

**COMMISSION OF ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW
STAFF REPORT
November 24, 2015 Meeting**

2. **CAR No. 15-133** (C. Dosier)

**725 North 24th Street
Union Hill Old and Historic District**

Project Description: **Painting of elements on the front façade and installation of a plaque**

Staff Contact: **M. Pitts**

The applicant requests approval to paint elements on the front façade and install a plaque adjacent to the front door of a Greek Revival home in the Union Hill Old and Historic District. This application is the result of enforcement activity as the work was completed without obtaining a Certificate of Appropriateness from the Commission. The applicant painted the following elements on the front façade a bright blue color: bottom and top rails of the porch railing, porch decking, stair treads, previously unpainted masonry piers, and previously painted masonry foundation. The prior owner had installed a decorative plaque adjacent to the front door. The applicant has removed that plaque and installed a new wooden plaque with the property address and owner's name. The application notes additional modifications to the rear and side of the property and landscaping improvements. As the changes at the rear and side are not visible from the public right of way due to the presence of an existing privacy fence, they are not under the purview of the Commission. Additionally, the Commission does not review this type of landscaping.

Staff recommends partial approval of the project.

Painting of Masonry

The *Richmond Old and Historic Districts Handbook and Design Review Guidelines* state that painting previously unpainted masonry is historically inaccurate and is not permitted (pg. 59). Additionally, the *Guidelines* note that when painting previously painted masonry the colors of natural brick are strongly encouraged and are preferred over less appropriate colors such as blue (pg. 59). For these reasons, staff recommends denial of the painting of both the previously unpainted brick piers and the previously painted masonry foundation. As the removal of the paint from the masonry may damage the bricks, the Commission may wish to consider approving the painting of the piers a red brick color to match the color of the previously unpainted brick and the painting of the masonry foundation the color it was previously painted (black) or a red brick color to match the piers.

Painting of Wooden Elements

The *Guidelines* state that appropriate colors for the trimwork for Greek Revival style homes include white, tan, dark greens, and greys (pg. 58). The proposed

bright blue color is not included on the paint palette in the Commission's Guidelines. As the proposed color is not appropriate for Greek Revival style homes and is not a color included in the Guideline's paint palette, staff cannot recommend approval of painting the wooden elements to include the rails, deckings, treads, and door this color.

Wall Plaque

The Guidelines note that signs should not obstruct important architectural elements or details (pg. 71). The wooden plaque does not obstruct any architectural features and is a simple sign that does not conflict with the building's design. For these reasons, staff recommends approval of installation of this wall plaque.

It is the assessment of staff that the application is partially consistent with the Standards for Rehabilitation in Section 30-930.7(b) and Standards for Signage in Section 30-930.7(f) 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.