

**COMMISSION OF ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW
STAFF REPORT
January 26, 2016, Meeting**

7. **CAR No. 16-004** (A. Ogburn)

**815 North 24th Street
Union Hill Old and Historic District**

Project Description: **Rehabilitate a single family home by replacing non-historic materials to include the siding, windows, and front porch stairs and relocating a rear door.**

Staff Contact: **M. Pitts**

The applicant requests approval to rehabilitate a home in the Union Hill Old and Historic District. The Italianate style home was constructed around 1882 and is a 2-story, 3-bay frame house with a 1-story, 3-bay porch with turned posts, decorative sawn brackets, dentils, and ornate sawn balusters.

The applicant is proposing to complete the following work:

- Remove all vinyl siding and install Hardieplank smooth, unbeaded siding with a 7 inch reveal in Sail Cloth color. The applicant proposes to install white PVC trim on all the corners and rebuild the soffits and existing trim with wood.
- Replace all existing vinyl windows with 1/1 PVC windows. Return the first floor windows to their original 3' by 6.5' size to align with the head of the front door transom. Remove existing non-original double window on the north elevation and replace it with a 2' by 3'-2" window. The window on the rear of the south elevation will be replaced with a small 3' by 3' window to accommodate the kitchen installation.
- Relocate the rear door to align with the upper window. The proposed door will be a 15 lite door. The balcony door will be replaced with a 9 lite door.
- The HVAC units will be located at the rear of the home and will be screened from view from the public right of way by a 6 foot privacy fence.
- Apply an aluminum coating the front porch roof.
- Remove the front porch concrete stairs and replace with wooden stairs and railing to match the existing columns and rails.

This application includes the request for the installation of a wooden privacy fence. The applicant has submitted a separate application for the privacy fence which has been administratively approved by staff. With the installation of the proposed privacy fence, the alterations to the first floor on the rear and much of the side elevations including the relocation of the rear door and the changes to the window openings will not be visible from the public right of way and therefore are not under the purview of the Commission.

Staff recommends approval of the project with a condition. The *Richmond Old and Historic Districts Handbook and Design Review Guidelines* state that on existing buildings, the use of fiber cement siding should be limited to secondary elevations with limited visibility from the public right-of-way (pg. 56). Staff does not know the condition of the original wood siding beneath the vinyl. Staff recommends the applicant assess the condition of the original wood siding beneath the vinyl siding and that if possible, a sufficient amount of existing wood siding be salvaged and installed with the historic reveals on the front façade, and that smooth cementitious siding may be installed on the secondary elevations.

The Guidelines note that size of windows should not be changed and that changes to existing windows along a secondary elevation will be considered by the Commission on a case by case basis (pg. 65, #8). The applicant is proposing to restore the window openings on the front façade to the original height. The proposed alterations to the size of the historic openings on the secondary elevations including the doors and windows will not be visible with the installation of the approved privacy fence. For these reasons, staff recommends approval in the changes to window and door openings.

The Guidelines state that all original windows should be retained (pg. 65, #1). As the existing windows are not original to the home, staff supports the removal of these windows. The Guidelines note that 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 (pg. 65, #11). PVC windows are routinely approved in new construction and the historic windows were previously replaced with vinyl windows, therefore staff recommends the proposed window replacements.

The Guidelines recommend using documentation when reconstructing the missing elements including the physical evidence such as a surviving balustrade. The existing stairs and railing are not original to the structure. The applicant is proposing install new wooden stairs and restore the character defining features of the turned posts to the railing, and therefore staff recommends approval.

It is the assessment of staff that the application, with the condition noted above, is consistent with the Standards for Rehabilitation outlined 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 page cited above, adopted by the Commission for review of Certificates of Appropriateness under the same section of the code.