

**COMMISSION OF ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW  
STAFF REPORT  
February 24, 2015 Meeting**

16. **CAR No. 15-0210** (S. Glover) **2239 West Grace Street  
West Grace Street Old and Historic District**

**Project Description:** **Install replacement windows  
and storm windows**

**Staff Contact:** **J. Hill**

The applicant requests approval to replace the eight 1/1 wood sash windows and storm windows on the façade of this single-family residence in the West Grace Street Old and Historic District with Pinnacle Wood Sash Pac Kit units. The existing storm windows completely cover the window frames in the masonry openings. The current 1/1 wood sash features upper sash with ogee lugs that are visible from certain angles. The applicant has provided photographs documenting the condition of the windows from the interior.

**Staff recommends denial of the project.** The building appears to retain its original wood sash windows in fair to good condition.

The *Guidelines* address the issue of replacing windows on page 95:

*It is generally not appropriate to replace historic windows. Replacements are often made as a result of poor maintenance of the original materials, or from a belief that original windows do not provide sufficient energy efficiency; such replacements are considered inappropriate if the new windows do not duplicate the historic character of original windows in size, materials or design.*

The applicant has selected a wood sash window that appears to duplicate the historic character of the original windows in size and materials, but without the ogee lugs visible in the design of the historic upper sash. The condition of the windows documented in the photographs supplied indicates that the windows are not deteriorated beyond repair (as described below). They appear to be candidates for retention and repair.

Additional references to handling historic windows appear in the standards for residential rehabilitation included in the *Richmond Old and Historic Districts Handbook and Design Review Guidelines* on page 55: "Retain original windows including both functional and decorative elements such as frames, sash, muntins, [and] glazing," and in more detail in the guidelines for windows on page 65-66:

- Original windows should be repaired by patching, splicing, consolidating or otherwise reinforcing them. (The presence of rotted or decayed wood can be determined by jabbing an ice pick into wet wood at an angle and prying up a small section of the wood or by inserting an ice pick perpendicular to the wood. Sound wood will separate in long splinters, decayed wood in short irregular

pieces, and penetration of less than one-eighth of an inch means the wood is solid.)

- Windows should be replaced only when they are missing or beyond repair. Any reconstruction should be based on physical evidence or photographic documentation.
- Changes to existing windows or the addition of new windows along a secondary elevation will be considered by the Commission on a case-by-case basis.
- Thermal efficiency can be enhanced through the use of weather stripping, storm windows, caulking, interior shades, shutters, blinds, and awnings, if appropriate.

It is the assessment of staff that the work described in the application is not consistent with the Standards for Rehabilitation outlined in Section 114-930.7(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.

For these reasons staff recommend denial of the application for the replacement of the windows and further recommend the retention and repair of the windows. Review and administrative approval of new storm windows can be referred to Commission staff.