

**COMMISSION OF ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW
STAFF REPORT
November 22, 2016, Meeting**

6. CAR No. 16-160 (K. Morris)

**804 North 22nd Street
Union Hill Old and Historic District**

Project Description: **Install fiber cement siding on an existing concrete block apartment building and replace existing windows with vinyl slider windows.**

Staff Contact: **M. Pitts**

The applicant requests approval to clad an existing concrete block apartment building in the Union Hill Old and Historic District with textured Hardiplank siding. The applicant is also requesting to replace wall mounted air conditioner openings and the adjacent windows at the center of both floors on the north and south elevations with a vinyl slider window. At the rear of the structure, the applicant is proposing to rebuild the porches in wood to meet code to include rails with vertical pickets and stairs with risers. The building is listed as a noncontributing resource in the inventory for the Union Hill National Register Historic District.

This application is not the result of enforcement activity as the applicant contacted staff once he realized the need for the proposed changes to be reviewed by the Commission. Unfortunately, this occurred after much of the siding had been installed.

Staff recommends partial approval of the project with conditions.

Siding: The *Richmond Old and Historic Districts Handbook and Design Review Guidelines* note that fiber cement siding is a product with limited applications on historic structures which includes being used on secondary elevations with limited visibility from the public right of way and that the siding should reveal a smooth surface, rather than a faux wood grain (pg. 56). As the Guidelines specify the use of the smooth surface, staff cannot recommend approval of the application of the faux grain siding on the structure and recommends smooth, unbeaded, fiber cement siding be installed. The Commission may wish to consider if the faux grain may be acceptable on a non-historic structure such as this 1957 concrete block apartment if it is painted a darker color which will minimize the texture.

Window: The *Guidelines* note that changes to existing openings on secondary elevations will be considered by the Commission on a case by case basis. Slider windows are not a window form found in the district on both historic and non-historic structures, therefore staff recommends two double hung windows or two casement windows be installed rather than the proposed slider. Though the *Guidelines* note that vinyl windows are not appropriate for historic buildings in historic structures (pg. 65, #11), the existing building is not a historic structure therefore staff recommends approval of the proposed material.

Porches: The *Guidelines* note that the replacement of porches should match the original as much as possible (pg. 67, #5) and that typical deck railings, consisting of nailed-up stock elements, are not approved as they are not based on a compatible historical model found in Richmond's Old and Historic Districts (pg. 446, #2). Staff recommends approval of the proposed porches with the conditions the railing be a standard Richmond rail design that is more compatible with the district, or the proposed pickets be placed on the inside of the handrail for a more finished appearance and the porches be painted or opaquely stained a color to be administratively reviewed and approved by staff.

It is the assessment of staff that, with the conditions above, the application is partially consistent with the Standards for Rehabilitation outlined in Sections 30-930.7(b) of the City Code, as well as 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.