

**COMMISSION OF ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW
STAFF REPORT
April 26, 2016 Meeting**

12. CAR No. 16-054 (K. Santelli)

2415 Jefferson Avenue
Church Hill North Old & Historic District

Project Description: **Rehabilitate an existing garage to accommodate a retail use by altering an existing opening, creating a new window opening, and installing cementitious siding, new windows and a door, and signage**

Staff Contact: **K. Chen**

The applicant requests approval to rehabilitate an existing garage to accommodate a retail use by altering an existing opening, creating a new window opening, and installing cementitious siding, new windows and a door, and signage. The building is located at 2415 Jefferson Avenue in the Church Hill North Old and Historic District.

A review of Sanborn maps and a 1977 photograph suggest that this building was once two separate buildings. The portion to the left was a garage constructed between 1905 and 1924, which originally had sliding doors that covered the façade. The building to the right was a small store with a window and door in the façade. The buildings were united post 1997 when the National Register nomination was written and in the inventory refers to a free standing store and garage. The full facade garage doors were replaced with a smaller pair of doors, a door appears to have been inserted in to what was the gap between the two buildings, and the window and door were covered with siding. The gap between the buildings, front and rear, was in-filled and the appearance unified by the installation of lap siding.

Staff recommends approval of the project with conditions.

Façade Modifications: The application requests approval to replace the existing pair of doors with a storefront window, to replace the existing 6-panel metal door with a glazed, storefront door, and to introduce a new storefront window on the right side of the façade. The *Richmond Old and Historic Districts Handbook and Design Review Guidelines* discourage the cutting of new window openings and the radical alteration of entrances, pages 65 and 67, respectively. The replacement of the nonhistoric door with a glazed storefront door does not alter the size of the opening or result in the loss of historic fabric. The introduction of the storefront window on the right side of the façade is similar in scale to the door and window combination seen in the 1977 photograph and it does not appear to result in a loss of historic fabric because of the numerous alterations to the building. While staff recognizes that the existing façade is of a more recent iteration, staff recommends that the storefront window on the left

side of the façade be redesigned to more closely resemble the existing doors and reflect the building's historic use as a garage. This could be done in a manner that also provides the transparency sought by the conversion of the doors to a window.

New window in the west elevation: The applicant would like to add a new window to the narrow west elevation that is visible from Jefferson Avenue and the alley. The *Richmond Old and Historic Districts Handbook and Design Review Guidelines, page 65, states – 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 windows. 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 available documentation does not suggest that there was an opening in the narrow west elevation of the building. Staff recommends against the addition of this window unless the applicant can provide physical or documentary evidence that there was an opening on this elevation.

Rear Elevation: The applicant proposes to retain the three, non-historic windows on the rear of the building and introduce a new door at the east end of this elevation. Staff finds that the new door is not visible from the public right-of-way.

Siding: The application calls for the repair of the existing siding or its replacement with HardiePlank. The siding does not appear to be historic. Staff recommends the use of smooth, un-beaded HardiePlank siding if the existing siding is replaced.

Colors: The applicant has not specified a particular color but the renderings provided in the application indicate a dark grey color with white trim. The 1977 photograph shows that the building was painted a dark color with white trim. However, the *Guidelines, page 58, recommend the use of pale earth tones, such as light browns, tans and grays for simpler frame vernacular structures.* Staff recommends that the applicant submit a color more in keeping with the Guidelines for administrative approval.

Lighting: The applicant would like to install carriage-light style sconces on either side of the door on the façade. Guidance on light fixtures is limited to the language in the Administrative Approval Guidelines for Light Fixtures. The *Guideline states: Wall sconces and porch ceiling lanterns on the street façade(s) of a building that are compatible with the scale and style of a historic building – can be administratively approved by staff.* Staff recommends the installation of simple wall sconces that do not evoke a particular style or period because of the vernacular nature of the building. The applicant can submit alternate lighting for administrative approval.

Signage: The applicant proposes to paint 18"x24" signs on the two new storefront windows and the installation of a 20"x36" hanging sign. The proposed signage is compatible with the Standards for Signage contained on page 70 of the *Richmond Old and Historic Districts Handbook and Design Review Guidelines*. Staff recommends that the applicant confirm that the number and size of the proposed signage does not exceed that allowed by Zoning.

It is the assessment of staff that the application, with the conditions above, is consistent with the Standards for Rehabilitation and New Construction outlined in Sections 30-930.7(b) and 30-930.7(c) 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.