

**COMMISSION OF ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW
STAFF REPORT
April 28, 2015 Meeting**

9. **CAR No. 15-049** (T. & B. Keller)

**310 N. 23rd Street
St. John's Church Old and Historic District**

Project Description: **Paint house and replace porch columns**

Staff Contact: **W. Palmquist**

The applicant requests approval to paint the façade and porch, as well as install missing capitals, at this previously-painted masonry house in the St. John's Church Old and Historic District. The house is part of an attached double-house. The application also consists of the in-kind replacement of three deteriorated column bases, which was approved administratively. The applicant proposes painting the façade of the house "Classic French Gray," the trim "Classic Light Buff," and the concrete porch floor "Caviar." The applicant has proposed installing two capitals at the top of the porch columns where they are missing. The applicant has proposed Ionic Order (Roman) Scamozzi capitals, which are of composite construction. Currently, two column bases are installed where the two new capitals would be installed.

Staff recommends partial approval of the project. The *Richmond Old and Historic Districts Handbook and Design Review Guidelines* states that in regards to painting a previously-painted masonry structure, "Colors associated with the colors of natural brick are strongly encouraged and are preferred over less appropriate colors (white, green, blue, etc)" (p. 59 #3). Staff does not necessarily have issues with the proposed trim or porch floor colors, but the proposed gray color for the façade is not supported by the *Guidelines*. Furthermore, since the house is part of an attached double-house, care should be taken to maintain the harmony of the double-house. Currently both houses have brick-colored painted facades, white trim, and gray porch floor and steps. Therefore, staff does not recommend approval of this portion of the application.

In regards to the proposed installation of the porch column capitals where they are missing, the *Guidelines* state to, "Use materials that match the original in type, or use physically and chemically compatible substitute materials that convey the same appearance as the surviving elements or sections. Use available documentation when reconstructing missing elements. Pictorial, historical or physical documentation can be helpful" (p. 55 #7). The proposed capitals, which are to be painted, appear very similar in design to the surviving capitals and therefore would make a suitable replacement where the original capitals are missing. The composition construction of the capitals should be considered a suitable substitute material as defined by the *Guidelines*, given the unavailability of historic materials and the unavailability of skilled craftsmen to reconstruct the missing capitals with an in-kind material. Therefore, staff recommends approval of this portion of the application.

It is the assessment of staff that the application is partially consistent with the Standards for Rehabilitation in Section 114-930.7(b) 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.