

**COMMISSION OF ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW  
STAFF REPORT  
February 23, 2016, Meeting**

2. CAR No. 16-024 (B. Clair)

2121 East Marshall Street  
Church Hill North Old and Historic District

**Project Description:**

**Rehabilitate front porch by replacing  
the tin roof with flat seam copper roofing  
and rebuilding the stairs**

**Staff Contact:**

**M. Pitts**

The applicant requests approval to rehabilitate the front porch of a home in the Church Hill North Old and Historic District. The applicant states that the existing tin porch roof is deteriorated and beyond repair. The applicant proposes to replace the tin roof with 16oz flat seam copper roofing. Rotted roof decking and portions of the box beam will be repaired or replaced in-kind. The applicant is also proposing to replace the existing modern stairs as they are uneven and are improperly attached to the porch with stairs of the same width. The proposed stairs will be rebuilt with pressure treated lumber and treads constructed with two boards each. The proposed handrail will be of Richmond rail style. All wooden elements of the porch will be painted to match the existing.

**Staff recommends approval of the project.** The *Richmond Old and Historic Districts Handbook and Design Review Guidelines* state that “deteriorated historic features shall be repaired rather than replaced” (pg. 5, #6). As observed in staff’s site visit, multiple attempts to repair the roof through patching have occurred over the years and have been unsuccessful in maintaining the porch roof. The *Guidelines* state that if replacement is necessary and if in-kind materials cannot be found or are impractical, substitute materials can be used (pg. 57) and that substitute materials should match the original style and form as much as possible (pg. 62, #3). Specifically, the *Guidelines* note that modern tin-coated steel roofing is much less durable than historic tin and that copper provides a viable alternative (pg. 57). Due to the limited availability of tin roofs, the applicant is proposing to use copper as a substitute metal material. The flat seam copper roof has the same visual appearance as the historic tin roof. Over time, the copper roof will develop a green patina which would resemble the historic grey roof color more closely. Staff recommends approval of this replacement as the historic roof was failing, and the proposed roof closely matches the visually appearance of the historic roof.

The existing stairs and railings are not original to the structure. The *Guidelines* note that when replacing damaged pieces one should use materials that match the original in type (pg. 55, #7). The applicant is proposing to use wood to match the existing stairs and will be using a Richmond rail style railing which is consistent with the existing railing and railings found throughout the District.

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, 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.