

**COMMISSION OF ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW  
STAFF REPORT  
April 25, 2017 Meeting**

8. **COA-015224-2017** (W. Bulifant) **2705 East Clay Street  
Church Hill North Old and Historic District**

**Project Description:** **Paint an existing single family home,  
replace front steps and railing,  
and construct rear addition.**

**Staff Contact:** **C. Jeffries**

The applicant requests approval to paint an existing vernacular Italianate dwelling, apply fiber cement and vinyl siding to the addition at the rear, and replace the front steps and handrail of this vernacular Italianate home in the Church Hill North Old and Historic District. This application is a result of enforcement activity as the property was cited for painting, construction of a rear addition, and other exterior work without review and approval by the Commission of Architectural Review.

The body of the structure has been painted green with the trim, porch columns and pickets, lattice, and cornice brackets painted a lighter bright green. The front door and porch railing have been painted black. Four of the front façade window sashes have also been painted black.

The front steps were replaced and a wooden handrail was added. The applicant has stated that the existing steps were installed incorrectly and needed to be replaced for safety reasons.

The applicant has stated that the rear addition was in place when he purchased the property, and the work he is currently performing was to add fiber cement and vertical vinyl siding to the structure. After researching the site, staff has determined the second story addition was constructed at some point after April of 2009 based on photographs of the rear of the property taken from 27<sup>th</sup> Street. This indicates that the addition was constructed after the establishment of the Church Hill North Old and Historic District. Additionally, there are no permits on file for this second story rear addition.

**Staff recommends partial approval of the project with conditions.**

**Painting**

The *Richmond Old and Historic Districts Handbook and Design Review Guidelines* state that the walls and trimwork of Italianate structures should be painted greens, blues, browns, or reds in deep rich tones (Richmond CAR paint palette). Though the exact color of the body of the structure is not found on the Commission's paint palette, it is similar to the greens on the palette and is appropriate for an Italianate structure; therefore, staff recommends approval of this paint color for the body of the structure. The Guidelines also note that

fluorescent and obtrusive colors should not be used and that individual details in the cornices and columns should not be emphasized with additional color (pg. 59). The proposed bright green that has been used for the trim work and other elements is not a color included on the Commission's paint palette and is not appropriate for the historic structure; therefore, staff recommends denial of the use of this color. Additionally, staff recommends denial of the use of paint on the individual cornice details. Staff recommends that applicant consider painting the trim, porch columns, and lattice white to match the existing cornice or another more appropriate color to be reviewed and administratively approved by staff. Staff also recommends that all windows sashes be painted the same color.

### **Addition and Siding**

The *Guidelines* state that vinyl, asphalt, and aluminum siding are not permitted for use in City Old and Historic Districts (pg. 45). As the addition which the applicant is proposing to clad in vinyl siding is partially visible from 27<sup>th</sup> Street, staff recommends denial of this portion of the proposed work.

The applicant applied only for the installation of siding on the rear addition as he informed staff that the addition was not new construction. Staff has determined that the addition was constructed after the establishment of the historic district and was not permitted or approved by the Commission. Staff has reviewed the addition as new construction and notes that the addition is not differentiated from the original structure as viewed from 27<sup>th</sup> Street. This entire side of the structure has been clad in fiber cement siding and there is no visual difference between the second story addition and the existing first story. Staff recommends approval of the new addition as it is subordinate to the primary structure and located in the rear with the condition that the addition be clad in a compatible material to be reviewed and approved by staff that differentiates the addition from the original section.

### **Front Steps**

The replacement front steps have the same appearance as the previous wooden steps. Since the steps were replaced for safety reasons, staff is supportive of this change. The new railing design is not typically found within the district as it lacks pickets and a handrail. Staff recommends that the railing design be modified to match the front porch railing to include a handrail and pickets in the Richmond rail design. The new railing design should be submitted to staff for administrative review and approval.

It is the assessment of staff that the application, with conditions, is partially consistent with the Standards for Rehabilitation in Section 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 pages cited above, adopted by the Commission for review of Certificates of Appropriateness under the same section of the code.