

**COMMISSION OF ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW
STAFF REPORT
August 25, 2015 Meeting**

14. **CAR No. 15-108** (R. Baratta & J. Rautio) **2302 E. Grace Street
St. John's Church Old and Historic District**

Project Description: **Temporary removal of portico for
rehabilitation work and replacement
of front step treads and risers, and
portico decking with Ipe**

Staff Contact: **K. Chen**

The applicant seeks approval for the temporary removal of the portico for rehabilitation work and replacement of the front step treads and risers and portico decking with Ipe in the St. John's Church Old and Historic District. In 1957, when the Historic Richmond Foundation initiated the Pilot Block project, the Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities, now Preservation Virginia, had already begun the restoration of 2302 and 2306 E. Grace Street. At that time a large gable dormer and iron porch were removed from the façade of 2302 and Mary Wingfield Scott designed a Federal-style portico to take its place. The late-1950's Mary Wingfield Scott portico was altered sometime after 1969. These changes include the replacement of the newel posts, railing, balustrade design, and the paired front columns. The tympanum is constructed of plywood. The engaged columns at the façade appear to date from the installation of the Scott design.

The applicant proposes to temporarily remove the portico so that the deteriorated brick piers can receive proper footings and be reconstructed. The newel posts, treads, risers and porch decking are deteriorated and need to be replaced. The treads, risers and decking will be replaced with Ipe. There is brick work that needs to be repaired on the façade around the existing portico. The applicant has been in consultation with Preservation Virginia, who holds an easement on the property, and with the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, who is reviewing the work as a Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credit project.

The proposed work meets the Standards for Rehabilitation contained on page 55 of the *Richmond Old and Historic Districts Handbook and Design Review Guidelines* which emphasize the retention and repair of historic materials and in-kind replacement. The porch elements that are proposed for replacement, namely the treads, risers, decking, and tympanum do not appear to be historic. Care should be taken to protect the columns, especially the engaged columns at the façade.

Staff recommends approval of the project with a condition. The project appears to meet the general standards for rehabilitation outlined on page 55 of the *Richmond Old and Historic District Handbook and Design Review Guidelines*, which recommends the retention and repair of character-defining, historic features of a property. The Commission's approval should be conditioned upon the work being performed in conformance with the Part II Tax Credit application approval and conditions. In addition, the applicant should submit any additional conditions subsequently imposed by DHR or the National Park Service to CAR staff for administrative review and approval.

It is the assessment of staff that, with the condition above, 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 pages cited above, adopted by the Commission for review of Certificates of Appropriateness under the same section of the code.