

**COMMISSION OF ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW
STAFF REPORT
August 26, 2014 Meeting**

9. **CAR No. 14-088** (S. Towns)

**2712 E. Leigh Street
Church Hill North Old and Historic District**

Project Description:

Replace windows

Staff Contact:

W. Palmquist

The applicant requests approval for the replacement of two 1st story windows on the front of this building in the Church Hill North Old and Historic District. The building is home to the Harvest Gathering Church of God in Christ. This application is the result of enforcement efforts after these windows were replaced without a Certificate of Appropriateness. The building itself has been modified numerous times over the years with new or modified window and door openings which are apparent on the front and sides of the structure. Sanborn Fire Insurance maps indicate it was once used for storage, and prior to that it may have originally be used as a stable or other outbuilding.

The new windows which were installed are double-hung six-over-six vinyl windows with grid between the glass. The original windows were modified two-over-two wood windows with divided lites, whose characteristics were indicative of the use of the building. The applicant notes that the windows were in poor condition, and were severely damaged by storms and vandalism.

Staff recommends denial of the project. The *Richmond Old and Historic Districts Handbook and Design Review Guidelines* emphasizes the need to retain and repair original architectural features of a property. The Standards for Rehabilitation notes on page 51, "Retain original windows including both functional and decorative elements such as frames, sash, muntins, [and] glazing." The more detailed recommendations for windows outlined on page 59 state that:

- Windows should only be replaced when they are missing or deteriorated beyond repair. Any reconstruction should be based on physical evidence or photo documentation.
- 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.

While the windows which were replaced may not have been original to the building, they were character-defining features which were indicative of the use of the building as a church. The replacement windows with artificial grid-between-glass muntins are not appropriate for use in City Old and Historic Districts.

Staff recommends that if the previous windows are still available, that they be repaired and reinstalled. If the windows are no longer available, staff recommends the applicant work with the window retailer to find a suitable two-over-two aluminum-clad wood window with external muntins or simulated

divided-lites, and reapply to the Commission for their approval. If the applicant agrees to this recommendation, the Commission could approve a Certificate of Appropriateness for the work.

Otherwise, it is the assessment of staff that the application, as submitted, is not 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.