



## Commission of Architectural Review

11. COA-179904-2026	Final Review <span style="float: right;">Meeting Date: 2/24/2026</span>
Applicant/Petitioner	Matson Roberts
Project Description	Revise previously approved plans to include the construction of a new freestanding fireplace in the side yard
Project Location	
Address: 2315 Monument Avenue	
Historic District: Monument Avenue	
<p><b>High-Level Details:</b></p> <p>The applicant requests approval to construct a side yard, outdoor fireplace.</p> <p>The fireplace will be approximately 10 feet tall x 7.5 feet wide, rectangular in form and be clad in stucco to match the main building and previously approved addition.</p> <p>The fireplace is mostly obscured by an existing wall, and a proposed wall, gate, and lattice.</p> <p>The work has started but has not been completed.</p>	
Staff Recommendation	Approval, with Conditions
Staff Contact	Alex Dandridge, Alex.Dandridge@RVA.gov, (804)646-6569
Previous Reviews	The Commission reviewed and approved a new addition and other alterations to the building in 2023.
Staff Recommendations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the applicant further reduce its visibility by lowering the height of the fireplace 2-3 courses of CMU block (approximately 16-24 inches).</li> </ul>

# Staff Analysis

Guideline Reference	Reference Text	Analysis
<p>Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation, pg. 4</p>	<p>2. The historic character of a property shall be retained and preserved. The removal of historic materials or alteration of features and spaces that characterize a property shall be avoided.</p> <p>9. New additions, exterior alterations or related new construction shall not destroy historic materials that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible with the massing, size, scale and architectural features to protect the historic integrity of the property and its environment.</p> <p>10. New construction shall be undertaken in such a manner that if removed in the future the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.</p>	<p>While the <i>Guidelines</i> do not specifically address the construction of outdoor fireplaces, there is guidance for new residential construction and associated accessory buildings and structures.</p> <p>Staff first reviewed the construction of the outdoor fireplace against the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation.</p> <p>While outdoor fireplaces are not common features in the Monument Avenue City Old and historic district, the construction of the fireplace is completely detached from historic building.</p> <p>If the fireplace was removed, there would not be a negative impact on the historic building or the character of the site.</p> <p>It will be clad in same material as the historic building, but will have a simple, contemporary design with minimal detailing. Staff finds that its materiality helps with its overall compatibility with the site, while its minimal detailing and contemporary design will set it apart as a modern feature.</p> <p>The fireplace will project a few feet above the existing masonry wall on the west side of the property, as well as the proposed wall, gate, and lattice at the front of the property. Staff believes that the fireplace, while mostly obscured by the existing &amp; proposed wall, will be minimally visible from the public right-of-way along Monument Avenue.</p> <p>Because this feature is not original to the site and is not common in the Monument Avenue City Old and Historic District, <u>staff recommends that the applicant further reduce its visibility by lowering the height of the fireplace 2-3 courses of CMU block (approximately 16-24 inches).</u></p> <p>The applicant has provided a future landscaping plan which indicates that two Sweet Bay Magnolias will be planted on either side of the new wall and gate. These trees reach a mature height of approximately 20-30 ft and will help further obscure the fireplace.</p>
<p>New Construction, Residential Outbuildings, pg. 51</p>	<p><i>1. Outbuildings, including garages, sheds, gazebos and other auxiliary structures, should be compatible with the design of the primary building on the site, including roof slope and materials selection.</i></p>	<p>The new fireplace will be clad in stucco, which is a compatible material to the new historic building on site.</p>

*It is the assessment of staff that, with the conditions above, the application is 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. View of fireplace from sidewalk along Monument Avenue, 2315 Monument Avenue, February 2025.



Figure 2. Fireplace in the context of site. Fireplace detached from historic building. This view is from within the property and not visible from the public right-of-way. 2315 Monument Avenue, February 2025.



Figure 3. View of fireplace from sidewalk along Monument Avenue. Construction of new front yard wall and lattice will obscure the lower half of the fireplace. Wall is not yet completed. 2315 Monument Avenue, February 2025.