

**6. COA-050416-2019**

PUBLIC HEARING DATE

March 26, 2019

PROPERTY ADDRESS

200 West Marshall Street

DISTRICT

Jackson Ward

APPLICANT

Vanderbilt 5, LLC

STAFF CONTACT

C. Jones

# Commission of Architectural Review

## STAFF REPORT



**PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

**Convert second story window into a door and install a fire escape.**

**PROJECT DETAILS**

- In order to meet occupancy code requirements the applicant proposes to convert an existing second story window on the rear, brick, Brook Road section of the building to a door and install a set of steel fire escape stairs.
- The window opening is currently filled with a wood, two-over-two window. The window would be removed, the opening enlarged, and a fireproof door installed.
- The fire escape stairs will run along the exterior of the building, have a landing that is approximately 9'-7" above street level, and have a counter-balanced stair that would only be in the down position when needed.



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STAFF RECOMMENDATION

**APPROVE WITH CONDITIONS**

**PREVIOUS REVIEWS**

At the Commission meeting on January 29, 2019 the Commission reviewed and approved changes to the front doors to accommodate code requirements. At the same meeting the Commission also approved removal of the non-historic awnings. This is the first time the Commission will review the proposed fire escape stairs.

The Guidelines do not specifically address adding fire escapes or secondary stairs to exterior elevations. In order to prepare the recommendations in this report staff utilized the Richmond Old and Historic Districts Handbook and Design Review Guidelines and additional guidance found in the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties available online at: <https://www.nps.gov/tps/standards/treatment-guidelines-2017.pdf>.

**STAFF RECOMMENDED CONDITIONS**

- The new stairs be installed in a manner that does not damage the historic masonry, so that should they

be removed in future the material integrity will not be diminished.

- The new door be submitted to staff for review and approval.
- The historic window be retained for future use.
- A revised elevation that accurately reflects the existing and proposed opening be submitted to staff.

### STAFF ANALYSIS

Building Elements, Windows, Window Maintenance, pg. 69, #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>	Staff asked the applicant if the fire escape stairs could utilize the former hayloft opening (currently bricked-in) instead of enlarging an existing masonry opening. The applicant has provided information that using the former hayloft door opening would result in the fire escape stairs extending past the building or being too close to the ground level door. Staff finds the proposed location is on a secondary elevation that has already had changes to the fenestration pattern and on a section of the building that post-dates the original construction of the firehouse building. While staff typically does not support enlarging an existing opening on a masonry elevation, staff finds this is the only location for the fire escape stair that meets code requirements.
Secretary of the Interior Standards, Code Required Work, Recommended, pg. 71	<i>Identifying the historic building's character-defining exterior features, interior spaces, features, and finishes, and features of the site and setting which may be affected by accessibility code- required work. Complying with life-safety codes (including requirements for impact-resistant glazing, security, and seismic retrofit) in such a manner that the historic building's character-defining exterior features, interior spaces, features, and finishes, and features of the site and setting are preserved or impacted as little as possible</i>	Staff finds the proposed location of the fire escape is in keeping with the Secretary of Interior guidance since it is located on a secondary elevation, will not remove important character-defining exterior features, and the site and setting are impacted as little as possible. <u>Staff recommends approval of the exterior fire escape with the condition that the new stairs be installed in a manner that does not damage the historic openings and masonry, so that should they be removed in the future the material integrity will not be diminished.</u>
Building Elements, Porches, Entrances, and Doors, pg. 71 #14	<i>14. Do not remove original doors and door surrounds. Replacement doors and door surrounds with stamped or molded faux paneling or leaded, beveled, or etched glass are strongly discouraged and rarely permitted. Stamped or molded faux paneled doors are inappropriate substitutes for door types found in historic districts.</i>	The applicant proposes a new door to provide access to the fire escape stairs. <u>Staff recommends the new door be submitted for staff review and approval.</u>
Standards for Rehabilitation, pg. 59, #s 2, 5	<i>2. Retain original wood features such as cornices, brackets, window and doorway surrounds, sashes and doors. Maintain the historic reveal or exposure of the siding and trim, as it is an important character-defining feature.</i>	The applicant proposes to remove a historic window from the side elevation. <u>Staff recommends this window be retained by the applicant should the new door opening be returned to a window or for use in future rehabilitation projects.</u>

5. Retain original windows including both functional and decorative elements such as frames, sash, muntins, glazing, sills, hood molds, paneled or decorated jambs and moldings, shutters and exterior blinds.

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

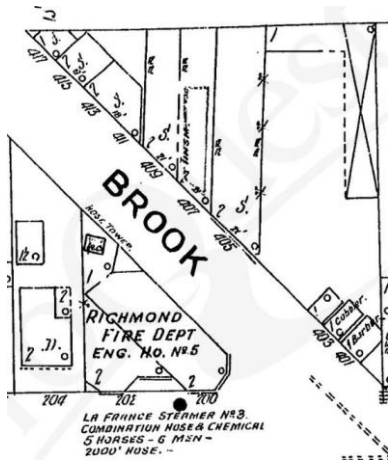


Figure 1. 1905 Sanborn map.



Figure 2. 1925-1952 Sanborn map.



Figure 3. 200 West Marshall Street, rear section and location of proposed fire escape stairs.



Figure 4. 200 West Marshall Street, rear section on Brook Road.