

**COMMISSION OF ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW
STAFF REPORT
June 24, 2014 Meeting**

8. **CAR No. 14-53** (2108 Venable St LLC)

**2108 Venable Street
Union Hill Old & Historic District**

Project Description: **Replace missing or damaged windows**

Staff Contact: **W. Palmquist**

The applicant requests permission to replace missing or damaged windows at this property located in the Union Hill Old and Historic District. This application is part of a larger project to rehabilitate this building into four apartment units. In total, 13 eight-over-eight double-hung windows will be replaced on the primary façade of the building facing Venable Street. 12 windows will be replaced on the rear of the building, but as this façade is not visible from any public right-of-way, it is not included as part of this application. The applicant has provided photos from the building's interior showing the advanced state of deterioration of the windows, or the absence of windows altogether. The applicant has provided a spec sheet for their preferred replacement option, the PlyGem sash replacement kit, which is an eight-over-eight double-hung wood window, with dual-glazed clear glass, and a 7/8" simulated divided lite grid. The proposed windows have a frame dimension of 44" in width and 54" in height.

Staff recommends approval of the project. The window guidelines outlined on page 59 of the *Richmond Old and Historic Districts Handbook and Design Review Guidelines* emphasize the need to retain and repair all original windows, but provides guidance concerning the style of replacement windows if original windows are missing or deteriorated beyond repair:

- Original windows should be repaired by patching, splicing, consolidating or otherwise reinforcing them.
- Windows should be replaced only when they are missing or beyond repair. Any reconstruction should be based on physical evidence or photographic documentation.
- Changes to existing windows or the addition of new windows along a secondary elevation will be considered by the Commission on a case-by-case basis.
- The architectural character of windows should not be altered by inappropriate materials or finishes that radically change the sash, depth of reveal, muntin configuration, the reflective quality or color of the glazing or the appearance of the frame.
- Do not replace multi-paned sash windows with new thermal sash windows that use false muntins.

The *Guidelines* also address the inappropriate replacement of windows on page 90: *It is generally not appropriate to replace historic windows. Replacements are often made as a result of poor maintenance of the original materials, or from a belief that original windows do not provide sufficient energy efficiency; such*

replacements are considered inappropriate if the new windows do not duplicate the historic character of original windows in size, materials or design.

The photos provided by the applicant demonstrate that the condition of the existing windows are beyond the ability to be repaired. The photos show missing windows or windows which are rotten, missing glass panes, or are separated from their frame completely. The proposed replacement windows are of a comparable style, being of the same grid pattern and grid type, and would not detract from the historic appearance of the structure. It is the assessment of staff that the application is consistent with the Standards for Rehabilitation outlined in Section 114-930.7(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.