

**COMMISSION OF ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW  
STAFF REPORT  
February 24, 2015 Meeting**

11. **CAR No. 15-014** (T. Softic & G. Shapiro) **2322 West Grace Street  
West Grace Street Old and Historic District**

**Project Description:** **Build new garage**

**Staff Contact:** **J. Hill**

The applicant requests approval to construct a one-story brick garage where an earlier brick garage previously stood at the rear of this residential property in the West Grace Street Old and Historic District. The applicant has based the design of the garage on historic garages of similar proportion and scale found elsewhere in this Old and Historic District. The footprint of the new garage will be expanded some five or six feet to the east property line. The garage features brick parapet walls with metal coping, a roll-up garage door (aluminum frame with insulated translucent glass set in a HardiPanel surround, and an inset entry and supercan storage area with walls clad in painted HardiPanel.

**Staff recommend approval of the project.** The plans for construction of the garage appear overall to be consistent with the *Richmond Old and Historic Districts Handbook and Design Review Guidelines* for residential outbuildings (page 48). The design features that are compatible with the design of the main house include the use of red brick for the walls and the shed roof form. Brick is the common material for garage construction in the district often mirroring the use of red brick for construction of the rear portions of the residences even when the Grace Street elevations are constructed of lighter brick. The building is smaller than the main residence and is located to the rear of the property, emphasizing its character as a secondary structure. The proposed garage appears to respect the siting, massing, and roof profile of existing outbuildings in the neighborhood. In staff's opinion the work proposed is compatible with the existing structure with sufficient differentiation in materials so as not to be mistaken for original or historic fabric.

The remains of the earlier garage indicate the location, dimension and materials of the earlier building. Staff agrees that the remnants have not survived in a condition that would allow them to serve as a foundation for new construction. Staff does not find an objection to the wider footprint of the new garage. A combination of brick wall and garage construction across the entire parcel at the alley is not foreign to the West Grace Street and Monument Avenue Old and Historic Districts. Staff notes that the exterior colors selected appear to be appropriate for use in this application.

The use of translucent insulated glass in the overhead garage door is unusual. There are a wide variety of garage door types found in this and the nearby Old and Historic Districts. As near as staff can discern, the glass would have a lustrous matte appearance during the day and would softly glow when occupied after nightfall. Because this is the first known instance to staff of this material

being proposed for a garage door, the Commission may wish to discuss this with the applicant at the meeting. Staff recommend that the design of the garage itself is sufficiently compatible with the district to be approved, even if there are issues or conditions to be worked out concerning the materials or configuration of the overhead door.

It is therefore the assessment of staff that with the acceptance of the offered conditions (if any) the project is consistent with Richmond City Code Section 114-930.7 (a) *General standards*, and (c) *Standards for new construction*, and the *Richmond Old and Historic Districts Handbook and Design Review Guidelines*, specifically the pages cited above, adopted by the Commission in accordance with Section 114-930.7 (g) of the Code.