



Staff Report
City of Richmond, Virginia



Commission of Architectural Review

15. COA-165908-2025	Final Review	Meeting Date: 5/27/2025
Applicant/Petitioner	Firoz N. Khan	
Project Description	Construct a two-story rear addition.	
Project Location		
Address: 15 West Leigh Street		
Historic District: Jackson Ward		
<p>High-Level Details:</p> <p>The applicant proposes to construct a frame, two story rear addition onto the rear of a masonry Italianate building circa 1870s-1880s.</p>		
Staff Recommendation	Approval, with Conditions	
Staff Contact	Alex Dandridge, alex.dandridge@rva.gov, (804) 646-6569	
Previous Reviews	<p>This application was conceptually reviewed by the Commission in June 2024. The applicant presented two addition designs, one proposing a rear and third story addition, and another design portraying a rear addition with a third-floor setback. The Commission did not support the design for a full third story addition and suggested that a two-story rear addition would be more appropriate given the intact façade of the building. Because the building still maintained much of its character, a subordinate rear addition would be more appropriate for the building.</p>	
Staff Recommendations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The rear porch have a finished appearance, be painted/stained a color that compliments the building and have railings with the pickets inset into the top and bottom banister, rather than nailed-up pickets. • New windows be constructed of wood or aluminum clad wood, final window specifications submitted to staff for approval. • The addition be clad in either horizontal wood siding or fiber cement siding. Fiber cement siding must be un-beaded and not have a faux wood grain, final materials submitted for administrative approval. • Final exterior color selections must be submitted for staff approval. 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any new exterior HVAC equipment be located adjacent to a secondary elevation and screened from the street and the alley by either fencing or vegetation. • Any unpainted masonry on the extant building must remain unpainted. Any change in the exterior color of the extant building must be submitted in a subsequent COA application for Staff approval. • Any exterior work to the primary portion of the building avoids the removal or alteration of any existing architectural features such as the windows, doors, cornice, and porch elements. Any work beyond routine maintenance and in-kind painting must be submitted in a subsequent COA application prior to completing.
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Staff Analysis

Guideline Reference	Reference Text	Analysis
Standards for New Construction, Siting, pg. 46	<p>1. Additions should be subordinate in size to their main buildings and as inconspicuous as possible. Locating additions at the rear or on the least visible side of a building is preferred.</p>	<p>The applicant is proposing to construct a two-story rear addition. The addition will be approximately 20' long by 15' wide and will match the height of the extant building.</p> <p>The addition will be in the most inconspicuous location onsite, at the rear.</p>
Standards for New Construction, Form, pg. 46	<p><i>1. New construction should use a building form compatible with that found elsewhere in the historic district. Building form refers to the specific combination of massing, size, symmetry, proportions, projections and roof shapes that lend identity to a building. Form is greatly influenced by the architectural style of a given structure.</i></p> <p><i>3. New residential construction and additions should incorporate human-scale elements such as cornices, porches and front steps into their design. In Richmond, porches were historically an integral part of residential design and provide much of the street-level architectural character of Richmond's historic districts.</i></p>	<p>The addition will be rectangular in form with a low sloped shed roof. The roof of the addition will connect just below that of the primary building's rear roofline. Staff finds that the form of the addition is in-keeping with other rear additions in the district and compatible with the primary building.</p> <p>The addition will feature a wooden rear porch off the second story with stairs and a landing into the rear yard. <u>Staff recommends that the rear porch have a finished appearance, be painted/stained a color that compliments the building and have railings with the pickets inset into the top and bottom rail, rather than nailed-up pickets.</u></p>
Standards for New Construction, Height, Width, Proportion & Massing, pg. 47	<p><i>1. New residential construction should respect the typical height of surrounding residential buildings.</i></p> <p><i>2. New residential construction should respect the vertical orientation typical of other residential properties in surrounding historic districts. New designs that call for wide massing should look to the project's local district for precedent. For example, full-block-</i></p>	<p>The addition's height will be just below the rear roofline of the extant building.</p> <p>There will be two windows and two doors on the rear elevation of the addition, which will be vertically aligned.</p> <p>While window specifications were not submitted with the application. The plans show six-over-six windows on the rear addition. <u>Staff recommends that the new windows be constructed of wood or aluminum clad wood with</u></p>

	<p><i>long row house compositions are rare in Richmond. New residential buildings that occupy more than one third of a block face should still employ bays as an organizational device, but the new building should read as a single piece of architecture</i></p>	<p><u>simulated divided lights, final window specifications submitted to staff for approval.</u></p>
<p>Standards for New Construction, Materials & Color, pg. 47</p>	<p><i>1. Additions should not obscure or destroy original architectural elements.</i></p> <p><i>2. Materials used in new residential construction should be visually compatible with original materials used throughout the district.</i></p> <p><i>3. Paint colors for new additions should complement the historically appropriate colors used on the primary structure. Paint colors used should be similar to the historically appropriate colors already found in the district (see Painting Section starting on page 60).</i></p> <p><i>4. Vinyl, asphalt, and aluminum siding are not permitted for use in City Old and Historic Districts. Other synthetic siding materials with a smooth, untextured finish may be allowed in limited cases, but approval by the Commission is always required.</i></p> <p><i>5. Rooftop mechanical equipment should be located as discretely as possible to limit visibility. In addition, appropriate screening should be provided to conceal equipment from view. When rooftop railings are required for seating areas or for safe access to mechanical equipment, the railings should be as unobtrusive as possible, in order to minimize their appearance and visual impact on the surrounding district.</i></p>	<p>The addition will not obscure or destroy original architectural elements that define the building character.</p> <p>The application shows that the addition will be clad in horizontal siding; however, the exact material was not specified. <u>Staff recommends that the addition be clad in either horizontal wood siding or fiber cement siding. Fiber cement siding must be un-beaded and not have a faux wood grain, final materials submitted for administrative approval.</u> Vinyl siding will not be permitted.</p> <p><u>Staff recommends that final exterior color selections must be submitted for staff approval.</u></p> <p>Information on exterior HVAC equipment was not submitted with this application. <u>Staff recommends that any new exterior HVAC equipment be located adjacent to a secondary elevation and screened from the street and the alley by either fencing or vegetation.</u></p>
<p>Paint Guidelines, pg. 64</p>	<p><i>Existing unpainted brick and stone must remain unpainted per the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation.</i></p>	<p>The brick façade of the extant building appears to have been painted, as well as a section of the west elevation. <u>Staff recommends that any unpainted masonry remain unpainted. Any change in the exterior color of the extant building must be submitted in a subsequent COA application for staff approval.</u></p>
<p>Secretary of the Interior's Standards</p>	<p><i>2. The historic character of a property shall be retained and preserved. The removal of historic materials or alteration of features and spaces that characterize a property shall be avoided.</i></p>	<p>While the application only covers the construction of the rear addition, the existing building retains much of its historic integrity. <u>Staff recommends that any exterior work to the primary portion of the building avoid the removal or alteration of any existing architectural features such as the windows, doors, cornice, and porch elements. Any work beyond routine maintenance and in-</u></p>

kind painting must be submitted in a subsequent COA application prior to completing.

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. Façade May 2025



Figure 2. Rear May 2025

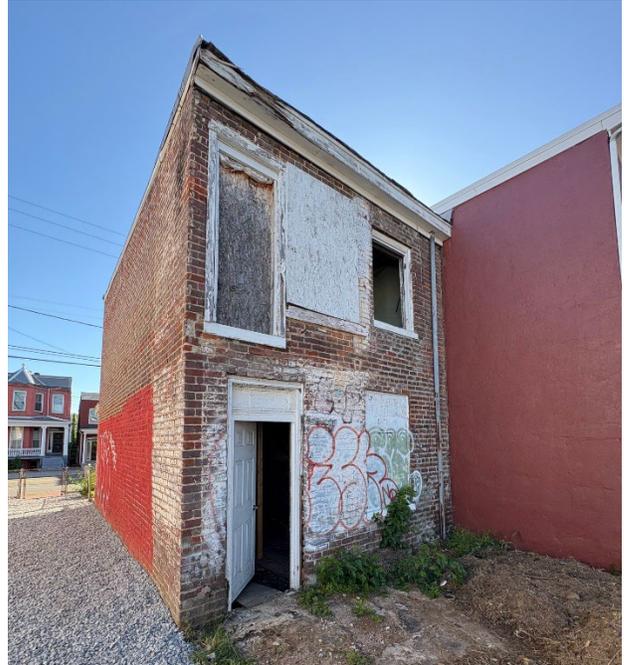


Figure 3. Rear context May 2025



Figure 4. Cornice detail

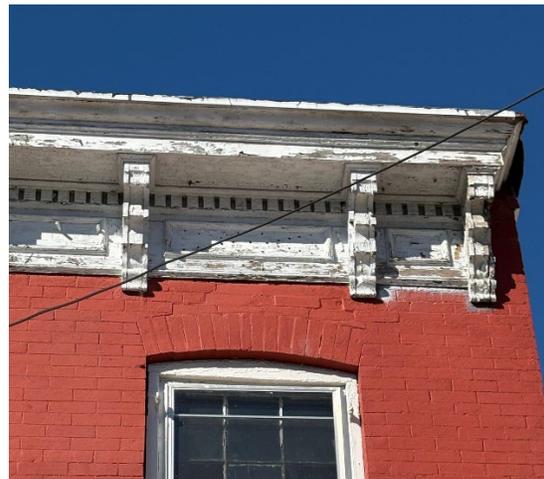


Figure 5. Front railing detail

