

**COMMISSION OF ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW  
STAFF REPORT  
April 28, 2015 Meeting**

8. **CAR No. 15-048** (Historic Union Hill, LLC) **2109-2111 M Street  
Union Hill Old and Historic District**

**Project Description:** **Modify approved porch and window plans**

**Staff Contact:** **M. Pitts**

The Commission of Architectural Review approved a Certificate of Appropriateness for the construction of two new single-family residences at the subject property during the Commission's meeting on November 25, 2014. As a part of this approval, the Commission approved the installation of a two story porch at the rear of both structures. The applicant is proposing to reduce the length of upper story porches by half resulting in modifying the porch dimensions from the previously approved 10' x 18' to 10' x 9'. To accommodate the installation of the railings for the proposed porches, one window at the rear of the façade of each residence is proposed to be removed. Additionally, the applicant is proposing to slightly alter the window locations on the side view of the structure by moving the upper bath transom windows one foot towards the rear of the house.

**Staff recommends partial approval of the project as submitted.** The *Richmond Old and Historic Districts Handbook and Design Review Guidelines* state that new construction should use a building form compatible with that found elsewhere in the historic district (pg. 44). The *Guidelines* note that "building form refers to the specific combination of massing, size, symmetry, proportions, projections and roof shapes that lend identity to a building" (pg. 44). The configuration in the rear of the residences of a half porch over a full first floor porch is not consistent with the building form in the area. The typical configuration in the historic district is that which was originally approved by the CAR of the double porch which spans the full width of the rear of the structure. Based on the proposed inappropriate changes to the building form, staff cannot recommend approval of the modifications to the rear porches and the removal of the window off of the rear of the structures.

The proposed alterations to the windows on the side elevations are minimal changes as compared to the previously approved plans. The Guidelines recommend that size, proportion, and spacing patterns of window openings on free standing, new construction should be compatible with patterns established within the district (pg. 46) which the Commission confirmed the compatibility of the previously approved plans by issuing the Certificate of Appropriateness for the work. As the proposed changes are in substantial conformance with the plans approved by the CAR on November 25, 2014, staff recommends approval of the window modifications on the side elevations.

It is the assessment of staff that the application is partially consistent with the Standards for New Construction outlined in Section 114-930.7(c) of the City Code, and 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.