submitted for staff review and approval Align the reconstructed roof with historic scarring or physical evidence uncovered during construction Confirm that the main roof material is standing seam metal All final exterior materials, including roofing, trim, and porch components, to be submitted for staff review and approval Submit final gutter and downspout design built into the porch roof assembly for staff review and approval. Design should match the profile of the original, as seen in the 1950s historic photos. Any proposed reconstruction of the side addition or chimney to be submitted under a separate application. 	

Staff Analysis

Guideline Reference	Reference Text	Analysis
<p>Building Elements, Porches, Entrances & Doors, pg. 71</p>	<p><i>4. Do not remove or radically change entrances and porches important in defining the building's overall historic character. Front and side porches are architecturally more ornate than utilitarian back porches.</i></p> <p><i>5. The entire porch should only be replaced if it is too deteriorated to repair or is completely missing; replacements should match the original as much as possible.</i></p> <p><i>6. When restoring a railing or balustrade there may be difficulty in maintaining the original height while meeting current building code. Always consult with the building department.</i></p> <p><i>7. When replacing a railing on a historic building which has lost its railing, the first step is to look for documentary evidence which records the appearance of that railing. If no documentary evidence survives, look for physical evidence (this may benefit from the help of a design professional)</i></p>	<p>Historic Sanborn maps from 1925 document the presence of a front porch, and photographic evidence from the 1950s confirms that a porch remained at that time. The historic porch appears to have featured column bases connected by a Richmond rail system, supporting slender vertical posts with diagonal bracing and classical column capitals.</p> <p>While it is unclear whether the porch shown in later photographs represents the original Greek Revival porch or a later alteration, documentation confirms that a porch has historically been present on the façade.</p> <p>Based on historic imagery, it appears that the porch, an attached sunroom-style projection, and one of two original chimneys were removed.</p> <p>The surrounding block includes full-width porches, with a variety of column detailing (thick wooden Tuscan columns, turned posts, bracketed posts, etc.). The scale and width of the proposed porch align with established district patterns.</p> <p>In summary, the proposed design introduces a full-width porch with similar proportions to the original; the columns have a simple configuration without excessive ornamentation, which is appropriate when exact historic detailing is uncertain or difficult to replicate. The proposed Richmond rail is appropriate, and consistent with district precedents.</p> <p><u>Staff recommends approval of the reconstruction of the front porch using a simplified design.</u></p>
<p>Standards for Rehabilitation, Residential Construction, pg. 59</p>	<p><i>6. Retain original entrances and porches including doors, frames, fanlights, sidelights, steps, balustrades, pilasters, entablatures, columns and decorative features.</i></p> <p><i>7. Repair damaged elements instead of replacing them. Use materials that match the original in type or use physically and chemically compatible substitute materials that convey the same appearance as the surviving elements or sections. Use available documentation when reconstructing missing elements. Pictorial, historical, or physical documentation can be helpful.</i></p>	<p>The proposed porch roof is currently shown as a hipped form set too high on the façade. Historic images indicate that the porch roof was either flat or a very shallow hipped roof, connecting approximately midway between the first and second floors. This proportion is critical to maintaining the Greek Revival composition; a hipped roof with a strong pitch could alter the historic proportions of the façade.</p> <p>If reduction results in a change in materials, staff recommends a flat-lock metal roof, or membrane-style roofing.</p> <p><u>Staff recommends revising the porch roof to a flat or very low-slope hipped configuration; final roof design and materials to be submitted for staff review and approval.</u></p>

Standards for New Construction, p. 46	<i>All new residential and commercial construction, whether in the form of additions or entire buildings, should be compatible with the historic features that characterize their setting and context. To protect the context of the surrounding historic district, new construction should reference the materials, features, size, scale, proportions, and massing of the existing historic building or buildings in its setting. However, compatibility does not mean duplicating the existing buildings or environment. To avoid creating a false sense of history, new construction should also be discernible from the old.</i>	Removal of the siding in preparation for the porch reconstruction may reveal scarring or physical evidence indicating the original porch roofline and attachment points. This evidence should guide final installation to ensure proportional accuracy and historic alignment. <u>Staff recommends that the reconstructed roof align with any historic scarring or physical evidence uncovered during construction.</u>
Standards for New Construction, porches & porch details, p.49	<i>5. Porch roofs are encouraged to utilize standing- or flat-lock metal seam roofs that are hand-seamed, or closely approximate hand-seaming. Seams that, in section, are large, rectangular seams, reminiscent of pre-formed seams utilized on prefabricated industrial or commercial structures, are not acceptable. Membrane roofs are acceptable substitutes for flat-lock seamed metal roofs.</i>	The façade drawing shows asphalt shingles at the main roof of the house. However, site photographs and historical documentation indicate that the existing roof is metal. Asphalt shingles would not be appropriate roofing material for this building, as metal roofing is more consistent with historic precedent and better with the character of the building. <u>Staff recommends confirming that the main roof material is standing seam metal. Staff further recommends that all final exterior materials, including roofing, trim, and porch components, be submitted for staff review and approval.</u>
Standards for Rehabilitation, p.59	<i>1. Retain original features and materials that define the building style, including but not limited to wood siding, shingles, stucco and masonry.</i>	The application does not specify gutter treatment. <u>Staff recommends submitting final gutter and downspout design built into the porch roof assembly for staff review and approval. Design should match the profile of the original, as seen in the 1950s historic photos.</u>
		The submitted isometric drawing shows a potential reconstruction of a previously removed side addition (sunroom-style projection) and the reconstruction of the west chimney. While historic Sanborn maps and photographs indicate that these elements previously existed, they are not included as part of the current application scope. <u>Staff recommends that any proposed reconstruction of the side addition or chimney be submitted under a separate application.</u>

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



Figure 2

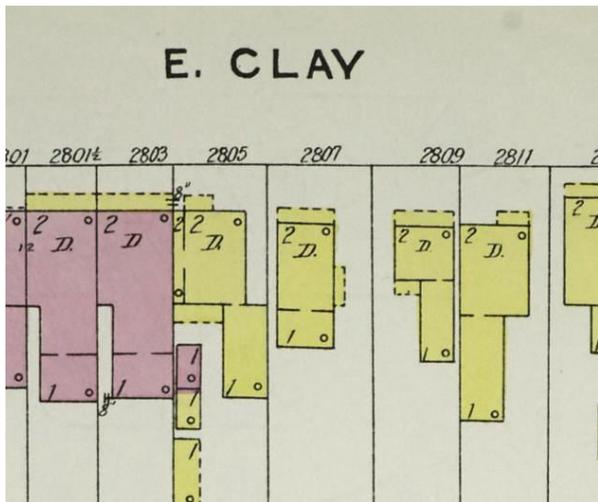


Figure 3: Sanborn Map, 1925, showing a porch and side addition that have since been removed



Figure 4



Figure 5