



**Staff Report**  
**City of Richmond, Virginia**



**Commission of Architectural Review**

4. COA-142863-2024	Final Review	Meeting Date: 2/27/2024
Applicant/Petitioner	Stephen Casey	
Project Description	Construct a new retaining wall and rebuild a portion of a foundation.	
Project Location		
Address: 504 North 26 <sup>th</sup> Street		
Historic District: Church Hill North		
<p>High-Level Details:</p> <p>The applicant proposes exterior alterations to a frame dwelling ca. 1854 otherwise known as the (Thomas S. Hundley House).</p> <p>Exterior alterations will include reconstructing the southeast wall of the foundation, constructing a sunken, basement-level side entrance with an associated retaining wall and steps, and the front porch floor and posts will be replaced.</p> <p>Concrete porch floor will be replaced with wood, and posts will be replaced with new 4x4 inch square posts.</p>		
Staff Recommendation	Approval, with Conditions	
Staff Contact	Alex Dandridge, (804) 646-6569, alex.dandridge@rva.gov	
Previous Reviews	None	
Conditions for Approval	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New decking boards be tongue and groove and installed perpendicular to the face of the building.</li> <li>• Front porch roof not be removed or altered.</li> <li>• Basement level entrance door be a design and material compatible with the district; final selection submitted for administrative review and approval.</li> <li>• The new steps, retaining wall, and sidewalk are of a similar design and material to the neighboring basement level entrances. Final material selection submitted for administrative review and approval.</li> <li>• The foundation wall be reconstructed, and limited to only the sections that need repair.</li> <li>• Applicant re-use historic material, if possible (possibly as a veneer), in the reconstruction of the damaged portion of the foundation.</li> <li>• Any new brick be differentiated from the original brick. Final brick specification submitted to staff for review and approval.</li> </ul>	

## Staff Analysis

Guideline Reference	Reference Text	Analysis
<b>Porch and Entrance Repair, pg. 71</b>	<p>4. <i>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>5. <i>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>8. <i>Do not strip entrances and porches of historic material and details that should be retained in any repair or partial replacement.</i></p>	<p>Currently the front porch floor is a concrete slab. The applicant proposes to remove the concrete slab and reconstruct the porch floor using wood decking. The concrete slab porch floor is likely not original. Staff supports its removal. <u>Staff recommends that the new decking boards be installed perpendicular to the face of the building and be tongue and groove to be compatible with decking designs and profiles found throughout the district.</u></p> <p>The existing porch has slender, square, wooden posts supporting the porch roof. The applicant proposes to replace these posts with new simple square posts. The porch roof will be replaced with black-colored EPDM roofing. Photographic documentation demonstrates that the porch originally featured simple wooden posts.</p> <p>The front porch will have a concealed gutter, a PVC soffit, and the 4"x4" wooden posts will have a PVC wrap.</p> <p>Based on photographic documentation, staff believes that the front porch roof is original to the building. <u>Staff recommends that the front porch roof not be removed or altered.</u></p> <p>Staff finds that the alterations to the front porch are in-keeping with the style of the building and with the photographic documentation.</p>
<b>Window Replacement and/or Reconstruction, pg. 69</b>	<p>8. <i>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</i></p>	<p>The applicant proposes to create a new side entrance at the basement level where the foundation is being reconstructed. The Guidelines generally discourage the creation of new masonry openings; however, this opening will be located on a secondary elevation. Furthermore, basement entrances are a common feature on the subject block. Staff recommends approval of the new side entrance. <u>Staff recommends that the basement level entrance door be a design and material compatible with the district; final selection submitted for administrative review and approval.</u></p>
		<p>The application states that the southeast portion of the foundation is in disrepair due to water, shifting soils, and improper past repairs. The applicant proposes to reconstruct this portion of the foundation to ensure the stability and longevity of the building. Images submitted with the application appear to show evidence of water infiltration and shifting bricks. It is the staff's opinion that the foundation be repaired to ensure the longevity of the building. <u>Staff recommends that the foundation wall be reconstructed, and limited to only the sections that need repair. Staff recommends that applicants re-use historic material, if possible (possibly as a veneer), in the reconstruction. Staff recommends that any new brick be</u></p>

		<u>differentiated from the original brick, final brick specification submitted to staff for review and approval.</u>
<b>Fences &amp; Walls, pg. 51</b>	<i>1. Fence, wall, and gate designs should reflect the scale of the historic structures they surround, as well as the character of nearby fences, walls, and gates. 2. Fence, wall, or gate materials should relate to building materials commonly found in the neighborhood.</i>	Currently, the south side yard slopes down to the rear yard and has several steps. The applicant proposes to add a basement level entrance in this location which will be accessed by stairs enclosed by a retaining wall. This is a configuration that is common of other dwellings on the block. This entrance will be accessed by a new sidewalk that leads to the public sidewalk in front of the building. <u>Staff recommends that the new steps, retaining wall, and sidewalk be a similar design and material to the neighboring basement level entrances. Final material selection submitted for administrative review and approval.</u> The most common material on the block for this feature is concrete or parged brick/masonry.

*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. 504 N. 26<sup>th</sup> Street façade.



Figure 2. Front porch concrete slab and slender wooden posts.





Figure 3. 504 N. 26<sup>th</sup> Street. Existing conditions of the side yards and future location of new basement level entrance.



Figure 4. 504 N. 26<sup>th</sup> Street, rear.



Figure 5. Existing basement level entrances on the subject block.



Figure 6. Existing basement level entrances on the subject block.

