

**COMMISSION OF ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW
STAFF REPORT
April 25, 2017 Meeting**

3. **COA-015011-2017** (S. Blystone) **2711 East Clay Street
Church Hill North Old and Historic District**

Project Description: **Repair front steps and porch
and demolish and replace rear addition.**

Staff Contact: **C. Jeffries**

The applicant requests approval to rehabilitate an existing vernacular Italianate dwelling, including repairing the front steps and porch, and replacing a rear one story addition. This application is a result of enforcement activity as the property was cited for demolition and construction of a rear addition without review and approval by the Commission of Architectural Review.

The front steps were repaired by replacing loose and damaged brick and the existing metal handrails were removed. Damaged wooden elements on the front porch were replaced in-kind, including porch decking, top and bottom rails, balusters, and post bases. A wooden gate at the side of the property was also replaced.

The applicant has stated that the rear addition was in poor condition and was repaired to keep the structure as close as possible to what was existing. During a site visit in January 2017, staff documented the demolition of the rear addition. A new one story addition was constructed at some point after the demolition. Additionally, there are no permits on file for this one story rear addition.

Staff recommends partial approval of the project with conditions.

Addition and Siding

The *Guidelines* state that vinyl, asphalt, and aluminum siding are not permitted for use in City Old and Historic Districts (pg. 45). The applicant is proposing to clad the new addition to match what was removed. Though no details on the siding were provided, the addition appears to be clad in T1-11 and vinyl or aluminum siding. As this type of siding is not appropriate in a City Old and Historic District, staff recommends denial of this portion of the proposed work.

The applicant applied only for repairs of the original rear addition. Staff has determined that the original addition was demolished and reconstructed without Commission approval or building permits. Staff has reviewed the addition as new construction and notes that the addition is not differentiated from the original structure as viewed from East Clay Street. This side of the structure has been clad in synthetic siding and there is no visual difference between the addition and the existing structure. Staff also has concerns that the existing addition may not meet building code requirements, based on information from building inspection staff. Staff recommends approval of the new addition as it is subordinate to the

primary structure and located in the rear with the condition that the addition be clad in a compatible material to be reviewed and approved by staff that differentiates the addition from the original section.

Porch Repair

The porch and front step repairs are generally consistent with the porch guidelines on page 69 of the *Guidelines*. Staff recommends that the new wood be painted white to match the existing porch. The application does not indicate whether the metal handrail on the stairs will be replaced. Staff recommends that the design of any replacement handrail be submitted to staff for administrative review and approval.

In addition to the porch repairs, a picket gate between 2711 and 2709 was replaced with a wooden dog-eared gate. Staff recommends that the new gate be painted or opaquely stained a color to be administratively reviewed and approved.

It is the assessment of staff that the application, with conditions, is partially consistent with the Standards for Rehabilitation in Section 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.