

**COMMISSION OF ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW
STAFF REPORT
July 25, 2017 Meeting**

16. **COA-019857-2017** (Concepts in Catering) **411 N. 1st Street
Jackson Ward Old and Historic District**

Project Description: **Rehabilitate a two-story commercial building**

Staff Contact: **M. Pitts**

The applicant requests approval for the rehabilitation of a commercial building in the Jackson Ward Old and Historic District. The building is located mid-block, on an alley between Clay and Marshall streets, fronting on 1st Street. The proposal is for the rehabilitation of a two-story building constructed in 1977 with a parking garage on the first floor and office space above. The proposed new use will have a catering kitchen on the first floor and offices above.

The applicant is proposing to replace the existing vinyl windows on the structure with aluminum storefront and clear glazing. The applicant is proposing to elongate a first floor window on the façade to accommodate a door and sidelight. On the south alley elevation, the existing first floor openings will be infilled with CMU and additional window openings will be created on the second story to match the existing window openings. The applicant is proposing to paint the rear and alley side elevation a dark green color. These elevations are currently painted with murals which were not reviewed or approved by the Commission. The existing unpainted brick will remain unpainted.

This project was conceptually reviewed by the Commission on June 23, 2015. The proposed project reviewed in 2015 included details from the historic buildings in the neighborhood including windows with wood box cornices above and doors organized by a wood frame and box cornice. The Commission expressed some concerns that the proposed plans were trying to dress up the building and convey a false sense of history. In response to these concerns, the applicant has revised the plans to remove these wooden elements and present a more simple and modern design and materials.

Staff recommends approval of the project as submitted. The *Richmond Old and Historic District Handbook and Design Review Guidelines* note that for the rehabilitation of commercial structures that pictorial research should be used to determine the design of the original building and if no pictorial documentation is available, any new additions should respect the character, materials and architectural style of the entire building (pg. 54 #1). The building has not been altered since constructed in 1977 and the proposed alterations are in keeping with the character, materials and architectural style of the entire building. The building is a rectangular brick veneered box with punched openings on the façade that are unglazed on the first story and open directly to the parking

garage and glazed with fixed glass on the second story. The proposed new openings on the façade and south alley elevation are in keeping with the existing fenestration on the structure. The proposed green color for the south and east elevations is comparable to dark green colors on the palette, will complement the overall color scheme on the street, and will be painted on non-historic CMU walls; therefore staff recommends approval of this color on this non-historic structure.

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