

**COMMISSION OF ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW  
STAFF REPORT  
October 24, 2017, Meeting**

3. **COA-024459-2017** (Z. Fazaldin)

**508 St. James Street  
Jackson Ward Old and Historic District**

**Project Description:**

**Renovate for 4 dwelling units,  
construct elevator shaft in the rear.**

**Staff Contact:**

**M. Pitts**

The applicant requests permission to rehabilitate a 2-story, brick, residential structure with a large three story rear addition located in the Jackson Ward Old and Historic District in order to reuse the structure as a multifamily residential building. The structure was original constructed as a single family home in 1915, and in 1952 a large rear addition was constructed. The existing structure is in poor condition with substantial water and termite damage. The applicant is proposing to rehabilitate the existing structure to include repairing windows and replacing missing or severely deteriorated window units to match the existing as needed, repairing the existing doors and front and side porches, and restoring the cornice based on photographic evidence. Additionally, the applicant proposes to reconstruct a demolished side porch on the south elevation based on photographic and physical evidence to include new 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> story openings to access the porch.

In addition to the rehabilitation work, the applicant is proposing to alter the rear of the structure to include a small brick elevator shaft that will be 23'-8" in height. The proposed shaft would require the removal of a portion of the existing projecting cast stone lintels of the 1952 addition. The opening for the roll up door at the rear of the 1952 addition will be decreased in size, and the existing door will be replaced with a metal clad wood door, window, and transoms. The applicant is proposing to install a metal railing with wire mesh panels on the existing concrete ramp.

The applicant is proposing site improvements at the front of the structure to include an aggregate concrete sidewalk, patio in a brown color, and a wooden picket fence.

The applicant is pursuing rehabilitation tax credits for this project and has not received Part II approval at the time of the application submittal.

**Staff recommends approval of the project with conditions.** The project appears to meet the general standards for rehabilitation outlined on page 59 of the *Richmond Old and Historic District Handbook and Design Review Guidelines*, which recommend the retention and repair of character-defining, historic features of a property and encourage the restoration of missing features based on physical and photographic evidence.

Staff has reviewed the proposed elevator shaft under the Commission's Guidelines for residential building additions found on pages 46 and 47. Staff supports the proposed addition as it is subordinate to the primary structure and is located on the rear elevation. The Guidelines note that additions should not obscure or destroy original architectural features (pg. 47, Materials & Color #1). Though the proposed addition will result in the removal of a portion of the existing projecting cast stone lintels and modification of a rear opening, these modifications are to a later addition to the historic structure. Staff supports the use of brick for this addition with the conditions that the brick not be tooled into the existing brick to differentiate the new construction and the brick color be submitted to staff for administrative review and approval.

The Guidelines note that the development of front yard hardscaping in yards where hardscaping did not historically exist is discouraged (pg. 77, #10). As there is evidence of existing concrete walkways in the front yard, staff recommends approval of the proposed hardscaping. In addition, the proposed hedges and fence will partially reduce the visibility of the front yard hardscaping.

The existing site is enclosed with a chain link front yard fence. The historic photograph does not show the historic fence as the fence appears to be behind hedges along the street with a gate at the entrance. As the Guidelines note that when there is no documentary evidence of a historic fence, the proposed fence should be compatible with fences on the block face and opposite block face; staff supports the installation of a wooden picket fence as there are examples of these fences on this block of St. James Street. Staff recommends the final design of the proposed picket fence be submitted to staff for administrative review and approval and the fence be painted or opaquely stained a color to be administratively approved by staff.

The Commission's approval should be conditioned upon the work being performed in conformance with a Part II Tax Credit application approval and conditions. In addition, the applicant should submit any additional conditions subsequently imposed by DHR or the National Park Service to CAR staff for administrative review and approval.

It is the assessment of staff that with these conditions, the application is consistent with the Standards for Rehabilitation and Site Improvements outlined in Section 30-930.7(b) and (e) 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.