

**COMMISSION OF ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW  
STAFF REPORT  
February 28, 2017, Meeting**

14. **CAR No. 16-165** (V. Jain)

**2504 West Grace Street  
West Grace Street Old and Historic District**

**Project Description:**

**Replace all windows.**

**Staff Contact:**

**M. Pitts**

The applicant requests approval to replace all windows, excluding the stained glass windows, on a multifamily structure in the West Grace Street Old and Historic District. This application is the result of enforcement activity as the applicant replaced the windows with vinyl windows without obtaining approval from the Commission of Architectural Review. In the application, the applicant has noted that he renovated the structure to include the window replacement and obtained proper building permits for this work. It should be noted that the permit included a condition from CAR staff that the permit was for interior work only.

The applicant replaced the windows on the facade which were 1/1 wood windows with 1/1 vinyl windows to fit the existing openings. On the side and rear elevations, the applicant replaced the 6/6 wood windows with 6/6 grid-between-glass vinyl windows. The windows in the carriage house were replaced over 20 years ago and are not a part of this review. Additionally, many of the windows on the rear and side elevations are not visible from the public right of way. The Commission will only be reviewing the windows visible from the public view which consist of the 1/1 windows on the façade, the second story 6/6 windows on the rear of the projecting bay on the southeast elevation, the second story window on the south end of the rear elevation, and the ranked 6/6 windows on the north end of the rear elevation.

The applicant came before the Commission on December 13, 2016, and at the request of the applicant, the Commission deferred review of the application. Since December, the applicant has received administrative approval to repaint the brick mold a tan color, increase the height of the existing rear gate to the east of the carriage house, and erect a privacy fence of a matching height to the west of the carriage house.

With this application, the applicant is requesting to maintain all of the currently installed windows. The applicant has also presented an alternative that is to install 1/1 aluminum clad windows on the façade and maintain the vinyl windows at the rear.

**Staff recommends partial approval of the project with conditions.** The *Richmond Old and Historic Districts Handbook and Design Review Guidelines* state that all original windows should be retained and repaired and should only be replaced when the windows have deteriorated beyond the point of repair (pg. 65, #1, 6, 7). Staff was unable to determine the condition of the existing windows

as they were removed without CAR approval. Though the Guidelines note that when replacing elements, the replacement should match the original in appearance, the Guidelines specify that vinyl windows are not appropriate for historic buildings in historic districts (pg. 65, #11). Therefore staff cannot recommend the approval of the installation of vinyl windows that are visible from the public right of way on this historic structure. Additionally, staff does not consider the grid-between-glass 6/6 windows as effectively conveying the appearance of the original true divided lite windows without the presence of interior and exterior muntins. Staff recommends approval of the installation of the proposed aluminum clad wood windows on the façade and denial of maintaining any visible vinyl windows. Staff recommends the visible windows at the rear of the structure be replaced with 6/6 simulated or true divided lite wood or aluminum clad wood windows.

It is the assessment of staff that the application is partially consistent, with the noted conditions, with the Standards for Rehabilitation outlined in Sections 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.