

**COMMISSION OF ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW
STAFF REPORT
July 25, 2017, Meeting**

13. **COA-019847-2017** (D. McKittrick) **2515 East Grace Street
St. John's Church Old and Historic District**

Project Description: **Install new picket fence in front yard.**

Staff Contact: **C. Jeffries**

The applicant requests approval to install a white wooden picket fence enclosing the front yard of this structure in the St. John's Church Old and Historic District. This application is the result of enforcement activity as the fence was installed without prior approval. The applicant states that the fence was installed to protect boxwood bushes that were recently planted and will be removed once the bushes mature, in no longer than 5 years. The bushes were planted to replace other boxwood bushes which were removed.

Staff recommends denial of the project. Staff cannot recommend approval of the proposed front yard picket 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 not been able to locate photographic evidence of a front yard fence at the property, there is physical evidence of a fence which was likely metal. The applicant informed staff that he does not wish to install a metal fence as he desires to remove the fence once the bushes are large enough.

There are several examples of front yard fences located on the subject block, both metal and wooden pickets. If the Commission wishes to approve the fence for temporary installation staff recommends that the fence design be modified to match the other picket fences on the block and that a time limit be set for removal of the fence.

It is the assessment of staff that the application is not 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.