

**COMMISSION OF ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW  
STAFF REPORT  
May 26, 2015 Meeting**

1. **CAR No. 15-059** (L. Davis)

**518 North 22<sup>nd</sup> Street  
Union Hill Old and Historic District**

**Project Description:**

**Rebuild existing rear inset porch**

**Staff Contact:**

**M. Pitts**

The applicant requests approval to demolish and rebuild an existing two story inset porch at the side of the structure. This porch is visible from East Leigh Street as the subject lot extends from North 22<sup>nd</sup> Street to East Leigh Street. The porch is to be rebuilt in the same footprint as the existing porch. All railings will be Richmond rail and will be painted white. The posts will be 6" by 6" wooden posts painted white, and the decking will be 1 ½" tongue and groove wooden decking. The proposed stairs will be 32" wide to meet building code requirements which is wider than the existing stairs, and the treads will be painted black. The existing painted wooden tongue and groove privacy screen which blocks the view of the stairs will be removed and not replaced.

**Staff recommends approval of the project.** The *Richmond Old and Historic Districts Handbook and Design Review Guidelines* state that "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" (pg. 67, #5). Staff confirmed during the site visit that the existing porches are in poor condition and do not appear to be structurally sound, and therefore staff believes that the replacement of the porch is appropriate. Additionally, the existing porch railings do not appear to be original to the structure as the pickets are installed outside of the handrail, and the proposed Richmond rail is more appropriate and compatible with the district. Staff does not know whether the wooden privacy screen is a historic element of the porch, but its removal is necessary to accommodate the installation of stairs at a width permitted by code while also allowing access past the stairs on the first floor porch. Staff recommends approval of the proposed project as the applicant proposes to match the new to the old in terms of the porch design and layout while replacing non-historic features such as the porch railings and installing stairs which meet current building code requirements.

It is the assessment of staff that the application is consistent with the Standards for Rehabilitation in Section 114-930.7(b) 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.