



Staff Report
City of Richmond, Virginia



Commission of Architectural Review

4.COA-161171-2025	Final Review Meeting Date: 2/25/2025
Applicant/Petitioner	Richard Brown, Magnolia Renovations
Project Description	Alter a masonry opening on a secondary elevation.
Project Location	
Address: 209 North 28 th Street	
Historic District: St. John's Church	
<p>High-Level Details:</p> <p>The applicant requests exterior alterations to a masonry, Queen Anne Style row house circa 1910.</p> <p>Specifically, the applicant proposes to alter masonry openings on the south, alley facing elevation from their original dimensions to transoms windows.</p> <p>Additionally, the applicant proposes to paint the exterior.</p>	
Staff Recommendation	Partial Approval
Staff Contact	Alex Dandridge, alex.dandridge@rva.gov, (804) 646-6569
Previous Reviews	None.
Staff Recommendations	<p>Staff Recommends <u>approval</u> of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the already infilled window on the south, alley facing elevation, as reversal of the work could cause additional damage to the historic masonry. • Exterior painting, provided that all wooden and/or previously painted masonry be painted a color in-keeping with the Commission's paint guidance; colors submitted to staff for approval. <p>Staff Recommends <u>denial</u> of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the conversion of any other existing windows into transom windows. • Installation of vinyl windows. • Removal of any original wooden windows. • Exterior painting of unpainted masonry.

Staff Analysis

Guideline Reference	Reference Text	Analysis
<p>Window Replacement and/or Reconstruction #8, pg. 69</p>	<p><i>The number, location, size or glazing pattern of windows should not be changed by cutting new openings, blocking out windows or by installing replacement sash that do not fit the original window. Changes to existing windows or the addition of new windows along a secondary elevation will be considered by the Commission on a case-by-case basis.</i></p>	<p>The applicant proposes to alter windows on a secondary elevation. The existing windows will be converted into transom windows to accommodate interior alterations.</p> <p>The alteration will include infilling existing bathroom windows with brick. The brick infill will be toothed into the existing masonry for a seamless transition.</p> <p>It appears that the applicant has already infilled one window with brick and a transom window.</p> <p><u>Staff recommends approval of the already infilled window on the south, alley facing elevation, as reversal of the work could cause additional damage to the historic masonry.</u> The Guidelines also state that the Commission can consider changes to existing windows on secondary elevations on a case-by-case basis.</p> <p><u>Staff recommends denial of the conversion of any other existing windows into transom windows. However, if the Commission decides that infilling the windows is appropriate, the infill should be inset a few inches to demarcate the original window dimensions, and the wooden sills should remain in place.</u></p> <p>There are two existing transom window at the basement level of the alley elevation that appear to be original.</p> <p>The building Maintains some of its original windows. It appears that on the side and rear elevation, the original two-over-two windows were removed from the second floor and rear at some point.</p> <p><u>Staff recommends denial of the removal of any original wooden windows.</u></p>
<p>Window Replacement and/or Reconstruction #10, pg. 69,</p>	<p><i>10. The architectural appearance of original windows should be used as a model for new windows. Changes in the sash, depth or reveal, muntin configuration, frame or glazing is strongly discouraged. New glass should not be tinted or receive reflective coatings.</i></p> <p><i>11. Because the material cannot be manufactured to model effectively the appearance of historic windows, vinyl windows are not appropriate for historic buildings in historic districts</i></p>	<p>The application states that the existing windows will be removed to accommodate the infill, and vinyl transom windows will be installed. The guidelines state that vinyl windows are not appropriate for historic buildings. <u>Staff recommends denial of the installation of vinyl windows.</u></p>
<p>Commission of Architectural Review Administrative Approval</p>		<p>The application states that the exterior of the building be painted. The exterior of the building is currently unpainted masonry, and all wooden elements are painted white, along with stone lintels and sills.</p>

Guidelines for Painting

Staff recommends that all unpainted masonry must remain unpainted.

Staff recommends that all wooden and/or previously painted masonry be painted a color in-keeping with the Commission's paint guidance; colors submitted to staff for approval.

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. Façade, February 2025



Figure 2. Window that has been infilled without approval. Sill relocated and infill toothed into original masonry.



Figure 3. Alley Elevation with infilled window.



Figure 4. Existing transoms at basement level on the alley elevation. These appear to be original to the building.

