

**COMMISSION OF ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW  
STAFF REPORT  
December 13, 2016, Meeting**

8. **CAR No. 16-173** (Cedar St. Baptist)

**2301 Cedar Street  
Union Hill Old and Historic District**

**Project Description:** **Infill existing basement window openings  
and install fire department connections.**

**Staff Contact:** **M. Pitts**

The applicant requests approval to infill existing basement windows on the east elevation of the Cedar Baptist Church of God sanctuary as part of the rehabilitation of the 1893 Gothic church structure in the Union Hill Old and Historic District. Additionally, the applicant is proposing to install fire department connections on this elevation in a location that aligns with the interior utilities. The applicant proposes to remove the existing windows and infill the opening with brick recessed 6". The applicant proposes to infill the existing window wells and extend the sidewalk to the face of the structure. The applicant has stated that the existing windows are allowing water to infiltrate the building which has resulted in mold in the basement level.

**Staff recommends denial of the project.** The *Richmond Old and Historic Districts Handbook and Design Review Guidelines* state that original masonry openings for windows should be maintained and infilling original masonry openings is strongly discouraged (pg. 65, #5). For this reason, staff cannot recommend approval of the infilling of the windows and the window wells as this would affect the historic elevation. Staff recommends the applicant retain and repair the historic windows, infill the windows from the interior if desired, and consider alternative solutions for addressing the drainage problem including improved maintenance of the light wells.

The Guidelines note that mechanical equipment should be located where its visibility is minimized and with the least impact on historic materials (pg. 64, #4). Staff recognizes that the fire department connections must be located in a visible, accessible location such as this primary façade. Staff believes the applicant has the opportunity to locate the equipment on a portion of the structure that is not historic immediately to the northwest of the proposed location. Staff recommends denial of the proposed location which will impact the historic fabric and encourages the applicant to determine a location on the non-historic portion of the structure.

It is the assessment of staff that the application is not consistent with the Standards for Rehabilitation outlined in Sections 30-930.7(b) of the City Code, as well as with the *Richmond Old and Historic Districts Handbook and Design Review Guidelines*, specifically the page cited above, adopted by the

Commission for review of Certificates of Appropriateness under the same section of the code.