

**COMMISSION OF ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW  
STAFF REPORT  
June 27, 2017, Meeting**

11. COA-018243-2017 (E. Fendley)

517 N 29<sup>th</sup> Street  
Church Hill North Old and Historic District

**Project Description:** Replace rear porch, reinstall two rear doors.

**Staff Contact:** C. Jeffries

The applicant requests approval to replace an existing porch, add a floor at the second story, and convert two second story windows to doors at the rear of a structure in the Church Hill North Old and Historic District. The applicant proposes to remove an existing porch post and first floor railing to install box columns and a second story floor and railing. Two vinyl second floor windows will be removed and replaced with six panel wood doors. No changes are being proposed for the existing porch roof.

**Staff recommends approval of the project with conditions.**

**Porch replacement:** Staff supports the removal of the existing porch elements which are not original as demonstrated by the documentation submitted by the applicant. In addition, staff has located documentation that confirms the rear porch was removed in 1990, before the district was established. The proposed porch is consistent with the Commission's Guidelines for porches found on page 69 of the *Richmond Old and Historic Districts Handbook and Design Review Guidelines* as there is evidence of a second-story door and so the porch likely would have had two floors. No evidence of the original porch exists, though the Sanborn Fire Insurance map from 1925 confirms there was a 2-story porch in this location. The porch is located on a secondary elevation, is minimally visible from the public right of way and the proposed design uses traditional elements found throughout the district. Staff recommends the applicant paint or stain the porch a color to be administratively approved by staff.

**Window conversion:** The proposed conversion of two windows back to door openings is consistent with the standards for rehabilitation listed on page 57 of the *Guidelines*. Documentation from 1990 confirms that new windows were installed but no detail beyond this was documented. In addition, photographic documentation from 1977 confirms that the original windows were replaced. The applicant has submitted documentation of physical evidence that the opening on the eastern elevation (facing the rear of the structure) was previously a door. The presence of a transom light and the door casing on the interior clearly indicates that this entrance was converted to a window. Staff is less confident that the second window, on the northern elevation, was previously a door. This opening does not have a transom light and the applicant has not provided overwhelming evidence to suggest that this opening was once a door. Staff does note that this window appears to align with the window on the eastern elevation and be larger

than the windows on the rear of the structure. The *Guidelines* state that changes to windows on a secondary elevation will be considered by the Commission on a case-by-case basis. The opening is minimally visible from East Leigh Street due to an existing privacy fence on a neighboring property. Staff recommends the head-height of the opening on the northern elevation be maintained and dimensioned plans including head heights be submitted for staff review and approval.

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 Sections 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 page cited above, adopted by the Commission for review of Certificates of Appropriateness under the same section of the code.