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To: Planning Commission  
From: Urban Design Committee  
Date: January 21, 20120  
RE: **Final location, character, and extent review of window replacements for Binford Middle School, 1701 Floyd Avenue; UDC 2020-01**

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**I. APPLICANT**

Robert (Bobby) Hathaway

**II. LOCATION**

1701 Floyd Avenue

**Property Owner:**

City of Richmond School Board

**III. PURPOSE**

The application is for final Location, Character, and Extent review of exterior window replacements at Binford Middle School at 1701 Floyd Avenue.

**IV. SUMMARY & RECOMMENDATION**

Since opening in 1915, Binford Middle School has retained its original windows, making them over 100 years old. All original windows are of a wood construction and a majority have fallen into disrepair. Richmond Public Schools (RPS) is looking to replace approximately 250 windows with new thermal aluminum single-hung windows. The applicant has listed several issues with the existing windows, citing safety, environmental, and energy concerns.

RPS has a budget of \$1M, and explored an add-alternate for the project which would consist of cleaning and painting the existing wood frames. According to a national commercial window consultant, the cost of this alternative was estimated to be \$400,000.

Considering the school's prominent location and influence on the character of the surrounding community, Staff was concerned about the fine, architectural details that may be negatively impacted with the renovation as initially proposed, along with longer term issues that may arise in the future. Staff requested comment from the Commission of Architectural Review, which provided more insight into possible options for preservation as well as potential cost savings:

- Windows can often be repaired without a wholesale replacement
- Storm windows can provide the same amount, if not more, energy efficiency as new windows

The applicant consulted with the manufacturer and demonstrated that the restoration of all original windows would be cost prohibitive however compromises were met that addressed Staff's concerns:

- Third floor windows will include Gothic Tracery similar to the original windows but will not produce shadowlines like the originals

- The applicant would preserve one bay of original windows on the western side of the building
- The applicant also stated they will not wrap the window frames in vinyl or any other material

Therefore the Urban Design Committee recommends that the Planning Commission grant final approval of the plan with the following conditions:

- That the proposed preserved bay of windows on the buildings southwest corner be restored to have a light configuration that matches the original light configuration, based on any existing historic documentation of the western facade

It should be noted a quorum consists of five members of the committee. Procedural guidelines state that the meeting may be held and the recommendation forwarded to the Planning Commission as long as the Planning Commission is advised of the (Urban Design) Committee's attendance.

**Staff Contact:**

Josh Son // (804) 646-3741 // [joshua.son@richmondgov.com](mailto:joshua.son@richmondgov.com)

Alex Dandridge // (804) 646-6569 // [alex.dandridge@richmondgov.com](mailto:alex.dandridge@richmondgov.com)

**V. FINDINGS OF FACT**

**a. Site Description and Surrounding Context**

Binford Middle School is located in an urban setting surrounded by single family attached and semi-attached residences. The property is bounded by Floyd Avenue to the north, Vine Street to the east, W. Main Street to the South, and N. Allen Street to the west. It sits on approximately 2 acres zoned R-6 – Residential.

**b. Scope of Review**

The proposed plan is subject to location, character, and extent review under Section 17.07 of the City Charter as identification for a “public building”.

**c. Project Description**

Binford Middle School opened in 1915 and still has the original windows on the building. All of the windows are wood and they are in extremely poor condition. RPS is looking to replace approximately 250 windows with a new thermal aluminum single hung window. This will include the Gothic Tracery for the third floor. RPS will repair, replace, and paint the exterior trim as needed.

Richmond Public Schools is proposing to install new Westco Thermal Aluminum Single Hung, White AAMA 2603 Painted Finish, Low-E 270 Annealed Glass, Box Frame. The third floor windows will include the UDC desired Gothic Tracery. (See Original Sample Provided, in addition a tinted type window will be provided at time of the UDC meeting. The manufacture has this sample window in production).

RPS has agreed with the fourth statement about the existing windows, whereas “It was decided that they look into the cost and practical issues related to restoring and reinstalling all of the windows in one bay (four windows wide in all three stories) on one side to preserve an example of the workmanship and appearance of the original construction.”

In summary, the window replacement will create a more secure environment for students and staff during the day and in the off hours when school is not in session. Plus it will greatly improve the appearance of the building, help reduce the cost for heating and cooling of the building as well as keeping with City of Richmond's plan of historic preservation of the building.

The funding source will be Richmond Public Schools with a budget of \$1,000,000.00.

RPS would like to start the project immediately and have it completed over the next 6 to 12 months.

**d. UDC Review History**

In 2006 the Urban Design Committee reviewed the installation of a Rain Garden at Binford Middle School for location, character, and extent.

There have not been any previous reviews for window replacement at this location.

**e. Master Plan**

This project falls within the Near West Planning District of the Master Plan. Although Binford Middle School is not specifically mentioned, the Master Plan does mention the role of preservation of historic structures and its connection to good urban design, stating that, "Existing historic preservation design controls should be implemented, and where neighborhood support exists, new design controls should be encouraged in order to preserve existing historic neighborhoods from inappropriate development/design".

**f. Urban Design Guidelines**

The Urban Design Guidelines impart that "The number, size, style and type of windows should be appropriate for the architecture of the building... Too many different window variations on a building can lead to visual confusion and should be avoided. Window design is also influenced by and should be compatible with details such as sills, sashes, lintels, depth of reveal, decorative caps and shutters."

The Guidelines further state "Historic elements should be surveyed and preservation should be considered for both facilities and landscapes (page 9)". "Energy efficiency should be considered in window design (page 18)."

**VII. ATTACHMENTS**

- a. Vicinity Map**
- b. Application**
- c. Plans**