



To: Urban Design Committee
From: Planning and Preservation Division
Date: September 5, 2019
RE: **Final location, character, and extent review of window replacements for Binford Middle School, 1701 Floyd Avenue; UDC 2019-23**

I. APPLICANT

Robert (Bobby) Hathaway

II. LOCATION

1701 Floyd Avenue

Property Owner:

City of Richmond School Board

III. PURPOSE

The application is for final Location, Character, and Extent review of exterior window replacements at Binford Middle School at 1701 Floyd Avenue.

IV. SUMMARY & RECOMMENDATION

Since opening in 1915, Binford Middle School has retained its original windows, making them about 104 years old. All original windows are of a wood construction and have fallen into disrepair. Richmond Public Schools (RPS) is looking to replace approximately 280 windows with a new thermal aluminum single-hung window to include grids (muntins) where applicable to match the existing view. The applicant has listed several issues with the existing windows, citing safety, environmental, and energy concerns.

RPS has a budget of \$1M, and has considered an add-alternate for the project which would consist of cleaning and painting the existing wood frames. According to a national commercial window consultant, the cost of this alternative is estimated to be \$400,000.

Considering the school's prominent location and influence on the character of the surrounding community, Staff was concerned about the fine, architectural details that may be negatively impacted with the renovation as proposed, along with longer term issues that may arise in the future. Staff requested comment from the Commission of Architectural Review, which provided more insight into possible options for preservation as well as potential cost savings:

- Windows can often be repaired without a wholesale replacement
- Storm windows can provide the same amount, if not more, energy efficiency as new windows

Therefore, it is Staff's position that the Urban Design Committee should recommend that the Planning Commission defer final approval as submitted for resubmission.

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V. FINDINGS OF FACT

a. Site Description and Surrounding Context

Binford Middle School is located in an urban setting surrounded by single family attached and semi-attached residences. The property is bounded by Floyd Avenue to the north, Vine Street to the east, W. Main Street to the South, and N. Allen Street to the west. It sits on approximately 2 acres zoned R-6 – Residential.

b. Scope of Review

The proposed plan is subject to location, character, and extent review under Section 17.07 of the City Charter as identification for a “public building”.

c. Project Description

Binford Middle School opened in 1915 and still has the original windows on the building. All of the windows are wood and in poor condition. Richmond Public Schools (RPS) would like to replace approximately 280 windows with new thermal aluminum single-hung windows, to include spacer bars to replicate muntins where applicable to match the existing view. RPS is planning to wrap the existing window frames with vinyl.

RPS is proposing to install new Westco Thermal Aluminum Single Hung, White AAMA 2603 Painted finish, Low-E 270 Annealed Glass, Box Frame and a 1 inch Vertical Contour Grid Bar Window where applicable.

RPS has selected a white vinyl wrap for the window frames, as opposed to cleaning and painting the existing wood frames.

The new windows will create a more secure environment for students and when school is not in session. RPS believes that the new windows will improve the appearance and energy efficiency of the school building.

RPS has considered an add-alternate to the project. Instead of using the vinyl wrap, they would clean and paint the existing wood frames. The additional cost for the painting would be \$400,000.00, which is outside the RPS budget to replace the windows.

d. UDC Review History

In 2006 the Urban Design Committee reviewed the installation of a Rain Garden at Binford Middle School for location, character, and extent.

There have not been any previous reviews for window replacement at this location.

e. Master Plan

This project falls within the Near West Planning District of the Master Plan. Although Binford Middle School is not specifically mentioned, the Master Plan does mention the role of preservation of historic structures and its connection to good urban design, stating that, “Existing historic preservation design controls should be implemented, and where neighborhood support exists, new design controls should be encouraged in order to preserve existing historic neighborhoods from inappropriate development/design”.

f. Urban Design Guidelines

The Urban Design Guidelines impart that “The number, size, style and type of windows should be appropriate for the architecture of the building... Too many different window variations on a building can lead to visual confusion and should be avoided. Window design is also influenced by and should be compatible with details such as sills, sashes, lintels, depth of reveal, decorative caps and shutters.”

The Guidelines further state “Historic elements should be surveyed and preservation should be considered for both facilities and landscapes (page 9)”. “Energy efficiency should be considered in window design (page 18).”

VII. ATTACHMENTS

- a. Vicinity Map**
- b. Application**
- c. Plans**