

9. COA-076904-2020

PUBLIC HEARING DATE

August 25, 2020

PROPERTY ADDRESS

2004 West Grace Street

DISTRICT

West Grace Street

APPLICANT

C. & S. Grandpre

STAFF CONTACT

C. Jeffries

Commission of Architectural Review

STAFF REPORT

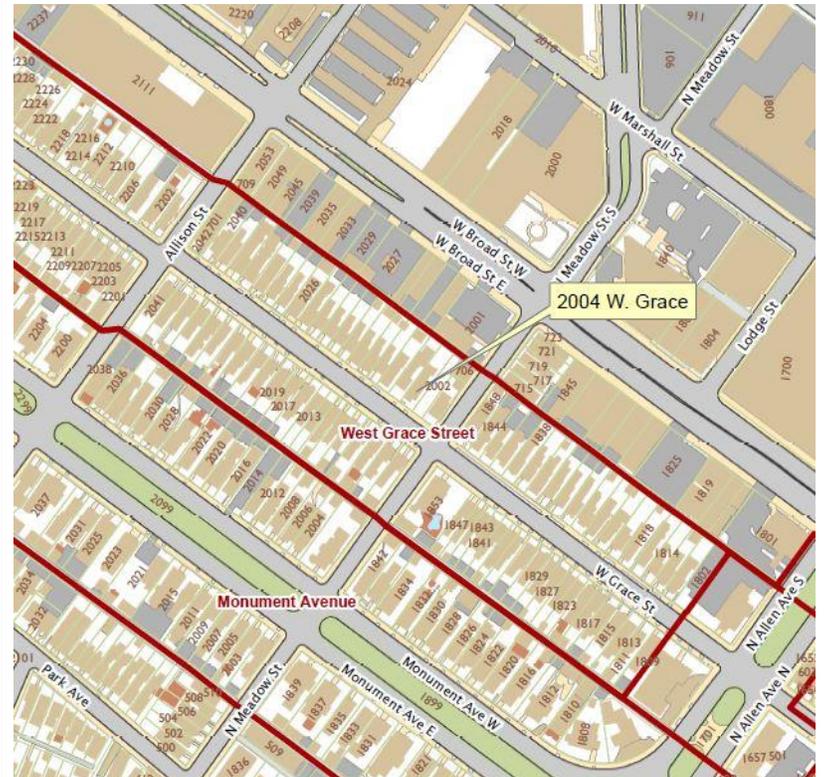


PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Install iron fence in a side yard; replace front porch handrails and install a metal gate on porch landing.

PROJECT DETAILS

- The applicant proposes to install a fence and gate at a single family home in the West Grace Street City Old and Historic District. The existing home is a 3-story brick Colonial Revival building built ca. 1906.
- The applicant proposes to replace an existing chain-link fence in the side yard with a black iron gate with decorative panels.
- The applicant is also proposing alterations at the front porch, including replacing metal handrails and installing a gate across the entrance to the porch.



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STAFF RECOMMENDATION

PARTIAL APPROVAL WITH CONDITIONS

PREVIOUS REVIEWS

The Commission approved alterations to the side porch at the July 2020 meeting. Staff also recently approved the installation of a gate in an existing rear privacy fence on the property, and the replacement of a door that accesses the side porch.

STAFF RECOMMENDED CONDITIONS

- The new fence be of a simple design that does not mimic the existing gates, and revised drawings be submitted to staff for administrative approval.
- Staff recommends **denial** of the proposed gate across the front porch as it is not consistent with the historic design or district.

STAFF ANALYSIS

Standards for Site Improvements, Fences and Walls #8, pg. 78	<i>Chain-link fences, split-rail fences and concrete block walls are not appropriate in any City Old and Historic District.</i>	As the guidelines state chain-link fences are not appropriate in City Old and Historic Districts, staff is supportive of the removal of the existing fence.
Standards for Site Improvements, Fences and Walls #7, pg. 78	<i>Fences in Old and Historic Districts located along main thoroughfares shall be painted or opaquely stained a color or colors complementary to the main structure.</i>	The applicant is proposing to install a black iron fence in the side yard. Staff finds this material is appropriate for the home and district.
Standards for Site Improvements, Fences and Walls #5, pg. 78	<i>When considering the design of new fences, remember that some districts, such as Church Hill North and Union Hill, historically featured modest wooden picket fences, while some districts, such as Monument Avenue and West Grace Street, more rarely had fences, and when they did occur, were rarely wooden picket fences. In the event of a conjectural fence, the design should seek simplicity, rather than elaboration.</i>	<p>The existing fence is not a historic design and the applicant has proposed a new design, mimicking metal gates that are currently on the property.</p> <p>Though the history of the existing gates is unknown, staff finds that mimicking an existing design would add a feature that suggests an inaccurate sequence of construction that would confuse the understanding of the evolution of the property and the historic use of front-yard fences on West Grace Street.</p>
Standards for Rehabilitation #10, pg. 59	<i>While it is acceptable to use salvaged materials as in-kind replacement, adding features or salvaged architectural elements that suggest an inaccurate or undocumented sequence of construction should be avoided because this confuses our understanding of the evolution of Richmond's historic built environment.</i>	<p>Though there are other fences on this block, historic front-yard fences are not common in the West Grace Street City Old and Historic District. To differentiate the new fence from historic construction and accurately reflect the evolution of the built environment, <u>staff recommends the new fence be of a simple design that does not mimic the existing gates, and revised drawings be submitted to staff for administrative approval.</u></p>
Porches, Entrances and Doors #4, pg. 71	<i>Do not remove or radically change entrances and porches important in defining the building's overall historic character.</i>	The applicant proposes to install a metal gate across the entrance to the front porch of the home. Staff finds that this alteration would radically change the main entrance to the home in a manner that is not consistent with the historic design or the district in general.
Porches, Entrances and Doors #11, pg. 71	<i>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.</i>	A gate across the entrance to a porch is not a feature found in the West Grace Street City Old and Historic District and <u>staff recommends denial of the proposed gate.</u>
Guidelines for Administrative Approval of Handrails and Porch Railings	<i>Staff may approve up to two metal handrails for any type or location of porch, deck, or stoop as long as the railings are a simple wrought iron design and installed in such a way as to have a minimum impact on historic materials.</i>	Staff finds that the handrails meet the administrative guidelines for new handrails and notes that they have already been installed.

It is the assessment of staff that, with the conditions above, the application is partially 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. Existing fence in the side yard of the property, currently covered with vines.



Figure 2. Existing side gate to the rear yard.



Figure 3. Front porch of 2004 West Grace Street.



Figure 4. New handrails at front porch.