

7. COA-066685-2020

PUBLIC HEARING DATE

January 28, 2020

PROPERTY ADDRESS

1 North 29th Street

DISTRICT

St. John's Church

Commission of Architectural Review

STAFF REPORT



APPLICANT

L. Jewett & K. Wheatley

STAFF CONTACT

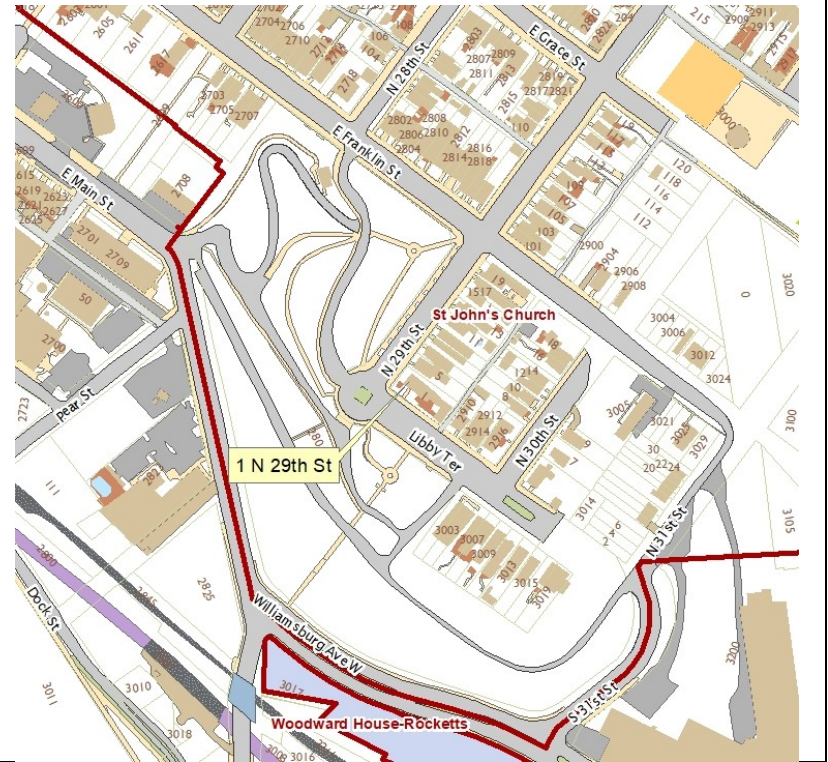
C. Jeffries

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Alter existing fenestration, enlarge a rear deck and add partial screening.

PROJECT DETAILS

- The applicant requests approval to alter the exterior openings of a three-story brick home at the corner of North 29th Street and Libby Hill Terrace. The applicant also proposes to extend an existing side porch facing Libby Hill Terrace. General exterior rehabilitation work is also planned as part of the project.
- The existing house is known as the Luther Libby House, constructed ca. 1851. The building has experienced multiple alterations over time, including the addition of the mansard roof and changes to the rear massing.



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STAFF RECOMMENDATION

PARTIAL APPROVAL WITH CONDITIONS

PREVIOUS REVIEWS

None.

STAFF RECOMMENDED CONDITIONS

- The new door opening in the porch enclosure be of a simple or contemporary design and be aligned with the door above.
- The new doors on the south elevation be aligned by converting the westernmost window to a door on the second story and the new doors be at least half-lite doors, to maintain the open appearance of the windows.
- The existing door in the porch enclosure be enclosed from the interior in a manner that is reversible and does not alter the exterior appearance of the door.
- The salvaged window sashes be installed in the opening that will be restored to a window on the south elevation, if possible.
- The existing jambs and head height of the opening on the north elevation be maintained, and the new

window have a simplified or contemporary design rather than the 6/6 light configuration proposed.

- The exterior materials be repaired and not replaced, and any new paint colors be submitted to staff for administrative review and approval.
- Any repointing of the masonry be done in accordance with NPS Preservation Brief #2, paying special attention to the need for removing existing mortar to sound mortar with hand tools and not power tools; and that any new mortar match the hardness of the existing mortar.
- All new windows be wood or aluminum clad wood with simulated divided lights with interior and exterior muntins and a spacer bar between the glass; and final window and door specifications be submitted to staff for administrative approval prior to the issuance of a building permit.
- Accurate existing condition plans and elevations be submitted to staff for administrative approval prior to the issuance of a building permit.
- Staff recommends **denial** of the proposed second story window in the main massing on the north elevation.

STAFF ANALYSIS

Windows #8,
pg. 69

The number, location, size or glazing pattern of windows should not be changed by cutting new openings, blocking out windows or by installing replacement sash that do not fit the original window. Changes to existing windows or the addition of new windows along a secondary elevation will be considered by the Commission on a case-by-case basis.

Several changes to exterior openings are proposed, including returning a door on the south elevation to a window. An existing brick arch above the current arch for the door indicates that this opening was previously converted to a door. Sanborn maps do not show the existing 1-story porches on this elevation, further indicating that historically there were no door openings on this portion of the building. Staff is supportive of the proposed change to this opening, as well as the proposed 6/6 design which matches the other windows on the rear section of the building.

Windows #10,
pg. 69

The architectural appearance of original windows should be used as a model for new windows.

The plans also call for creating a new door opening on the rear elevation, onto the first floor of the side porch. This new opening would be created in a previously enclosed porch. Though highly visible from the street, the proposed opening would be easily reversible as it is located in frame construction. Staff recommends the new door be of a simple or contemporary design and be aligned with the door above.

The plans also indicate that two new doors will be created opening onto the existing side porch. These openings are currently paired windows in a section of the home that appears to be a later addition, though it is shown on the 1905 Sanborn map. One of a pair of windows will be converted to a door on each story. The plans show the left window on the second story converted to a door with a transom and the right window on the first story being converted. The openings are highly visible from Libby Hill Terrace and the unique design of the paired

windows is replicated on three floors. Staff recommends the new doors be aligned by converting the westernmost window to a door on the second story. In addition, staff recommends the new doors be at least half-lite doors, to maintain the open appearance of the windows.

Staff notes that there is an existing door on the east elevation of the enclosed porch which will not be utilized after the renovation. As details were not provided, staff recommends the door be enclosed from the interior in a manner that is reversible and does not alter the exterior appearance of the door.

Standards for Rehabilitation #10, pg. 59

While it is acceptable to use salvaged materials as in-kind replacement, adding features or salvaged architectural elements that suggest an inaccurate or undocumented sequence of construction should be avoided because this confuses our understanding of the evolution of Richmond's historic built environment.

The applicant is proposing to relocate an existing window that is currently in what has become an interior space. A new window will be created on the second story on the north elevation, in the oldest section of the building. Staff finds that this proposed new window opening is highly visible from the street, due to the large setback to the adjacent building. The addition of a new window on a visible elevation that attempts to replicate the historic windows by using salvaged materials is not consistent with the Guidelines. Staff recommends denial of the proposed second story window in the main massing on the north elevation.

Windows #8, pg. 69

The number, location, size or glazing pattern of windows should not be changed by cutting new openings, blocking out windows or by installing replacement sash that do not fit the original window. Changes to existing windows or the addition of new windows along a secondary elevation will be considered by the Commission on a case-by-case basis.

The Guidelines state it is acceptable to use salvaged materials as in-kind replacement. Staff recommends the salvaged window sashes be installed in the opening that will be restored to a window on the south elevation, if possible.

Staff has confirmed with the architect for the project that an existing opening on the south elevation in the rear massing of the building will be enlarged to accommodate a new window. The existing sill will be lowered to create an opening that is the same size as the adjacent windows. Staff finds that the proposed alteration will be minimally visible from the public right of way and is supportive of this change. Staff recommends the existing jambs and head height be maintained, and the new window have a simplified or contemporary design rather than the 6/6 light configuration proposed.

Porches, Entrances &

Porch enclosures to aid in energy conservation are only appropriate on

The Guidelines do not specifically address porch screening. Staff finds that the proposed

Doors #13, pg. 71	<i>secondary elevations. Solid materials are not recommended for use in enclosure projects since they can radically alter the historic appearance of a porch.</i>	screening of the first story side porch is consistent with the Guidelines as it is removable and will not obscure or destroy character-defining features of the building.
Decks #2-3, pg. 51	<p>2. Decks should complement the architectural features of the main structure without creating a false historical appearance. Decks should be painted or stained a neutral color that complements one or more of the colors found on the main structure.</p> <p>3. Deck design may include vertical picket balustrades or contemporary railing that is in scale with the house and the deck.</p>	The applicant is proposing to expand the existing open deck on the south elevation to connect it with the stairway toward the rear of the building. Staff was unable to locate any documentary evidence of the date of construction of the existing porch and deck. Staff is supportive of the proposed alteration to the footprint of the deck, which is likely a contemporary alteration.
Standards for Rehabilitation 7, pg. 59	<i>Repair damaged elements instead of replacing them.</i>	The application notes that the project scope includes general rehabilitation work on the exterior materials. As further details were not provided, <u>staff recommends the exterior materials be repaired and not replaced, and any new paint colors be submitted to staff for administrative review and approval.</u>
Maintenance and Repair, Masonry, pg. 89	<i>Do not repoint with mortar that is stronger than the original mortar or the existing brick. Mortar is not glue but a cushion that allows masonry units to expand and contract in periods of freeze and thaw.</i>	The application mentions the exterior brick walls will be rehabilitated. If repointing is necessary, <u>staff recommends any repointing of the masonry be done in accordance with NPS Preservation Brief #2, paying special attention to the need for removing existing mortar to sound mortar with hand tools and not power tools; and that any new mortar match the hardness of the existing mortar.</u>
Standards for Rehabilitation #7, pg. 59	<i>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><u>Staff recommends all new windows be wood or aluminum clad wood with simulated divided lights with interior and exterior muntins and a spacer bar between the glass; and final window and door specifications be submitted to staff for administrative approval prior to the issuance of a building permit.</u></p> <p>Staff notes that the plans do not reflect the existing conditions in some instances. <u>Staff recommends accurate existing condition plans and elevations be submitted to staff for administrative approval prior to the issuance of a building permit.</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

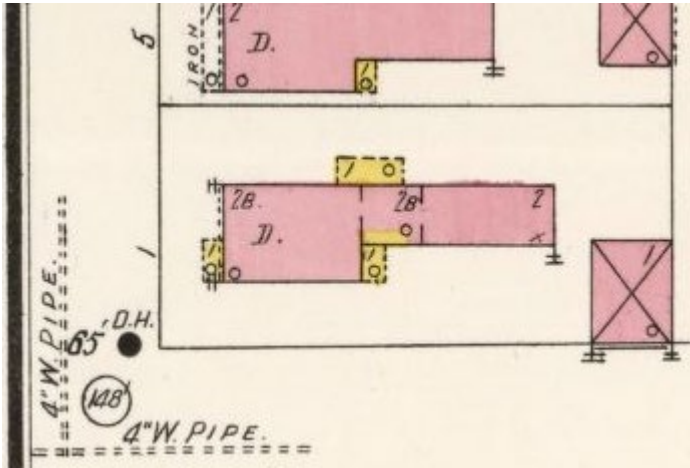


Figure 1. 1905 Sanborn Map



Figure 2. View of south elevation from Libby Hill Terrace.



Figure 3. View of north elevation from North 29th Street.