



## Commission of Architectural Review

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| #8 COA-170382-2025  | Final Review  | Meeting Date: 8/26/2025 |
| Applicant/Petitioner  | James Abell   |                         |
| Project Description   | Replace vinyl windows with wood or aluminum 6 over 6 windows with SDLs; rebuild cornice in-kind to match original historic design; replace vinyl siding on the front elevation with unbeaded cementitious lap siding  |                         |
| Project Location  |   |                         |
| Address: 2426 Venable Street  |   |                         |
| Historic District: Union Hill   |   |                         |
| <p>High-Level Details:</p> <p>The applicant requests retroactive approval to rehabilitate an existing two-story frame building circa 1872.</p> <p>The subject building is a two-story, three-bay frame dwelling with Italianate influences. It has a full width, covered front porch with square posts and simple railing. Prior to the applicant's ownership of the property, there appear to have been several alterations to the building.</p> <p>The applicant has performed several exterior alterations without review and approval by the CAR including, siding, demolition, new construction, windows, and repairs.</p> |   |                         |
| Staff Recommendation  | Approval, with Conditions   |                         |
| Staff Contact   | Alex Dandridge, Alex.Dandridge@RVA.gov, (804)646-6569   |                         |
| Previous Reviews  | A notice of violation was issued to the property on March 12, 2025.   |                         |
| Staff Recommendations   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Replacement vinyl siding be removed from the sides and rear and the applicant install new lap wood siding or fiber cement siding.</li> <li>If it exists, any salvageable wood siding be relocated to the façade. Documentation of the salvageable siding submitted to staff for review. If there is no original siding left, or it is deteriorated beyond repair, staff recommends approval of the installation of fiber cement siding on the façade.</li> </ul> |                         |

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|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All new windows have a six-over-six pane configuration, have SDL's, and fit within the existing window openings.</li> <li>• New window trim be installed to match the dimension and profile of the trim that has been removed from the building and based on photographic documentation.</li> <li>• The center chimney be reconstructed to match the original in design and location, using as many salvageable bricks removed from the property as possible.</li> <li>• The built-in gutter have the same detailing, molding, and profile as the original.</li> <li>• The design of the reinstalled corbels match the original as closely as possible and align with the edges of the window tops, final design submitted for administrative review and approval.</li> <li>• The asphalt shingles be replaced on the main roof of the house with a standing-seam metal roof to match the original. Final roofing materials submitted for administrative review and approval.</li> </ul> |
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## Staff Analysis

| Guideline Reference | Reference Text  | Analysis  |
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| Siding              | Fiber cement siding is a siding option that has limited application for use on historic properties. Advertised as an alternative to vinyl or wood products, the application of these products in City Old and Historic Districts should be restricted to new freestanding buildings, secondary elevations with limited visibility from the public right-of-way, new additions with limited visibility from the public right-of-way, and new outbuildings. | <p>The building was clad in vinyl siding before the Union Hill District Designation. The applicant removed the preexisting vinyl siding and installed new, beveled vinyl siding. In the application, the applicant requests to retain the new beveled vinyl siding on the rear and side elevations, and to remove the vinyl siding from the façade and install lap fiber cement siding, which more closely resembles wood siding.</p> <p>The guidelines for substitute materials speak to alternate siding materials limited use on historic buildings. <u>Staff recommends that the replacement vinyl siding be removed from the sides and rear and the applicant install new lap wood siding or fiber cement siding.</u></p> <p>The condition and extent of original wood siding remaining underneath of the vinyl siding is unclear. Images take by staff in March 2025 show that some wood siding may still be present; however, its condition may be poor to fair.</p> <p><u>Staff recommends that, if it exists, any salvageable wood siding be relocated to the façade.</u></p> <p><u>Documentation of the salvageable siding submitted to staff for review. If there is no original siding left, or it is deteriorated beyond repair, staff recommends approval of the installation of the fiber cement siding on the façade.</u></p> |

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|  |  | <p><u>Staff recommends that final siding materials be submitted for administrative review and approval.</u></p>  |
| <p>Building Elements, Windows, Window Replacement and/or New Construction, pg. 69.</p> | <p><i>7. Windows should only be replaced when they are missing or beyond repair. Any reconstruction should be based on physical evidence or photo documentation.</i></p>   | <p>The applicant removed the wooden windows and installed new vinyl one-over-one windows without CAR approval. The application states that the installed windows will be removed and replaced with six-over-six aluminum clad wood windows. Historic documentation supports this pane configuration.</p> <p><u>Staff recommends that all new windows have a six-over-six pane configuration, have SDL's, and fit within the existing window openings.</u></p> <p><u>Staff recommends that new window trim be installed to match the dimension and profile of the trim that has been removed from the building and based on photographic documentation.</u></p>   |
| <p>Standards for Rehabilitation, Residential Construction, pg. 59</p>                  | <p><i>4. Retain original roof shape, size, materials and related elements including cupolas, chimneys and weather vanes; if replacement is necessary, consideration for use of slate, wood and metal, with respect to color and patterns, should be given.</i></p>   | <p>The building featured a center brick chimney. On a site visit staff observed that the original chimney had been removed. Chimneys are important building elements that speak to historic heating technologies. The applicant has submitted plans that indicate the exterior portion of the chimney stack will be reinstalled. <u>Staff recommends that the center chimney be reconstructed to match the original in design and location, using as many salvageable bricks removed from the property as possible.</u></p>  |
| <p>The Secretary of the Interior, Standards for Rehabilitation, pg. 4</p>              | <p><i>2. The historic character of a property shall be retained and preserved. The removal of historic materials or alteration of features and spaces that characterize a property shall be avoided.</i></p> <p><i>5. Distinctive features, finishes and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property shall be preserved.</i></p> | <p>The building featured its original upper built-in gutter with crown molding, corbels, and wide fascia. These character defining elements have been removed.</p> <p>The applicant proposes to reconstruct the removed building elements based on photographic documentation.</p> <p><u>Staff recommends that the built-in gutter have the same detailing, molding, and profile as the original.</u></p> <p><u>Staff recommends that the design of the reinstalled corbels match the original as closely as possible and align with the edges of the window tops, final design submitted for administrative review and approval.</u></p> <p>The drawings submitted by the applicant appear to show the reinstallation of metal awnings on the second-story windows on the façade. Staff notes that the reinstallation of awnings is not necessary, as they were not original architectural elements on the building.</p> <p>The applicant proposes minimal alterations to the existing front porch which has undergone alterations over the years. One non-original square porch post will be replaced in-kind.</p> <p>Photographic documentation demonstrates that most of the front porch has been replaced pre district. The</p> |

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|  |  | <p>original configuration features a flat roof common of the building's style and a different railings and post design which is indiscernible from the historic photos available.</p> <p>Because the proper permits were not obtained prior to work being completed, it is unclear what alterations have occurred to the rear of the building; however, based on photographs by staff and historic documentation, it appears that some of the rear was removed and reconstructed in the same footprint and configuration.</p> <p>Based on historic documentation, there have been many alterations to the rear of the building overtime; however, the main front massing of the building has remained in-tact.</p> <p>It appears that the main roof of the building originally featured standing seam metal but was replaced with new black asphalt shingles. The non original front porch still maintains asphalt shingles.</p> <p>Roofing material is a character defining feature of a building that should be maintained and replaced in-kind. <u>Staff recommends that the asphalt shingles be replaced on the main roof of the house with a standing-seam metal roof to match the original. Final roofing materials submitted for administrative review and approval.</u></p> |
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*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. 2426 Venable Street, 1950s.



Figure 2. 2426 Venable Street, 2000s.



Figure 3. 2426 Venable Street, rear, March 2025, rear portion removed.



Figure 4. 2426 Venable Street, side elevation and facade, March 2025, some wood siding visible on side elevation.



Figure 5. 2426 Venable Street, Façade, July 2025.



Figure 6. 2426 Venable Street, rear, July 2025.

