



Staff Report
City of Richmond, Virginia

Commission of Architectural Review



5. COA-166151-2025	Final Review	Meeting Date: 6/24/2025
Applicant/Petitioner	Allan Rosenbaum	
Project Description	Replace various components of an existing storefront.	
Project Location		
Address: 3301 East Marshall Street		
Historic District: Chimborazo Park		
<p>High-Level Details:</p> <p>The applicant requests various alterations to an existing storefront on a two story, masonry, corner mixed-use building circa 1905.</p> <p>The applicant proposes to replace the existing storefront system with a new aluminum storefront assembly.</p> <p>The primary entrance door will be reconstructed to match the original door.</p>		
Staff Recommendation	Approval, with Conditions	
Staff Contact	Alex Dandridge, alex.dandridge@rva.gov, (804) 646-6569	
Previous Reviews	This application was reviewed and deferred by the Commission at the May 2025 meeting. Specifically, the Commission deferred the application to allow the applicant additional time to provide a storefront design that included more traditional window trims and profile. Additionally, the Commission requested a drawing of the new storefront.	
Staff Recommendations	<p>Staff recommends approval of the new aluminum storefront system for the following reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The rigid profile of the aluminum pieces will be reduced with the addition of trim pieces. The amount of vertical aluminum mullions has been reduced and the configuration of the new storefront will be based off historic documentation. The ornate transom board between the existing storefront and transom windows will be retained and restored in place. <p>In addition, Staff recommends:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The storefront's aluminum and trim pieces be primed and painted a color that is compatible with other painted woodwork on the building. The concrete be repoured to match the existing in height and footprint. The knee wall be reconstructed to match the existing in height. 	

Staff Analysis

Guideline Reference	Reference Text	Analysis
Standards for Rehabilitation, Commercial Construction, pg. 58	<p><i>1. Conduct pictorial research to determine the design of the original building. The Valentine Museum has an extensive collection of photographs of Richmond's 19th-century building stock to aid in this research. If no pictorial documentation is available, any new additions to the storefront design should respect the character, materials and architectural style of the entire building. If possible, careful exploratory demolition should be conducted to determine the extent and condition of all original materials. Consult a knowledgeable professional before beginning work.</i></p> <p><i>4. Materials and modifications typically considered inappropriate for use on most historic structures include: replacing historic wood storefront with aluminum storefront, enameled panels, stone veneer, textured wood siding, artificial siding, wood shingles, mansard roof, metal awnings and plastic shutters.</i></p>	<p>The applicant proposes to replace the existing storefront system with a new aluminum storefront system. The existing storefront wraps the corner of the building and features traditional storefront elements like transparent glass, a knee board, and transom windows above the main storefront window, which are separated by a prominent band of horizontal molding. The storefront currently features wood and thin aluminum mullions.</p> <p>3301 East Marshall Street is a contributing building to the Oakwood-Chimborazo National Register Historic District, and while not currently a commercial space, the building is associated with the small-scale commercial development on this block in the late 19th and early 20th century.</p> <p>Based on historic documentation, the storefront has been altered over time. A photograph from the City Assessor's office dating to the 1950s shows the storefront windows having fewer vertical divisions and a different knee board. This would suggest that the windows have been replaced and are not original. The transoms and horizontal trims appear to be original to the storefront.</p> <p>New aluminum storefront system will have 2 ¼" mullions.</p> <p>During the May 2025 review, the Commission suggested that the applicant consider ways to reconstruct the storefront that more closely resembled the original's detail and profile.</p> <p>As originally proposed, the replacement storefront would be insulated glass panels with 2 ¼ aluminum mullions.</p> <p>The applicant is still proposing to install the aluminum storefront but has provided a drawing that shows that the profile of the aluminum frame and mullion will be softened by the installation of traditional molding where the aluminum meets the glass.</p> <p>In addition, the applicant has been able to incorporate the existing transom board molding into the design, which the most ornate section of woodwork on the storefront. Additional vertical supports will have to be added to accomplish this.</p> <p>The existing storefront is divided into four window sections on the north elevation, and two window sections on the west elevation. Historic documentation from the 1950s shows that the storefront originally featured less divisions. The applicant proposes to install a system that matches the divisions seen in the historic photograph. This alteration from four to two divisions on the north elevation and two to one division on the west elevation will also reduce the amount of aluminum mullions and visual clutter.</p>

		<p>While the guidelines state that aluminum storefront assemblies are not typically considered appropriate replacement materials, <u>staff recommends approval of the new storefront system for the following reasons:</u></p> <p><u>The rigid profile of the aluminum pieces will be reduced with the addition of trim pieces, the amount of aluminum separation has been reduced and the configuration of the new storefront will be loosely based off historic documentation, and the ornate transom board between the existing storefront and transom windows will be retained and restored in place.</u></p> <p>Staff believes that these modifications in the design will help the modern aluminum system appear more traditional and compatible with the overall design of the building.</p> <p>To further blend the appearance of the aluminum with the building's tradition materials, <u>staff recommends that the aluminum and trim pieces be primed and painted a color that is compatible with other painted woodwork on the building.</u></p>
Building Elements, Porches, Entrances & Doors, Entrance and Porch Removal, Replacement and Reconstruction, pg. 71	<p><i>14. Do not remove original doors and door surrounds. Replacement doors and door surrounds with stamped or molded faux paneling or leaded, beveled, or etched glass are strongly discouraged and rarely permitted. Stamped or molded faux paneled doors are inappropriate substitutes for door types found in historic districts.</i></p>	<p>The existing primary entrance doors is a full-light wooden door. There is a non-original metal screen and wooden board over the doors window.</p> <p>The door will be replaced with a new full-lite wooden door to match the existing door. It will be constructed of mahogany, with a 5" top rail 17" bottom rail. The replacement door meets the intent of the <i>guidelines</i>.</p>
		<p>The applicant proposes to remove and replace the existing concrete foundation/floor at the corner entrance and underneath of the storefront's knee wall, as well as the knee wall, itself. In the application, it is stated that the existing concrete is cracked and may be deficient, and the knee wall has rot. Based on historic photographs, the knee wall appears to have been replaced and is not the original. The applicant proposes a new simplified design. <u>Staff recommends that the concrete be repoured to match the existing in height and footprint.</u></p> <p><u>Staff recommends that the knee wall be reconstructed to match the existing in height.</u></p>

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. 3301 E. Marshall, City Assessor, 1950s.

Figure 2. 3301 E. Marshall, HRF Survey 1970s



Figure 3. 3301 East Marshall existing conditions.

