

**COMMISSION OF ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW
STAFF REPORT
May 27, 2014 Meeting**

1. **CAR No. 14-32** (A. Van Ness)

**425 N. 26th Street
Church Hill North Old and Historic District**

Project Description: **Modify window and door openings**

Staff Contact: **C. Easterling**

The applicant requests approval to modify a window and two door openings at the rear of this property located in the Church Hill North Old and Historic District. The two existing door openings are located in a recessed portion of the building, and Door C does not appear to be visible from the public right-of-way. The applicant proposes replacing Door B with a new, wood Jeld-Wen window and transom with simulated divided lites, while maintaining the existing, arched brick opening. The applicant proposes replacing the first floor window on the rear of the building (visible from the alley) with a half-lite, fiberglass door. The existing arched opening would be maintained, but lengthened. Additionally, the applicant proposes to remove the brick parging at the rear of the house and repoint the brick using a type-O lime-based mortar to match the appearance of the original joints.

Staff recommends approval of the project with a condition. The *Richmond Old and Historic Districts Handbook and Design Review Guidelines* notes that the Commission may consider changes to existing window and door openings on secondary elevations on a case-by-case basis (pg. 59, #7). One of the door openings proposed for modification does not appear to be visible from the public right-of-way, and is therefore not subject to Commission review. The other door opening is modestly visible from the alley. Since the applicant is proposing to incorporate a transom window into the changes for door opening B, staff recommends that the existing transom be retained and repaired, if at all possible.

The window proposed for replacement at the rear of the building is visible from the alley, though it would not be visible in the event that a privacy fence was constructed along the rear property line. As the proposal calls for the retention of the existing brick arch above the window, the change does not appear to significantly alter the historic character of the property. The proposal to use type O lime-based mortar for the repointing is consistent with the recommended treatment for mortar repair outlined in *Preservation Brief No. 2 – Repointing Mortar Joints in Historic Masonry Buildings*.

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