

4. COA-049224-2019

PUBLIC HEARING DATE

February 26, 2019

PROPERTY ADDRESS

2113 M Street

DISTRICT

Union Hill

APPLICANT

M. Anderson

STAFF CONTACT

C. Jeffries

Commission of Architectural Review

STAFF REPORT



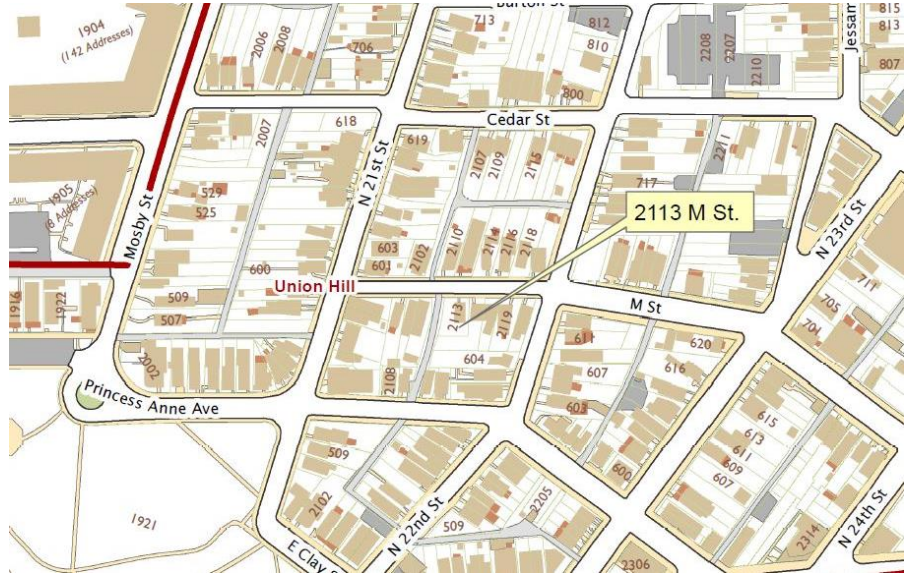
PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Reconstruct the front porch.

PROJECT DETAILS

- The applicant proposes to reconstruct the front porch of a single family home in the Union Hill City Old and Historic District.
- The existing home is a Greek Revival, 2-story, 3-bay, frame dwelling with a raised brick foundation. The home had a front porch with turned posts, sawn brackets, and a picket balustrade which rested on high wood piers. The porch was removed sometime in 2017 when it was damaged during a storm.

During a site visit on February 19, 2019 staff discovered work has been completed that did not receive an approval. An existing wall and front steps have been removed and rebuilt and a window has been added to the west elevation.



The City of Richmond assumes no liability either for any errors, omissions, or inaccuracies in the information provided regardless of the cause of such or for any decision made, action taken, or action not taken by the user in reliance upon any maps or information provided herein.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

APPROVE WITH CONDITIONS

PREVIOUS REVIEWS

The Commission approved the request to rehabilitate the home on September 26, 2017. At the meeting, the applicant proposed the same front porch design as currently proposed. The Commission denied the front porch design and instead approved the reconstruction of the porch with the condition that the porch be reconstructed per a 1940s picture to include turned posts, sawn brackets, high wooden piers, a landing, and stairs that run east parallel to the façade, the revised porch design to be submitted to staff for administrative review and approval. Since this approval the applicant has returned to the staff and has received administrative approvals for other work on the property including the exterior siding and the fence. The applicant had not contacted staff regarding the front porch design but submitted a building permit application for the design that was denied by the Commission.

STAFF RECOMMENDED CONDITIONS

- The porch be reconstructed per the photographic evidence to include turned posts, cutout railings, sawn brackets, high wooden piers, a landing, and stairs that run west into the side yard, as they did prior to the porch's collapse.
- The brick be removed from the concrete pad and the retaining wall and front steps be returned to their original appearance, a low concrete wall and concrete steps.
- The new window opening be removed and the west elevation be returned to its historic appearance.

STAFF ANALYSIS

Porches, pg. 71
#5

The entire porch should only be replaced if it is too deteriorated to repair or is completely missing; replacements should match the original as much as possible.

The proposed design does not match photographic evidence of the historic porch. Historic images of the porch show turned posts, sawn brackets, cutout railings, high wooden piers, a landing, and stairs that run east parallel to the façade (see Figures 1&2). Though the porch shown in the photographs is not of a traditional Greek Revival style, the stylistic elements such as turned posts and cutout railings are common in this area of Union Hill. The photographs date from the 1940s and 1950s and staff believes this design, whether it is original or not, is important to the history of the building and is the only surviving evidence of a historic design.

The application states that due to modern code requirements, the historic porch design cannot be recreated. Though dimensioned plans demonstrating this were not submitted, the applicant has provided photographs showing an approximation of the front stairs. Based on the information provided as well as consultation with the permits and inspections division, staff believes that the eastward running stairs cannot be rebuilt to meet modern code requirements.

Standards for
Rehabilitation, pg.
59 #7

Use available documentation when reconstructing missing elements. Pictorial, historical or physical documentation can be helpful.

Most recently the front porch featured a stairway that ran west, parallel to the façade, into the large side yard. Based on tax assessment records, the front porch was rebuilt in the 1970s and this may have been when the design of the stairs was altered. The porch collapsed due to storm damage within the past two years. Very clear pictorial evidence exists which shows the historic and more recent design of the front porch, both of which included front steps to the ground. As no evidence exists which supports the design submitted by the applicant, staff recommends the porch be reconstructed per the photographic evidence to include turned posts, cutout railings, sawn brackets, high wooden piers, a landing, and stairs that run west into the side yard, as they did prior to the porch's collapse.

Porches and
Entrances, pg. 71
#11

A primary entrance should not be altered to give an appearance that was not originally intended, such as adding a pediment to a simple vernacular entrance.

On a site visit staff discovered that the front retaining wall and front steps to the property have been rebuilt in brick and a brick veneer has been added to the concrete pad under the front porch without prior approval. This block of M Street contains many examples of low concrete retaining walls and concrete steps. Recent photographs of the property also indicate that a concrete block wall was constructed on top of an existing concrete retaining wall, which is seen in the 1940s photograph. As the Guidelines recommend against altering an entrance to give a false appearance, such as changing concrete to brick, staff recommends the brick be removed

from the concrete pad and the retaining wall and front steps be returned to their original appearance, a low concrete wall and concrete steps.

Windows, pg. 69 #8 *The number, location, size or glazing pattern of windows should not be changed by cutting new openings ... 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.*

On a recent site visit staff discovered that a new window opening has been cut into the west elevation of the home. This window was not shown on the previously approved plans and was installed without approval. Historic photographs of the building indicate that this elevation historically did not contain any openings.

Though the window is on a side elevation, the property has a large side yard adjacent to an alley which makes the elevation highly visible from the street. Furthermore, staff finds that the 4/4 window is not compatible with the architectural character of the building or the district and is an inappropriate alteration that creates an inaccurate sequence of construction.

Staff recommends that the new window opening be removed and the west elevation be returned to its historic appearance.

Windows, pg. 69 #9 *The architectural appearance of original widows should be used as a model for new windows.*

Standards for Rehabilitation, pg. 59 #10 *Adding features ... that suggest an inaccurate or undocumented sequence of construction should be avoided.*

It is the assessment of staff that, with the conditions above, the application is consistent with the Standards for Rehabilitation and New Construction outlined in Section 30-930.7 (b) and (c) of the City Code, as well as 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 the code.

FIGURES



Figure 1. Assessor's record, date unknown.



Figure 2. 2113 M Street, ca. 1940's



Figure 3. Assessor's record, 2017.



Figure 4. Front of 2113 M Street, 2019.



Figure 5. West elevation.