

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

6. **CAR No. 16-025** (E. Solarz) **2201 East Franklin Street**
St. John's Church Old and Historic District

Project Description: **Rehabilitate a former tobacco warehouse to include new openings, windows, entrances, and storefronts.**

Staff Contact: **M. Pitts**

The applicant requests approval to rehabilitate a former tobacco warehouse in the St. John's Church Old and Historic District for multifamily residential use. The building is a four story brick warehouse built about 1890, a three story brick addition to the south built prior to 1925, and a small three story addition incorporated into the property by 1950. The applicant is pursuing rehabilitation tax credits for this project.

The applicant is proposing the following work on the structure:

- Franklin Elevation: Remove an existing non-original window on the fourth story to be replaced with a new aluminum and glass storefront. Restore basement level light wells. Restore infilled windows on the façade with in-kind replacement windows. Fix in an open position the historic doors and install storefront to fit the existing opening.
- Alley Elevation South: Remove non-original windows and install new aluminum windows in existing openings. Install new storefront in existing openings. Create five new window openings. These openings are to be filled with aluminum single lite windows or storefront.
- 22nd Street Elevation: Remove an existing non-original window on the second story and replace this with a steel window to match the historic steel windows. Restore infilled first floor windows by installing 2/2 in-kind replacement windows. Restore basement level light wells. Salvage existing doors and install storefront to fit the existing opening. Remove the pendant ladder and preserve the remainder of the fire escape.
- Alley Elevation East: Restore infilled first floor windows by installing new aluminum windows in existing openings.
- Rooftop: Mechanical equipment will be placed on the rooftop.

Staff recommends approval of the project with conditions. In general, the proposed work meets the Standards for Rehabilitation contained on page 55 of the *Richmond Old and Historic Districts Handbook and Design Review*

Guidelines which emphasize the retention and repair of historic materials and in-kind replacement.

The *Guidelines* note that when reconstructing missing elements, documentation including physical documentation should be used as a basis for the reconstruction (pg. 55, #7). The applicant is proposing to replace a non-historic window on the fourth floor of the Franklin Street elevation with storefront. As the original arches above the windows are present, it is evident that this opening has been altered and was originally composed of two windows which matched the adjacent paired windows. For this reason, staff recommends the applicant restore the opening to match the historic appearance and not install new storefront to fill the existing altered opening.

The *Guidelines* state that though the number of openings on a historic building should not be changed by cutting new openings, the addition of new openings along secondary elevations will be considered by the Commission on a case-by-case basis (pg. 65, # 8). The applicant is proposing new openings on a secondary elevation which faces the alley to the south. Staff recommends the applicant consider aligning the new second floor opening with the window above to reflect the vertical alignment of other windows on this elevation.

Though staff has concerns regarding two elements of the proposed rehabilitation as noted above, staff recommends the Commission defer to the Department of Historic Resources on these items. The Commission's approval should be conditioned upon the work being performed in conformance with the Part II Tax Credit application approval and conditions. In addition, the applicant should submit any additional conditions subsequently imposed by DHR or the National Park Service to CAR staff for administrative review and approval.

It is the assessment of staff that, with the conditions above, the application is consistent with the Standards for Rehabilitation outlined in Sections 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.