

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

3. **CAR No. 15-013** (R. & K. Sienkiewicz) **2717 West Grace Street  
West Grace Street Old and Historic District**

**Project Description:** **Replace windows**

**Staff Contact:** **K. Onufer**

The applicant requests permission to retain replacement windows at the rear of this property located in the West Grace Street Old and Historic District. The application is before the Commission as a result of enforcement proceedings. Staff received a complaint about the windows and issued a Notice of Violation in April 2014. The applicant notes that the work was completed by a previous owner prior to their purchase of the house in February 2006.

**Staff recommends approval of the project.** The work covered in the application is subject to 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 the more detailed guidelines for windows on page 65:

- The architectural character of windows should not be altered by inappropriate materials or finishes that radically change the sash, depth of reveal, muntin configuration, the reflective quality or color of the glazing or the appearance of the frame.

A photographic survey done at the time of the West Grace Street District's designation in 1996 appears to show that the rear of the structure had three 4-over-4 windows and one 2-over-2 double-hung window (see attached photo). The replacement windows are 1-over-1 double-hung windows.

The inappropriate replacement of these windows was completed by a previous owner. The City Attorney's Office has advised staff that the City may legally hold new owners responsible for inappropriate work completed by previous owners. However, the Commission is allowed to consider extenuating circumstances and review applications on a case-by-case basis. The current owners had no hand in completing this work. In approving this application, the Commission would not set a precedent for approving inappropriate work completed by current owners of properties located in City Old and Historic Districts. Staff supports holding property owners accountable for work they themselves completed without the appropriate authorization by the Commission of Architectural Review. Furthermore, these replacement windows are at the rear of the structure, therefore limiting their exposure and incompatibility within the larger district.

It is the assessment of staff that the application is 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.

2717 W. Grace Street (1996)

