

**COMMISSION OF ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW
STAFF REPORT
May 27, 2014 Meeting**

5. **CAR No. 14-36** (F. Richardson)

**1006 N 25th Street
Union Hill Old and Historic District**

Project Description:

Paint previously painted brick

Staff Contact:

W. Palmquist

The applicant requests approval for painting that was done at this business in the Union Hill Old and Historic District without the required Certificate of Appropriateness from the Commission of Architectural Review. The applicant has painted previously painted brick on three sides of the building a bright blue color (Valspar Filoli Morning Glory). The upper-portion of the southern façade was previously unpainted brick. The applicant explains that the work was done as part of a C.A.R.E. application with the city's Department of Economic and Community Development, for which she was approved for 50% reimbursement of the cost of the project. At the time of the work the applicant was not aware of the local historic district designation nor was she made aware of this fact as part of the C.A.R.E. application process. The work was completed in early 2014 and the property owner received a Notice of Violation from Commission staff in March 2014.

The applicant states that she did take into consideration the history of the area and chose a color from the Valspar historic color palette (Filoli Morning Glory). The applicant argues that this color is similar enough to Duron Stratford Blue #2864 which is part of the Commission's color palette.

Staff recommends denial of the project as proposed. The *Richmond Old and Historic Districts Handbook and Design Review Guidelines* emphasizes the importance of selecting color schemes for properties that blend with and complement the overall color schemes of the street. The *Guidelines* notes that, "florescent and obtrusive colors should not be used because these [colors] were not traditionally used on local historic structures. The high Victorian 'painted ladies' of San Francisco and other western cities represent a phenomenon never adopted in Richmond" (pg. 55). The *Guidelines* also notes that when painting historic masonry, "Colors associated with the colors of natural brick are strongly encouraged and are preferred over less appropriate colors (white, green, blue, etc.)" (pg. 55).

The paint color selected by the applicant is not comparable to any of the colors included on the palette of sixty colors that has been developed to help guide staff and property owners in selecting appropriate paint schemes for buildings located within City Old and Historic Districts. While the current paint color is similar to

Duron Stratford Blue, the latter is more of a “slate blue” with a lighter hue, while the existing color is much brighter with a fluorescent quality. The selected color does not complement the overall color schemes of this area of Union Hill, nor is it deemed appropriate for painted masonry.

It is the assessment of staff that the project is not consistent with the Standards for Rehabilitation outlined in Section 114-930.7(b) of the City Code, nor is it compatible with the *Richmond Old and Historic Districts Handbook and Design Review Guidelines*, specifically the page cited above, adopted by the Commission for review of Certificates of Appropriateness under the same section of the code. Staff recommends that the property owner work with Commission staff to select a paint color for the property that conforms to the paint color guidelines outlined on pages 54 and 55 of the *Guidelines*.