

**COMMISSION OF ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW
STAFF REPORT
February 28, 2017, Meeting**

8. **CAR No. 17-019** (E. Fendley) **517 North 29th Street
Church Hill North Old and Historic District**

Project Description: **Replace porch decking, railing,
roofing, soffit and gutter.**

Staff Contact: **M. Pitts**

The applicant requests approval to rehabilitate an existing full façade front porch on a home in the Church Hill North Old and Historic District. The existing porch has been altered over time to include the replacement of brick piers with turned columns. The applicant proposes to replace the deteriorated wood decking with AZEK tongue and groove decking to running perpendicular to the façade. The applicant proposes to perform in-kind repair and replacement of the soffit, Richmond railing, and the gutter. The existing tin roof will be replaced with a standing seam copper roof.

Staff recommends approval of the project with conditions. The *Richmond Old and Historic Districts Handbook and Design Review Guidelines* state that whenever possible porches should be repaired and partially replaced rather than completely replaced and that replacements should match the original as much as possible (pg. 67, #3, #5). The applicant is proposing to replace in-kind to match materials and form or repair the majority of the porch elements including the soffit, railing and gutter. The *Guidelines* states that synthetic tongue-and-groove porch flooring may be a reasonable alternative to the use of wood tongue-and-groove decking (pg. 57). The *Guidelines* also notes that if in-kind materials are impractical, then substitute materials may be used (pg. 57). Staff recommends approval of the proposed composite decking, understanding that modern wood decking is much less durable than the first-growth timber that was historically used for porch flooring. Staff also supports the proposed orientation as it is consistent with the orientation of decking on historic homes in the district.

While the Guidelines acknowledge that copper is an appropriate substitute material for historic tin (pg. 57), staff has concerns that the standing seam design is not appropriate for a porch roof as it does not convey the appearance of a hand seamed tin roof. The Guidelines note that many historic front porches have shallow pitched metal roofs with flat seams (pg. 62, #5). Staff recommends approval of the roof replacement with the condition that the copper roof have flat seams or a membrane roof be installed as the Guidelines acknowledge that membrane roofs are acceptable substitutes for flat-lock seamed metal roofs (pg. 46).

It is the assessment of staff that the application, with the acceptance of the noted conditions, is consistent with the Standards for Rehabilitation outlined in Sections

30-930.7(b) 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.