

**COMMISSION OF ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW
STAFF REPORT
December 15, 2015 Meeting**

9. **CAR No. 15-149** (J. & R. Taylor)

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

Project Description:

Infill an existing window opening.

Staff Contact:

M. Pitts

The applicant requests approval to infill an existing window opening with brick on the first floor Venable Street elevation of a structure at the northeast corner of Venable and North 21st streets in the Union Hill Old and Historic District. This application is a result of enforcement activity. The window was in-filled with brick of a similar size and color as the existing. Prior to the installation of the brick, the window opening was covered with plywood.

Staff recommends approval of the proposed project as submitted. The *Richmond Old and Historic District Handbook and Design Review Guidelines* state that the infilling of masonry openings is strongly discouraged and that the Commission will consider changes to window openings including blocking out windows on a case by case basis for windows on secondary elevations (pg. 65, #5 & 8). If the proposed application came before the Commission prior to the work being completed, staff would have recommended denial as the opening is on a primary elevation. As the work has been completed, staff is concerned that the removal of the installed brick would result in damage to the surrounding brick. The Guidelines state that the removal of historic materials should be avoided (pg. 4, #4); therefore staff recommends the in-filled brick remain place to avoid damage to the historic brick. Additionally, the applicant has taken measures to maintain the historic appearance of this opening by not removing the lintel and the sill and by not toothing into the existing brickwork.

It is the assessment of staff that the application, is consistent with the Standards for Rehabilitation outlined in Section 30.930.7(b) 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 code.