

**COMMISSION OF ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW  
STAFF REPORT  
June 27, 2017 Meeting**

17. COA-018775-2017 (E. Marshall)

**2701 West Grace Street  
West Grace Street Old and Historic District**

**Project Description:**

**Reconstruct front porch with  
matching composite material.**

**Staff Contact:**

**M. Pitts**

The applicant requests approval to replace the existing front porch on a Colonial Revival brick row-house in the West Grace Street Old and Historic District. The existing porch includes a portico with fluted Doric columns, a bracketed cornice with dentil molding, and a roof railing with square pedestals and a turned balustrade. The first floor of the porch also includes a turned balustrade and square pedestals. The applicant is proposing to demolish the existing porch structure and reconstruct the structure using composite materials. The proposed columns are 12" round, fluted, fiberglass columns which will match the existing in design. The applicant is proposing a PVC railing system.

**Staff recommends approval of the project with conditions.** The *Richmond Old and Historic Districts Handbook and Design Review Guidelines* note that an entire porch should only be replaced if it is too deteriorated to repair or is completely missing and that the replacement should match the original as much as possible (pg. 67, #5). The existing porch columns, pedestals, and balustrade are deteriorated and missing elements. The applicant has taken great care to ensure the proposed reconstruction matches the original in design. The proposed plans are consistent with the existing design with the exception that proposal does not include the existing dentil molding. Staff recommends the proposed reconstruction include the dentil molding to match the existing. The *Guidelines* state that when replacing elements, materials that match the original in type, or are physically and chemically compatible substitute materials that convey the same appearance as the surviving elements, should be used (pg. 55, #7). Staff finds the proposed composite materials convey the appearance of the historic materials. As the specifications provided for the proposed railing system do not include details of a turned baluster, staff recommends the balusters be the turned balusters as shown on the plans in design and spacing.

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