



Commission of Architectural Review

5. COA-181516-2026	Final Review	Meeting Date: 3/24/2026
Applicant/Petitioner	Myles Baker	
Project Description	Alter rear fenestration, front steps and sidewalk, and reconstruct a retaining wall	
Project Location		
Address: 211 N 36th		
Historic District: Chimborazo Park		
<p>High-Level Details:</p> <p>The applicant proposes several external alterations, including the replacement of concrete front steps and retaining walls with modular brick, reconstruction of a rear enclosed porch, and modification of window openings on the rear addition. The rear of the building features a later enclosure of a historic porch form and is minimally visible from the public right-of-way on 36th street, though it can be seen from the alley.</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"> 2003 and 2015: The Commission approved the proposal to enclose the second-story porch at the rear of the building. 	
Staff Recommendations	<p>Staff recommends approval of the proposal, with the following conditions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reconstruct the rear addition in-kind; the existing footprint and chamfered form must be maintained. All rear elevation reconstruction materials specifications to be submitted for administrative review and approval. Approve the replacement of the concrete steps and retaining walls with modular brick; brick and mortar should match the existing house in color and size. New picture window configuration should match the existing window openings; final elevation drawings and detailed window specifications be submitted for staff review and approval. 	

Staff Analysis

Guideline Reference	Reference Text	Analysis
<p>Building Elements, porches, entrances & doors, p. 71</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>History & Visibility</i></p> <p>The rear elevation is minimally visible from the primary street frontage but is visible from the alley.</p> <p>Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps indicate that the rear portion of the structure historically functioned as an open porch, which was later enclosed. The existing rear addition retains the footprint and distinctive chamfered edge of the original porch form, though its enclosure represents a later alteration. While this enclosure and its windows are not original, they contribute to the massing at the rear and the building's history.</p> <p>The proposed work includes reconstruction due to structural failure, which is appropriate. The distinctive chamfered edge of the porch footprint is a defining characteristic and should be preserved.</p> <p><u>Staff recommends reconstructing the rear addition in-kind; the existing footprint and chamfered form must be maintained. All rear elevation reconstruction materials specifications to be submitted for administrative review and approval.</u></p>
<p>Standards for site improvements, sidewalks & Curbs, p. 76</p>	<p><i>4. Brick or granite pavers are the most appropriate choice in most Old and Historic Districts.</i></p> <p><i>7. Sidewalks and curbs should be built of common building materials found throughout the District. Generally, simple paving designs are more compatible with the diverse building styles and better unify the various elements found on streets throughout Old and Historic Districts. The use of more than two paving materials within an area is discouraged.</i></p>	<p>The surrounding block features a mix of brick and concrete site elements, with brick retaining walls and curbs more commonly found at higher elevations along N. 36th Street where it turns into East Broad Street, transitioning to concrete further downslope toward Government Road.</p> <p>The existing concrete steps and retaining walls appear as non-original when compared to adjacent curbs, although concrete was likely the historic hardscaping material.</p> <p>The proposed replacement with full modular brick aligns with the material character of the primary brick structure. While concrete is historically present along the curb of N. 36th Street, brick retaining walls and curbs are also common, particularly along higher elevations of the block.</p> <p><u>Staff recommends approval of replacing the concrete steps and retaining walls with modular brick. Brick and mortar should match the existing house in color and size.</u></p>
<p>Building Elements, porches, entrances & doors, p. 71</p>	<p><i>13. Porch enclosures to aid in energy conservation are only appropriate on secondary elevations. Solid materials are not recommended for use in</i></p>	<p>The proposal replaces three existing windows on the rear addition with a single picture window with simulated divided lites. The existing windows, which appear as 12-over-1 units, are not original to the building, as this portion historically functioned as an open rear porch (as demonstrated by Sanborn map</p>

	<p><i>enclosure projects since they can radically alter the historic appearance of a porch. Glass enclosures which reveal decorative porch elements are strongly preferred.</i></p>	<p>documentation). However, the size and arrangement of the current openings contribute to maintaining the visual rhythm and level of transparency characteristic of a porch.</p> <p>The proposed consolidation reduces the overall transparency of the elevation, as seen in the submitted elevation. While staff supports the removal of the existing non-original windows and does not oppose the introduction of a picture (plate glass) window in this location, it is important that the new window configuration fits within the existing window openings to preserve the established fenestration rhythm and maintain a similar opacity-to-transparency ratio. The two windows facing the alley also appear to be retained, which supports continuity along the elevation.</p> <p><u>Staff recommends that the new picture window configuration should match the existing window openings; final elevation drawings and detailed window specifications be submitted for staff review and approval.</u></p>
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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: Brick curbing found in the neighborhood



Figure 4: Concrete curb and steps on adjacent lots, that appear to be original



Figure 5: Historic photo, Assessor's Card Archives. Concrete is historically present on the lot and curb.