

**COMMISSION OF ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW
STAFF REPORT
May 27, 2014 Meeting**

7. **CAR No. 14-38** (J. Wight)

**2306 E. Grace Street
St. John's Church Old and Historic District**

Project Description:

Replace front steps

Staff Contact:

W. Palmquist

The applicant requests approval to replace the first flight of steps leading from the sidewalk to this property in the St. John's Church Old and Historic District. While this home, known as the Anne Carrington House, was built in 1810, the steps and sidewall date to the 1950's. At this time, a front facing brick wall was added, the front was re-graded upwards from the sidewalk, and a set of two flights of steps were installed. The first step from the sidewalk is solid stone, while the ensuing steps are brick.

The applicant explains that due to freeze-thaw action over time, the front steps and sidewalls require repair to preserve safety and structural integrity. The applicant requests approval to replace the first flight of steps with stone which would match the first step originally installed in the 1950's. In total, five bricks steps would be replaced with stone steps. The applicant states the reason for this is to match the existing first step as well as to prevent any future hazards for later owners.

Staff recommends approval of the project. The *Richmond Old and Historic District Handbook and Design Review Guidelines* states that, "Fence, wall, or gate materials should relate to building materials commonly found in the neighborhood," and that, "Fence, wall, and gate designs should reflect the scale of the historic structures they surround" (pg. 49 # 2-3). While brick is a predominant material used on steps and walls throughout this block of Church Hill, stone materials can be found as well, and are also in more widespread use in other areas of the neighborhood. Stone is often found in the form of granite curbing as well as granite steps leading to buildings' primary entrances. Therefore the use of this material for replacement steps would relate well to the property, the street, and the neighborhood as a whole.

It is the assessment of staff that the application is consistent with the Standards for Rehabilitation outlined in Section 114-930.7(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.