

**COMMISSION OF ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW
STAFF REPORT
September 25, 2018 Meeting**

2. **COA-039802-2018** (L. Lefferts) **2708-2712 East Broad Street
St. Johns Church Old and Historic District**

Project Description: **Install exterior gutters along the porch cornice
and downspouts on the outer bays.**

Staff Contact: **C. Jones**

The existing buildings are three, two-family, semi-attached, masonry rowhouses. A one-story, full-width porch runs the length of the houses providing visual continuity to the three structures. This application is the result of enforcement action as gutters and downspouts were installed without prior approval. The applicant has provided photos of damage to the porch deck and columns.

The new gutters appear to be vinyl with plastic downspouts and are installed directly below the porch roof cornice line. The gutters project past the cornice line at either end of the porch roof. At the outer bay of 2712 East Broad a downspout was installed on the front of the outermost column.

Previous Reviews

The Commission reviewed this application at the August 28, 2018 meeting and deferred the application pending additional photographs from the applicant. The Commission specifically requested photographs of the second story porch with a view towards the edge, where the historic boxed in gutters would be located. The applicant provided additional photographs as requested.

Staff recommends approval of the project with conditions.

The photographs provided by the applicant are not conclusive in terms of the presence or absence of the historic built-in gutters. Following the guidance of the National Park Service Technical Services Brief# 35: *Understanding Old Buildings: The Process of Architectural Investigation*¹ exploratory testing to determine if the box gutters are present below the metal roof is recommended. If evidence of box gutters is found their condition should be assessed in coordination with staff. Staff recommends that if box gutters are present, they should be repaired, including lining with a membrane (pg. 91, #3) (pg. 66# 8), and the newly installed exterior gutters be removed.

The Guidelines also state that suspended gutters should be attached at the eaves with spikes or straps and that the straps should be fastened under roofing materials not on the roof surface (pg. 66, #9). Staff recommends that if box gutters are not present that the current gutters be replaced with a less visually intrusive model,

¹ <https://www.nps.gov/tps/how-to-preserve/briefs/35-architectural-investigation.htm>

such as a half-round gutters in an appropriate material, and that the downspout and gutter on the column of the outer bay of 2712 East Broad Street be moved to a less visible location.

Summary of Staff Recommendations:

- Removal of the vinyl gutters.
- Relocation of the downspout at 2712 East Broad to a less visible location. If additional investigations reveal the presence the built-in/box gutters, they should be repaired including lining with a membrane.
- If the built-in/box gutters are not present, installation of less-visually intrusive gutters, such as half-round, in an appropriate material be submitted for staff review and approval.

It is the assessment of staff that, with these conditions, the application is 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 pages cited above, adopted by the Commission for review of Certificates of Appropriateness under the same section of the code.