

**COMMISSION OF ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW
STAFF REPORT
November 22, 2016, Meeting**

9. **CAR No. 16-165** (V. Jain) **2504 West Grace Street
West Grace Street Old and Historic District**

Project Description: **Replace all windows with vinyl windows.**

Staff Contact: **M. Pitts**

The applicant requests approval to replace of the windows excluding the stained glass windows with vinyl windows on a multifamily structure in the West Grace Street Old and Historic District. This application is the result of enforcement activity as the applicant replaced the windows without obtaining approval from the Commission of Architectural Review. The applicant replaced the windows on the facade which were 1/1 wood windows with 1/1 vinyl windows to fit the existing openings. On the side and rear elevations, the applicant replaced the 6/6 wood windows with 6/6 grid-between-glass vinyl windows. The windows in the carriage house were replaced over 20 years ago and are not a part of this review. Additionally, many of the windows on the rear and side elevations are not visible from the public right of way. The Commission will only be reviewing the windows visible from the public view which consist of the 1/1 windows on the façade, the ranked 6/6 windows on the rear of the projecting bay on the southeast elevation, and the ranked 6/6 windows on the north end of the rear elevation.

Staff recommends denial of the project. The *Richmond Old and Historic Districts Handbook and Design Review Guidelines* state that all original windows should be retained and repaired and should only be replaced when the windows have deteriorated beyond the point of repair (pg. 65, #1, 6, 7). Staff was unable to determine the condition of the existing windows as they were removed without CAR approval. Though the Guidelines note that when replacing elements, the replacement should match the original in appearance, the Guidelines specify that vinyl windows are not appropriate for historic buildings in historic districts (pg. 65, #11). Though the 1/1 windows may effectively convey the appearance of the 1/1 wood windows which were on the façade of the structure as the proportions appear similar, staff cannot recommend approval of the installation of vinyl windows that are visible from the public right of way on this historic structure based on the Guidelines. Additionally, staff does not consider the grid-between-glass 6/6 windows as effectively conveying the appearance of the original true divided lite windows without the presence of interior and exterior muntins.

It is the assessment of staff that the application is not consistent with the Standards for Rehabilitation outlined in Sections 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 page cited above, adopted by the

Commission for review of Certificates of Appropriateness under the same section of the code.