

**COMMISSION OF ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW
STAFF REPORT
May 24, 2016, Meeting**

22. **CAR No. 16-063** (P. Vaughn)

**1800 West Grace Street
Monument Avenue Old and Historic District**

Project Description:

**Install wrought iron railing on
roof of a single story addition.**

Staff Contact:

M. Pitts

The applicant requests approval to install a safety railing on the roof of a single story addition to a commercial structure in the West Grace Street Old and Historic District. The existing building is 2 ½ story Colonial Revival structure, and the subject addition is located on the rear and side of the structure adjacent to Allen Avenue. This application came before the Commission on April 26, 2016, and the Commission deferred the application to give the applicant the opportunity to clarify details on the proposed plans.

The proposed railing will be 42" in height with ¾" by ¾" pickets spaced 4" on center, a top and bottom rail, and an upper handrail. The railing will be attached to the brick wall and will be installed to align with the wall plan below. In addition to the proposed metal railing, the applicant has submitted a wooden railing and a vinyl railing as alternate designs for review. These proposed railings appear to be same in design with 1.5" by 1.5" turned pickets.

Staff recommends partial approval of the project as submitted. The *Richmond Old and Historic Districts Handbook and Design Review Guidelines* note that "when rooftop railings are required for seating areas or for safe access to mechanical equipment, the railings should be as unobtrusive as possible, in order to minimize their appearance and visual impact on the surrounding district" (pg. 45, Materials & Colors #45). The proposed metal railing is simple in design, and because of this, its visual impact on the District will be minimal. Though there is ghosting of a more detailed newel post and finial on the adjacent wall, staff has no photographic evidence of the previous balustrade. There are two balustrades on the front of the building. The piers on the 3rd floor balustrade and the piers that engage the building on the 2nd floor balustrade do not appear to match the ghosting at the rear of the structure. As staff does not know the design of the rear balustrade, staff supports the installation of the simple metal railing which will be visually unobtrusive instead installing a more detailed balustrade without knowledge of the original balustrade's design and recommends denial of the proposed vinyl and wooden turned balustrade.

It is the assessment of staff that the application is partially consistent with the Standards for Rehabilitation outlined in Section 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.