

**COMMISSION OF ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW  
STAFF REPORT  
February 27, 2018 Meeting**

6. COA-029598-2018 (M. Donohue)

**815 North 24<sup>th</sup> Street  
Union Hill Old and Historic District**

**Project Description:** Install a new front yard fence.

**Staff Contact:** C. Jeffries

The applicant requests approval to install a vinyl picket fence along the front and side yard of a residential property in the Union Hill Old and Historic District. This application is the result of enforcement activity as the fence was installed without prior approval. The applicant states that the fence was installed to protect boxwood bushes that were recently planted and to provide a barrier from new construction occurring on neighboring lots.

**Staff recommends approval of the project with conditions.** Staff cannot recommend approval of the proposed front yard picket fence as the fence does not meet the Commission's Guidelines for front yard fences (pg. 78). The *Guidelines* note that if not original to the site, new street-front fences should be compatible in design, materials, and location (pg. 78, #3). The proposed vinyl picket fence is not compatible in terms of design or materials as the vinyl does not effectively convey the appearance of wood and the picket and post design is not consistent with the design of historic front yard fences.

Staff has been able to locate photographic evidence of a wooden picket front yard fence that was installed prior to the establishment of the district. Staff also located photographic evidence from 1977 of a front yard chain-link fence. In addition, the applicant has provided a photograph showing a wooden picket fence in front of the property from 1965. There are also examples of wooden picket front yard fences on both sides of the 800 block of 24<sup>th</sup> Street.



Google Street View 2007



Historic Richmond Foundation 1977 Survey



Richmond Esthetic Survey and Historic Building Survey, 1965

As the new fence is not of a material appropriate to the district (pg. 78, #6), staff recommends the Commission approve the installation of a front yard picket fence with the conditions that the existing vinyl fence be removed and the new front yard fence be constructed of wood, be of a design that matches the 1965 photograph from the Richmond Esthetic Survey and Historic Building Survey, and be painted or opaquely stained a color to be administratively approved.

It is the assessment of staff that the application, with acceptance of the noted conditions, is consistent with the Standards for Site Improvements outlined in Sections 30-930.7(e) 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.