



Staff Report
City of Richmond, Virginia



Commission of Architectural Review

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| 2. COA-141067-2024 | Final Review | Meeting Date: 1/23/2024 |
| Applicant/Petitioner | David Herring | |
| Project Description | Replace a non-original, front porch railing with composite materials. | |
| Project Location | | |
| Address: 510 N. 29 th Street | | |
| Historic District: Church Hill North | | |
| <p>High-Level Details:</p> <p>Applicant requests to replace deteriorated wooden front porch railings and box columns with composite materials on a brick dwelling circa 1816, otherwise known as the McEnery-Metzger House</p> <p>Historic documentation demonstrates that the original porch was removed around 1963.</p> <p>The existing Richmond Rail was installed in 2016 and is deteriorating despite proper maintenance.</p> <p>Composite materials: Porch railings will be replaced with Intex Railing System and polyurethane flat lumber will be used for the square columns and porch fascia.</p> | | |
| Staff Recommendation | Approval | |
| Staff Contact | Alex Dandridge, alex.dandridge@rva.gov, (804) 646-6569 | |
| Previous Reviews | None | |
| Staff Recommendations | None | |

Staff Analysis

| Guideline Reference | Reference Text | Analysis |
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| Substitute Materials, pg. 61 | <p><i>There are three generally accepted circumstances under which substitute materials may be appropriate and economical replacements:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Unavailability of Historic Materials</i> <i>Unavailability of Skilled Craftsman</i> | <p>Based on historical documentation, the entire front porch was replaced in the 1960's. The original materials are no longer present. The wood used to reconstruct the front porch, including the columns and railings are failing and showing signs of disrepair. New growth wood available today does not have the same physical characteristics as the old growth timber that was likely used in the porch's original construction. New growth timber available today is</p> |

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| | <p><i>3. Replacement of poor-quality materials.</i></p> | <p>more susceptible to decay and pests due to its widely spaced growth rings.</p> <p>The Intex Millwork Solutions product proposed for the new porch railing is a paintable material that will have hidden fasteners. The balusters will be 1-1/4" with a square edge.</p> <p>Staff believe that the proposed substitute materials visually resemble the appearance of wood.</p> <p>Fypon polyurethane flat lumber proposed for the square columns will have a smooth finish and is a paintable material.</p> <p>Because the historic material has been lost, as well as to ensure the longevity of the new columns and railings, <u>Staff recommends approving the use of the substitute material on the front porch.</u></p> |
| <p>Building Elements, Porch and Entrance Repair, pg. 71</p> | <p><i>1. Elements that are damaged or loose should be repaired to match the detail of the existing original fabric.</i></p> | <p>The materials of the original front porch have not existed on the building for decades. The new materials will generally resemble the design of the existing box columns and handrails.</p> |
| <p>Building Elements, Entrance and Porch Removal, Replacement and Reconstruction, pg. 71</p> | <p><i>4. Do not remove or radically change entrances and porches important in defining the building's overall historic character. Front and side porches are architecturally more ornate than utilitarian back porches.</i></p> <p><i>7. When replacing a railing on a historic building which has lost its railing, the first step is to look for documentary evidence which records the appearance of that railing. If no documentary evidence survives, look for physical evidence (this may benefit from the help of a design professional).</i></p> <p><i>8. Do not strip entrances and porches of historic material and details that should be retained in any repair or partial replacement.</i></p> | <p>Historical documentation demonstrates that the original porch was removed around 1963. The porch featured a low-pitched hipped roof, classical entablature typical of the Greek revival style, and square columns.</p> <p>The oldest image Staff was able to find of the building dates from 1941-1949. In the image, the original porch is seen having horizontal 2x4 planks as railings. Given the style of the building, Staff believe that these were not original. In later images, the original front porch has been removed and a new porch with turned balusters is present. These turned balusters were replaced with a simpler Richmond Rail in the 2010's, and this design is what is currently existing on site. <u>Because the original handrail design is unknown, staff finds that the simple handrail design with minimal detailing would be most appropriate.</u></p> |

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. 510 North 29th Street Existing Conditions.



Figure 2. 510 North 29th Street Existing Conditions. Deteriorating column base, railings, and skirt board.



Figure 3. 510 North 29th Street, circa 1941-1949. Valentine Archives, accessed January 16, 2024. Original Greek Revival style, covered front porch still present.



Figure 4. 510 North 29th Street circa 1956. Valentine Archives, accessed January 16, 2024. Original Greek Revival style, covered front porch still present.



Figure 5. 510 North 29th Street circa 1977. Historic Richmond Foundation Survey. Original Greek Revival style, covered front porch has been removed and replaced. Front porch railings appear to be turned posts.

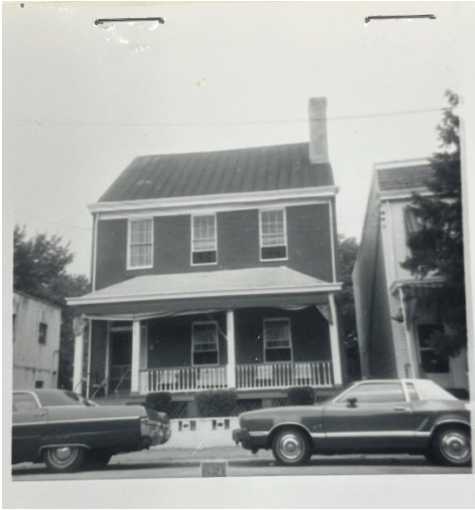


Figure 6. 510 North 29th Street. Original Greek Revival style, covered front porch has been removed and replaced. Front porch railings appear to be turned posts.

