

**COMMISSION OF ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW
STAFF REPORT
March 28, 2017, Meeting**

13. **CAR No. 17-045** (E. Fendley)

**517 North 29th Street
Church Hill North Old and Historic District**

Project Description: **Install new fence in front and along side,
regrade front yard.**

Staff Contact: **M. Pitts**

The applicant requests approval to alter the front walkway and install fences at a property in the Church Hill North Old and Historic District. The applicant proposes to remove the existing brick walkway to the front stairs, regrade the area, and install a new brick walkway to match the existing walkway. The regrading would necessitate the installation of two new stairs and a new handrail to match the existing. Additionally, the applicant proposes to install a black metal fence around the front yard. The 4 foot tall fence will be installed on top of the existing 22" concrete curb that is at the front property line. The metal fence will extend along the sides of the property and a wooden privacy fence will be installed at the rear of the structure.

Staff recommends partial approval of the project with conditions. The *Richmond Old and Historic Districts Handbook and Design Review Guidelines* state that brick and granite are the most appropriate materials for sidewalks and curbs in the Old and Historic Districts (pg. 72, #4). Staff recommends approval of the regrading of the front yard and the installation of the new walkway constructed of brick. Staff recommends approval of the new stairs and railing as they will match the existing.

Staff cannot recommend approval of the proposed front yard metal fence as the fence does not meet the Commission's guidelines for front yard fences (pg. 74). The *Guidelines* note that if not original to the site, new street-front fences, walls and gates are not recommended, except in cases where new infill construction occurs adjacent to an historic property with a fence, wall or gate (pg. 74, #3). While staff has found photographic documentation of a shorter front yard metal fence behind the concrete curb in 2015 and 2016, this fence is not present in older photographs of the property. For this reason, staff does not believe the fence was original to the site.



Google Street View July 2015



Historic Richmond Foundation 1977 Survey

There are no existing front yard metal fences nor any front yard fences of the proposed 5'-10" total height in any material on the subject block. As a front yard metal fence was not original to the site nor is a characteristic of the subject block, staff recommends denial of the proposed fence. Staff recommends details of the proposed rear privacy fence be submitted for administrative review and approval as these details were not provided with this application.

It is the assessment of staff that the application, with the acceptance of the noted conditions, is partially consistent with the Standards for Site Improvements outlined in Sections 30-930.7(e) 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.