

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

13. CAR No. 15-154 (M. Shubert)

**2220 East Marshall Street
Church Hill North Old and Historic District**

Project Description:

Rehabilitate the structure to include removing asphalt siding, replacing metal windows with PVC windows, rehabilitating front and rear porches, and installing mechanical equipment.

Staff Contact:

M. Pitts

The applicant requests approval to rehabilitate a home located in the Church Hill North Old and Historic District. Specifically, the applicant requests to do the following work as part of the rehabilitation:

- Remove the existing asphalt siding to expose the original wood siding which will be repaired and painted.
- Replace 14 aluminum windows with 1/1 white PVC double-hung windows and replace the existing metal trim with white PVC. The applicant has noted in his application that three windows on the façade were replaced by a previous owner with similar PVC windows. These windows were not reviewed by the Commission prior to installation.
- Install a shutter in the closed position over a window at the rear of the house.
- Front Porch: Replace the existing metal rails with black-painted steel rails. Repair the wood balustrade and paint all wood trim white. Replace the masonry outer-border on the front porch decking with masonry and painted wood molding
- Rear Porch: Restore the rear porches by removing the cinder blocks between the brick piers, replacing the masonry stairs with wood stairs which will span between the two porch posts, remove the brick above the decking, replace the decking with new treated wood decking, replace the upper porch railing with a new railing that is 36" in height, and paint the porch roof sky blue and the decking grey.
- Mechanical Equipment: Install two 2-ton central air compressor units. One unit will be located in the side yard on the northwest side of the building. The other unit will be located on the northeast side of the building in the location of the existing 4-ton condenser unit. The applicant will also be

removing the oil tanks and installing a cone shaped flue protruding out from the foundation to vent the new gas furnace.

Staff recommends partial approval of the proposed project with conditions.

Siding

The *Richmond Old and Historic District Handbook and Design Review Guidelines* note that the current asphalt siding is an inappropriate alteration to a contributing structure. As the applicant is proposing to remove this alteration and repair the original wood siding, staff recommends approval of the work to the siding.

Window and Trim Replacement

The Guidelines state that all original windows should be retained (pg. 65, #1). As the existing windows are not original to the home, staff supports the removal of these windows. The Guidelines note that because the material cannot be manufactured to model effectively the appearance of historic windows, vinyl windows are not appropriate for historic buildings in historic districts (pg. 65, #11). PVC windows are routinely approved in new construction and the historic windows were previously replaced with PVC and metal windows, therefore staff recommends the proposed window replacements.

The Guidelines state that on existing buildings, the use of PVC trim should be limited to secondary elevations with limited visibility from the public right of way. As the building is located on a corner lot, both the front and side elevations are primary elevations. For this reason, staff recommends that the applicant install wood trim rather than the proposed PVC trim.

Installation of a Shutter

The Guidelines state that shutters should only be used on windows that show evidence of their use in the past (pg. 66, #23). The Guidelines note that if a window opening is non-functional, the window should appear functional from the exterior, and the glass should be retained and frosted, screened or shuttered from the interior (pg. 65, #4). For these reasons, staff cannot recommend approval of the shutter installation.

Front Porch

The Guidelines state that whenever possible repair and partial replacement of a porch is preferable to complete replacement (pg. 67, #3). The applicant is proposing to repair portions of the front porch and replace elements like the border of the decking which appear to be modern alterations. For these reasons staff recommends approval of the proposed alterations to the front porch with the condition that the applicant submit details of the proposed handrail for staff to review and administratively approve.

Rear Porch

The Guidelines note that porches should not be radically changed as they are important in defining the building's overall historic appearance (pg. 67, #4). It is

evident that this porch has been altered over the years through the infilling of the brick piers with concrete block, the construction of brick stairs, and the installation of a portion of new railing on the first floor. As the existing porch has been greatly modified, staff supports the restoration of the porch as proposed. From the site visit, staff believes the railing on the second story of the porch may be original to the structure and therefore should be repaired not replaced as proposed by the applicant.

Mechanical Equipment

The Guidelines note new HVAC units should be placed in side or rear yards so as to minimize their visual impact and that side yard units should be located as far away from the front of the building as possible (pg. 64, #1). The applicant is proposing to locate one unit in the side yard adjacent to the neighboring house. Due to an existing front yard fence and vegetation, this proposed unit will not be visible from the public right-of-way. The unit which will be located on the northeast side of the building will be visible from the public right-of-way. As the Guidelines note that HVAC equipment on the ground should be appropriately screened with fencing or vegetation, staff recommends approval of the installation of the units with the condition that the unit be screened with vegetation, a low wooden fence around the unit, or a privacy fence around the rear yard.

It is the assessment of staff that the application, with the conditions noted above, 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.