

**COMMISSION OF ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW
STAFF REPORT
March 22, 2016, Meeting**

5. **CAR No. 16-039** (Richmond Metro Habitat) **3006 East Broad Street**
St. John's Church Old and Historic District

Project Description: **Rebuild front porch**

Staff Contact: **M. Pitts**

The applicant requests approval to rebuild the front porch of a home in the St. John's Church Old and Historic District. The applicant proposes to rebuild the severely deteriorated front porch to match the historic porch. The applicant proposes to use in-kind wood materials for the replacement balusters, rails, dentil trim, siding, and band boards as needed. The applicant is proposing to replace the existing deteriorated wooden deck boards with Aeratis brand 3" composite tongue and groove deck boards. The applicant is proposing to paint the porch the same color as the existing.

Staff recommends approval of the project. The *Richmond Old and Historic Districts Handbook and Design Review Guidelines* note original porches should be retained and repaired and that when replacing damaged elements materials should match the original in type or use physically and chemically compatible substitute materials that convey the same appearance as the surviving elements or sections (pg. 55, #6, #7). The applicant is proposing to use in-kind materials for all elements except the porch decking and replicate the design features of the existing deteriorated porch. The *Guidelines* states that synthetic tongue-and-groove porch flooring may be a reasonable alternative to the use of wood tongue-and-groove decking (pg. 57). The Guidelines also notes that if in-kind materials are impractical, then substitute materials may be used (pg. 57). Staff recommends approval of the proposed composite decking, understanding that modern wood decking is much less durable than the first-growth timber that was historically used for porch flooring.

It is the assessment of staff that the application is consistent 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.