

**COMMISSION OF ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW
STAFF REPORT
May 23, 2017, Meeting**

15. COA-017154-2017 (K. Santelli)

**616 North 25th Street
Church Hill North Old and Historic District**

Project Description: **Rehabilitate the front and rear porches of a residential structure and construct a new rear deck.**

Staff Contact: **M. Pitts**

The applicant requests approval to rehabilitate the front porch and replace the rear porches of a frame vernacular Italianate structure in the Church Hill North Old and Historic District. The applicant proposes to replace the metal columns and railing on the front porch with Tuscan round wooden columns and wooden Richmond rail to be painted white. On the recessed element of the façade, the applicant proposes to replace an existing smooth door with a four panel double light door which was salvaged from the home. The proposed new door will be nailed shut. At the rear of the structure, the applicant proposes to demolish the existing rear two story porch structure. The applicant proposes a new second floor porch in the approximate footprint of the existing second story porch. The new porch will have stairs which will run near the north property line. The applicant is working with the Zoning Division to obtain an administrative variance for these stairs. On the first floor, the applicant is proposing a deck which will project approximately 8 ½ feet into the rear yard. The rear porch structures will be constructed with pressure treated wood to be opaquely stained and will have Richmond rail to be painted white. While the second story porch and stairs will be visible from Jefferson Avenue and the adjacent alley, the first floor deck will not be visible from the public right of way due to the presence of a rear yard privacy fence.

Staff recommends approval of the project with conditions.

Front Porch: The existing metal columns and railing are contemporary additions, therefore staff supports their removal. The *Richmond Old and Historic Districts Handbook and Design Review Guidelines* note that when reconstructing a missing element; pictorial, historical, or physical documentation should be used as a basis for the design and materials (pg. 55, #7). There are existing half round columns on the front porch. Staff recommends approval of the proposed round columns with the condition that the columns match the dimensions of the surviving half round columns. Staff has been unable to locate pictorial or physical evidence of the historic porch railing. As the Guidelines note that for an existing building which has lost its railing and for which no documentary or physical evidences survives, the balusters in traditional Richmond rail are appropriate (pg. 46, Porches and Porch Details #2); staff recommends approval of the proposed railing.

Door: The Guidelines note that salvaged materials can be used as in-kind replacements (pg. 55, #10). Staff supports the use of the salvaged door as an in-kind replacement as the proposed door was salvaged from the existing home, and the current door is not the original door.

Rear Porch: The proposed deck is consistent with the Commission's Guidelines for decks found on page 47 of the *Richmond Old and Historic Districts Handbook and Design Review Guidelines* as the deck is located at the rear of the property and does not damage any significant site features. The *Guidelines* note that the railing's design may be Richmond rail or a contemporary railing that is in scale with the house and the deck (pg. 47, # 3), and therefore staff supports the proposed railing. Though tongue and groove decking boards are traditionally used in the District, staff supports the proposed decking as it will not be visible from the public right of way. As the *Guidelines* note that decks should be painted or stained a neutral color that complements one or more of the colors found on the main structure, staff recommends the applicant paint or stain the structure a color to be administratively approved by staff.

It is the assessment of staff that, with the conditions noted above, the application is consistent with the Standards for Rehabilitation and New Construction 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.