

**Historical Architectural Review Board
COA Final Review Sheet**

HDC-2023-00065

Address: 614 N. 5th Street

District: Old Fairgrounds Historic District

Applicant: Robert Velez, owner

Proposal: Replace wood porch columns with fiberglass columns; infill opening

Building Description:

This 3-story brick row house, c. 1900, is a porch house with Edwardian influences. The mansard roof has asphalt shingles, dormers, a single chimney and a two-story turret, no roof. The windows are 1/1 sash and there are visible basement window grilles. The main entry is a double-glazed door with transom on a wooden porch, the wood columns are on pedestals and a wooden balustrade railing. There are side porches, no detail.

Project Description:

The owner is currently working with Building Standards to address several property maintenance issues. The application includes a large scope of work to bring the property into compliance, and staff has approved some work to allow the owner to complete repairs and comply with building code requirements. The scope of work for review by the HARB includes the replacement of two wood columns at the front porch with PermaCast fiberglass columns, and the infilling of a second-story window at the side porch.



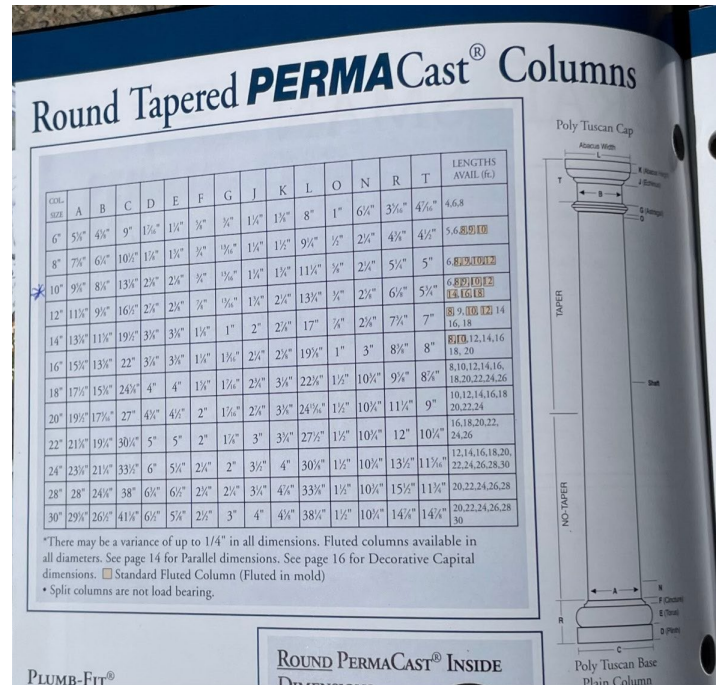
**Front façade of 614 N. 5th Street, 2021.
(Google StreetView)**



**Porch column to be replaced, 2023.
(Applicant)**



Previous porch configuration, 2019.
(Google StreetView)



Altered porch with new railings, 2023.
(HARB files)

Applicable Guidelines:

Chapter 3.5 – Windows

3.5.7 Repair, restore, and reuse original windows prior to replacing them. Where one component of a window is deteriorated or broken, repair or replace the individual piece rather than replace the entire window unit. Repair or selectively replace in-kind existing hardware to ensure window operability, including sash cords, weights, and pulleys. Repaired windows have been shown to achieve energy performance levels comparable to replacement windows.

3.5.8 Replace windows in-kind if original windows are deteriorated beyond feasible repair. Wood is the preferred material for most replacement windows. Replacement windows should match the original as closely as possible in material, size, type, operation, profile, and appearance. Replicate the existing dimensions of glazing, configuration of muntins, or unique decorative lites. Match sash and frame thickness and window depths. For existing non-original windows, it is preferred to replace with wood windows rather than new alternate windows.

3.5.9 Replace windows with alternate materials if in-kind replacement is not feasible. Replacement windows must match the original as closely as possible in type, size, operation, profile, appearance, and configuration of lites and muntins. Aluminum-clad wood windows are an appropriate alternate because they can replicate the original appearance and material. Composite wood or fiberglass windows with paintable exterior surfaces can be appropriate alternates if they match the original appearance, but are not recommended from a sustainability perspective. Vinyl windows are not appropriate due to short lifespan, poor performance, and inability to match historic profiles.

3.5.10 Preserve the ratio of window openings to solid wall surfaces. Increasing or reducing openings can impact the proportions of a facade and can look out of place within the larger streetscape. Changing the size of openings will also require a Building Permit because it changes the amount of enclosed space on a façade.

3.5.11 Retain the historic pattern of window openings (fenestration pattern), especially on primary facades. Avoid inserting new windows into a facade or infilling existing windows. The position, number, and arrangement of windows defines the rhythm of a facade and can be a character-defining feature of an architectural style or a type of building use. If

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creating new openings or infilling existing ones is necessary for a project such as an adaptive reuse, locate openings on side or rear facades.

Chapter 3.7 – Porches & Steps

3.7.3 Repair and restore existing porches and steps whenever possible. Salvage, repair, and reuse existing components including deck floor boards, railings, balusters, posts, and decorative trim. Repair and restore basement level windows or metal grates that are part of the porch base.

3.7.4 Replace individual deteriorated components in-kind with new materials matching the original in material composition, size, shape, profile, dimension, appearance, and finish. Custom fabrication is encouraged and may be necessary to provide an exact match. Where an exact match of the historic element cannot be found or fabricated, the new element should match the original as closely as possible.

3.7.7 Replace porches only if repair and select replacement is not feasible. A full demolition and rebuild is rarely necessary except in cases of severe deterioration and life safety concerns. Replicate the original design as closely as possible, allowing for structural and code requirements. Install flashing and waterproofing at all connections between the porch and main building.

3.7.8 If in-kind replacement is not feasible, replace with appropriate alternate materials that respect the original appearance and are durable. Composite wood decking is an appropriate alternate for tongue-and-groove wood floors if boards are similar to the original dimensions. Ceramic, tile, carpet, or cementitious coatings over wood are not appropriate floor materials. Steel, iron, and aluminum railings are acceptable replacements. Vinyl railings and trim are not appropriate alternate materials for wood elements. Use of dimensional lumber for visible parts of a porch is not appropriate.

Observations & Comments:

Building Standards has inspected the property and determined that two porch columns are rotted and require replacement. The owner has provided staff with specs on matching columns in fiberglass (PermaCast) and wood. The owner noted that the wood columns are hollow, though loadbearing, and that he prefers the fiberglass columns. The proposed columns have a tapered shaft and matching components. While a material change, they would replicate the appearance of the historic. Staff finds that the columns do not comply with Guideline 3.7.4 because of the material change, but do comply with Guideline 3.7.8. Despite the material change, staff finds the proposed alternative to be compatible and acceptable.

The application also proposes to legalize an infilled second-story window along the Page Street façade, though no details have been provided. Staff considers the Page Street elevation to be a contributing secondary façade and should comply with the guidelines, which recommend against infilling openings. The owner has noted in conversation with the staff that a shower exists behind the window, and that it cannot be reopened. In conversation, the owner has suggested infilling the window with brick veneer. Because infilling the window with brick would not comply with Guidelines 3.5.10 or 3.5.11, staff suggests that a fixed double-hung sash window with opaque glass (e.g., spandrel glass) be considered to better maintain the appearance of the window and ratio of openings.

Staff Recommendation:

Approval of the replacement of the wood porch columns with fiberglass columns, pursuant to Chapter 3, Section 3.7 Porches & Steps, but denial of the infilling of the window with brick veneer, pursuant to Chapter 3, Section 3.5 Windows.

HARB Discussion:

The HARB discussed and agreed that the materials and appearance of the proposed fiberglass columns were appropriate. Ms. Keller then suggested spandrel glass be used to replace the glazing of the second story rear window so the window unit would not have to be replaced. Mr. Huber suggested an alternative option of inserting a wood panel behind the glass and painting it a dark gray color to give a background to the glass.

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Action:

Mr. Lichtenwalner moved to approve with conditions the application presented on 10/2/2023 to replace wood porch columns with fiberglass columns and to reinstall window sashes at an infilled second-story opening, pursuant to Chapter 3, Section 3.5 Windows and Section 3.7 Porches & Steps, provided that the reinstalled window sashes have either spandrel glass or a painted panel behind the window. Mr. Huber seconded the motion, which carried with unanimous support.