

**COMMISSION OF ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW  
STAFF REPORT  
October 28, 2014 Meeting**

13. **CAR No. 14-123** (A. Grier)

**3317 Monument Avenue  
Monument Avenue Old and Historic District**

**Project Description:**      **Demolish rear porches and construct new addition,  
enclose side porch and install new rear entrance**

**Staff Contact:**

**J. Hill**

The applicant requests approval to make changes to this residential building located in the Monument Avenue Old and Historic District. The structure, a two-and-a-half-story brick house with a slate roof, was constructed in 1922. Work proposed involves enclosing a side porch, enlarging an existing window opening at the rear of the dining room in order to install a new exterior doorway, removing the porches on the rear elevation and constructing a new rear addition, and installing an elevator that requires changes to a portion of the roof and two windows visible from the public right-of-way. The work also includes a new covered stoop with stairs and railings at the new doorway and an ornamental aluminum fence around the parking area off the alley at the rear of the property.

**Staff recommends approval of the project as proposed.** The *Richmond Old and Historic Districts Handbook and Design Review Guidelines* allows for porch enclosures on secondary elevations, and offers the following recommendations for treatment:

*Solid materials are not recommended for use in enclosure projects since they can radically alter the historic appearance of a porch. Glass enclosures which reveal decorative porch elements are strongly preferred. (Pg. 61, #11)*

The applicant proposes enclosing the porch on the side (east) elevation of this property by installing aluminum-clad double-hung windows above a wood knee-wall with raised panels. The plane of the infill material is inset to engage only the back corner of the columns so that the character-defining features of the porch are preserved.

Page 51 of the *Guidelines* cautions against removing or altering windows roofs and porches and page 47 advises that original masonry openings for doors and windows should be maintained. The changes to the dining room window and second-story porch door are modest modifications on the rear elevation of the house that work with the dimensions of the existing openings in accommodating a door where the window currently is and a window where the door is now located. The windows where the elevator shaft will be located will remain in place

with no change discernible from the public right-of-way. The roof addition that houses the elevator will be visible from the public right-of-way, but is on a secondary elevation, subordinate to the volume of the existing roof over the rear wing, and constructed of materials that differentiate it from the original construction.

The proposed rear addition requires the removal of the two-bay, two-story covered porches. The porches are handsome and of straightforward construction. The application includes a discussion of the consideration given to retaining a portion of the porches while accommodating the new addition, as well as the reasons for deciding against retaining the upper porch. The Standards for New Construction (pages 44-45) in the *Guidelines* cover the construction of additions. In keeping with these standards, the proposed addition is subordinate in size to the main structure and located at the rear of the historic structure. The addition's building form takes its cues from the architectural style of the main structure and is compatible with additions and porches found within the district. The materials selected are compatible with original materials used throughout the surrounding neighborhood but are handled in a way that distinguishes the new construction from the historic portion of the house.

The application notes that the existing color scheme will be continued in the newly constructed portions. The proposed fence appears to be appropriate for use at the rear of the property (pages 49, 68).

It is the assessment of staff that the application is consistent with Richmond City Code Section 114-930.7 (b) Standards for Rehabilitation and (c) Standards for New Construction, 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.