



**Staff Report**  
**City of Richmond, Virginia**



**Commission of Architectural Review**

9.COA-158354-2024	Final Review	Meeting Date: 12/17/2024
Applicant/Petitioner	Doug Haver	
Project Description	Rehabilitate an existing building.	
Project Location		
Address: 400 West Clay Street		
Historic District: Jackson Ward		
<p><b>High-Level Details:</b></p> <p>The applicant requests approval to rehabilitate a late 19<sup>th</sup> century masonry building. Much of the building’s original ornamentation has been removed/covered with aluminum trim and or replaced with new materials.</p> <p>400 West Clay Street was identical to the neighboring attached buildings located at 402 &amp; 404 West Clay Street which have decorative wooden cornices, turned posts with decorative braces. The porches feature sawn pickets.</p> <p>The applicant proposes to remove aluminum trim, replace/reinstall windows, and to remove the non-original porch posts and railings and install new wooden posts. The applicant also proposes exterior painting.</p>		
Staff Recommendation		
Staff Contact	Alex Dandridge, alex.dandridge@rva.gov, (804) 646-6569	
Previous Reviews	None.	
Conditions for Approval	<p><b><u>Staff Recommends approval of:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Replacement of front porch metal railing with sawn pickets; matching those seen in the 1950s photograph and at 402 &amp; 404 West Clay Street.</li> <li>• Any new rail on the east elevation’s stoop be a simple design, such as Richmond Rail, or a design substantiated by historic documentation; final materials and design submitted for Administrative Approval.</li> <li>• Installation of new turned posts that match those at 402-404 West Clay Street, or a simplified design</li> </ul>	

	<p>matching the proportions/dimensions (turned to square portion ratio) of original posts. Final design submitted for Administrative Approval.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If the existing cornice remains, it be retained/repaired. If a new cornice is installed, it replicates the neighboring cornice or be a simplified design and aligned with 402 West Clay Street; final treatment/design submitted for Administrative Approval.</li> <li>• Original dentil detailing be retained/repaired. If new detailing is to be installed, it be based on historic documentation or be a simplified design that matches the proportions of the original, aligning with 402 West Clay Street.</li> <li>• New porch roof material be flat lock metal, or a dark colored membrane submitted for Administrative Approval</li> <li>• Original doors, windows, frames, transoms, and decorative features be retained/repaired.</li> <li>• New rear widows be two-over-two with SDLs; the muntin's of which match the width of the existing as closely as possible.</li> <li>• Painting of previously painted brick only using a color that is similar to the color of the original brick.</li> <li>• New wooden fence be submitted for Administrative Approval.</li> <li>• Repointing match original mortar joints in depth and profile.</li> <li>• the painting of the rear stucco; color to be submitted for Administrative Approval.</li> </ul> <p><b>Staff recommends denial of:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The painting of all unpainted masonry.</li> <li>• The selected replacement turned posts.</li> </ul>
--	--

## Staff Analysis

Guideline Reference	Reference Text	Analysis
<p><b>Building Elements, Porches, Entrances &amp; Doors, pg. 71</b></p>	<p>4. <i>Do not remove or radically change entrances and porches important in defining the building's overall historic character. Front and side porches are architecturally more ornate than utilitarian back porches.</i></p> <p>5. <i>The entire porch should only be replaced if it is too deteriorated to repair or is completely missing; replacements should match the original as much as possible.</i></p> <p>6. <i>When restoring a railing or balustrade there may be difficulty in</i></p>	<p>The applicant proposes to replace the existing non original metal posts and railings with new turned posts and railings that are similar to 402 &amp; 404 West Clay Street. The <i>Guidelines</i> suggest that when replacing original features on a building, the first step is to look for documentary and physical evidence of the original design.</p> <p><u>Staff finds that the selected replacement posts do not adequately resemble the original turned posts or their proportions and recommends denial.</u></p> <p><u>Staff recommends approval of removing the existing, non-original metal posts and railings.</u></p>

	<p><i>maintaining the original height while meeting current building code. Always consult with the building department.</i></p> <p><i>7. When replacing a railing on a historic building which has lost its railing, the first step is to look for documentary evidence which records the appearance of that railing. If no documentary evidence survives, look for physical evidence (this may benefit from the help of a design professional)</i></p>	<p>The application also suggests that the non-original metal railing will be removed and replaced with a railing to match 402 &amp; 404 West Clay Street, which have original sawn pickets. Photographic documentation shows that 400 West Clay featured identical sawn pickets. <u>Staff recommends approval of replacing the non-original metal railing on the front porch with new sawn pickets to match those seen in the 1950s photograph and those present on 402 &amp; 404 West Clay Street.</u></p> <p>There is a small stoop on the east elevation that doesn't have a railing. <u>Staff recommends that if a new railing is installed on the east elevation's stoop, that it be a simple design, such as Richmond Rail, or a design substantiated by historic documentation; final materials and design submitted to Staff for administrative review and approval.</u></p>
	<p><i>6. Retain original entrances and porches including doors, frames, fanlights, sidelights, steps, balustrades, pilasters, entablatures, columns and decorative features.</i></p> <p><i>7. Repair damaged elements instead of replacing them. Use materials that match the original in type or use physically and chemically compatible substitute materials that convey the same appearance as the surviving elements or sections. Use available documentation when reconstructing missing elements. Pictorial, historical, or physical documentation can be helpful.</i></p>	<p>The façade of 400 West Clay Street has been heavily altered. Based on City of Richmond assessor documentation, the original front porch columns, railings, and details were removed, and aluminum wrap added to the cornice and porch fascia between 1964-1970. These were character defining features that were removed prior to the designation of the district and before the current owner purchased the building.</p> <p>The applicant proposes to remove the metal supports and railings and to replace them with new turned posts and a railing with sawn pickets. <u>Staff recommends that the applicant install new turned posts that match the neighboring property at 402-404 West Clay or are a simplified design that matches the proportions and dimensions (turned to square portion ratio) of the original posts. Final post design submitted for administrative review and approval.</u></p> <p>The aluminum trim will be removed from the cornice and the applicant proposes repair it to match the neighboring buildings as closely as possible.</p> <p><u>Staff recommends that, if the existing cornice remains under the trim, it be retained and repaired. If a new cornice is to be installed, it should replicate the neighboring cornice as closely as possible or be a simplified design. Any cornice should align exactly with the neighboring building at 402 West Clay Street for a continuous appearance. Final cornice treatment/design submitted to Staff for Administrative Review and Approval.</u></p> <p>The metal wrap will also be removed from the molding around the front porch. <u>Staff recommends that that any original dentil detailing that is discovered under the aluminum wrap be retained and repaired. If original details do not exist under the wrap, and new detailing is to be installed, any new porch detailing should be based on historic documentation or be a simplified design that matches the proportions of the original as closely as possible and aligns exactly with the porch at 402 West Clay Street. Any new porch roof material should be flat lock metal, or a dark colored membrane roofing submitted for Administrative Review and approval.</u></p>

		<p>During the exterior rehabilitation of the building, <u>Staff recommends that all original doors, windows, frames, transoms, and decorative features be retained and repaired.</u></p>
<p><b>Building Elements, Windows, pg. 69</b></p>	<p><i>1. Retain all original windows, and ensure that hardware is in good shape, reusing serviceable window hardware and locks.</i></p> <p><i>7. Windows should only be replaced when they are missing or beyond repair. Any reconstruction should be based on physical evidence or photo documentation</i></p>	<p>There are four missing windows on the rear of the property. The applicant proposes to install aluminum clad windows in these locations which will be JELD-WEN 35.375-in x 80-in Clad W-5500 Double Hung windows. Based on a site visit, staff notes that the neighboring property and the east elevation of 400 West Clay feature two-over-two windows. <u>Staff recommends that the new windows installed on the rear be two-over-two windows with simulated divided lights, the muntin's of which match the width of the existing two-over-two windows on the building as closely as possible.</u></p> <p><u>Staff recommends that any new exterior storm windows have the same light configuration as the windows and be clear glass. New storm windows can be submitted for administrative review and approval.</u></p>
<p><b>Painting, General Guidelines</b></p>	<p><i>5. Unpainted masonry must remain unpainted</i></p>	<p>The applicant has requested to paint the exterior of the building. The façade is unpainted masonry, the east elevation is partially painted at the base which was a result of graffiti abatement, and the rear is unpainted stucco/slurry coat.</p> <p>The Guidelines recommend against the painting of unpainted historic masonry due to paint's potential detrimental impact on masonry. <u>Staff recommends denial of the painting of all unpainted masonry.</u></p> <p>Historically, stucco finishes were painted. <u>Staff recommends approval of the painting of the rear stucco. Final color to be administratively approved.</u></p> <p>Because the east elevation is partially painted, <u>Staff recommends approval of painting areas of previously painted brick only, and using a color that is like the color of the original brick to create a more uniform appearance.</u></p>
<p><b>Fencing</b></p>	<p><i>Administrative Approval Guidelines for Fencing.</i></p>	<p>The applicant is proposing to remove the existing chain-link fence around the property and to install a new wooden fence at the front and rear of the property to match the neighboring property. <u>Staff recommends approval of a new wooden fence and that any new fencing be consistent with the design found on the neighboring property and abide by application zoning regulations for height.</u></p>
<p><b>Masonry, pg. 90 &amp; Preservation Brief #2 Repointing of Historic Masonry</b></p>	<p><i>Repointing</i></p>	<p>The applicant plans to repoint the historic masonry using a lime-based mortar that matches the existing in color. <u>Staff recommends that repointing be done in a way that doesn't damage the outer edges of the brick, matches the color of the existing mortar as closely as possible, and that the mortar joints match the original in depth and profile. Mortar must not be flush with the face of the brick or smear onto the face of the brick. Use of any cement products is not authorized.</u></p>

*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. 400 West Clay Street, Façade, Existing Conditions.



Figure 2. 400 West Clay Street, East Elevation, Existing Conditions.



Figure 3. 400 West Clay Street, Rear.



Figure 4. 400-404 West Clay Street, looking East.



Figure 5. 400-404 West Clay Street, facades.



Figure 6. 1950s



