

**COMMISSION OF ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW
STAFF REPORT
November 24, 2015 Meeting**

3. **CAR No. 15-134** (R. & K. Gentry)

**801 North 21st Street
Union Hill Old and Historic District**

Project Description:

**Install windows in existing
altered window openings**

Staff Contact:

M. Pitts

The applicant requests approval to install windows on the west side of the first floor of an existing 2 story building at the corner of 21st and Venable Streets in the Union Hill Old and Historic District. The applicant proposes to restore the storefront by replicating the window treatment on the south side of the building which was constructed prior to the establishment of the Union Hill Old and Historic District. The applicant proposes to install two 60" by 60" nine lite windows with two 60" by 60" 6 lite transoms above and two molded panel bases which appear to be 10" by 70" below. Additionally, the applicant proposes to install a 36" by 22" transom above a new single lite door. The applicant's preference is to use PVC windows and trim and a steel door. To facilitate this new window treatment, the applicant will be removing one non-historic window.

Staff recommends approval of the project with conditions. The *Richmond Old and Historic Districts Handbook and Design Review Guidelines* state that historically, storefronts were defined by simple piers, large storefront windows, a cornice, signage and awnings (pg. 46), that windows should only be replaced when they are missing or beyond repair, and that any reconstruction should be based on physical evidence or phot documentation (pg. 65). The western façade of the building has been inappropriately altered over time to include the reconfiguration of this storefront by boarding up the original window opening and inserting an inappropriately sized window. The applicant's proposal attempts to reconstruct the historic storefront by reintroducing larger windows. A photograph from the 1970s shows two large storefront windows and a single lite door. Staff recommends that the applicant should base the reconstruction of the storefront on this photographic documentation, not the altered storefront on the southern façade. Therefore staff recommends approval with the conditions that large single pane storefront windows and single lite transom windows that fit the entire window openings in the layout proposed be installed rather than the proposed multi-lite windows. Additionally, staff recommends that the existing masonry curb which is not shown on the plans be maintained. Staff recommends the windows should be wood or aluminum clad wood windows, and the door should be wood to match the historic materials. The Commission may wish to consider if PVC and steel are appropriate substitutes for wood as they have been used on other primary façade of the structure.

It is the assessment of staff that the application is consistent, with the conditions noted above, with the Standards for Rehabilitation in Section 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 pages cited above, adopted by the Commission for review of Certificates of Appropriateness under the same section of the code.