

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

14. **CAR No. 17-047** (T. Schaaf)

**1208 West Franklin Street  
Monument Avenue Old and Historic District**

**Project Description:** **Reconstruct front porch, roof balustrade and fence, replace front second story doors.**

**Staff Contact:** **C. Jeffries**

The applicant requests approval for several items to rehabilitate the exterior of a Colonial Revival two-family residence in the Monument Avenue Old and Historic District. This application is a result of enforcement activity.

The applicant is proposing to complete the following work:

- Install new single lite doors and a transom in the existing second story door opening.
- Install new balustrade on the existing second story front porch. The proposed balustrade is beige, framed with pressure treated wood and clad in PVC or resin with wooden pickets and post finials.
- Install new roof balustrade, designed to match the new porch balustrade.
- Paint all trim to match the original beige color, based on physical evidence.
- Install metal fence in front yard using existing fencing and new aluminum fencing and gates to match, painted black.

**Staff recommends partial approval of the project with conditions.**

The *Richmond Old and Historic Districts Handbook and Design Review Guidelines* state that entrances important in defining the building's overall historic character should not be removed or radically changed (pg. 69, #4). The applicant removed non-contributing doors from the second story entrance due to deterioration and poor design. The applicant states that the doorframe had been modified to fit the doors and as a result they were structurally unsound. Based on photographic evidence, the doors may have been installed sometime between 2007 and 2009. However, the original transom light may have been unaltered before it was recently replaced. Single lite doors with a solid transom were installed without prior approval. The applicant states that solid panes were chosen to match the existing windows on the front façade, which do not have muntins. Photographs of the house taken for a survey in approximately 1969 or 1970 show double doors and a transom that appear to match the original house plans submitted by the applicant. The new replacement doors do not match the original design in style, material, or proportions. True or simulated divided lite wood or aluminum clad wood doors with fifteen lites and an eight lite transom

would be more appropriate. Staff recommends that the replacement doors match the design shown in the survey documentation, the design to be submitted to staff for administrative review and approval.



1208 W. Franklin Street, 1969 or 1970



1208 W. Franklin Street, February 2016 (Source: Google street view)



1208 W. Franklin Street, February 2017

The *Richmond Old and Historic Districts Handbook and Design Review Guidelines* state that documentation should be used when reconstructing missing elements, including pictorial, historical or physical documentation (pg. 57, #7). The applicant is proposing to replace several missing elements and has produced documentation to support the replacements. The applicant states that the proposed porch balustrade design was altered to meet code requirements, using examples within the district. The *Guidelines* acknowledge that when restoring a railing or balustrade there may be difficulty in maintaining the original height while meeting current building code (pg. 69, #6). The *Guidelines* also note that in rehabilitation projects, materials that match the original in type or physically and chemically compatible substitute materials that convey the same appearance as the surviving elements should be used (pg. 55). The applicant is proposing to use materials that convey the historic appearance of the porch balustrade that are simple in design and similar to other balustrades found in the district. As the proposed balustrade matches the original plans as closely as possible and is similar to examples in the district, staff recommends approval of the proposed porch balustrade.

Documentation also exists for the proposed reconstruction of the roof balustrade. The applicant has supplied the original house plans which show the balustrade design and has stated physical evidence of the balustrade can be found on the roof. The applicant proposes to install a balustrade that matches the new porch balustrade. Staff has found photographic evidence of the missing roof balustrade,

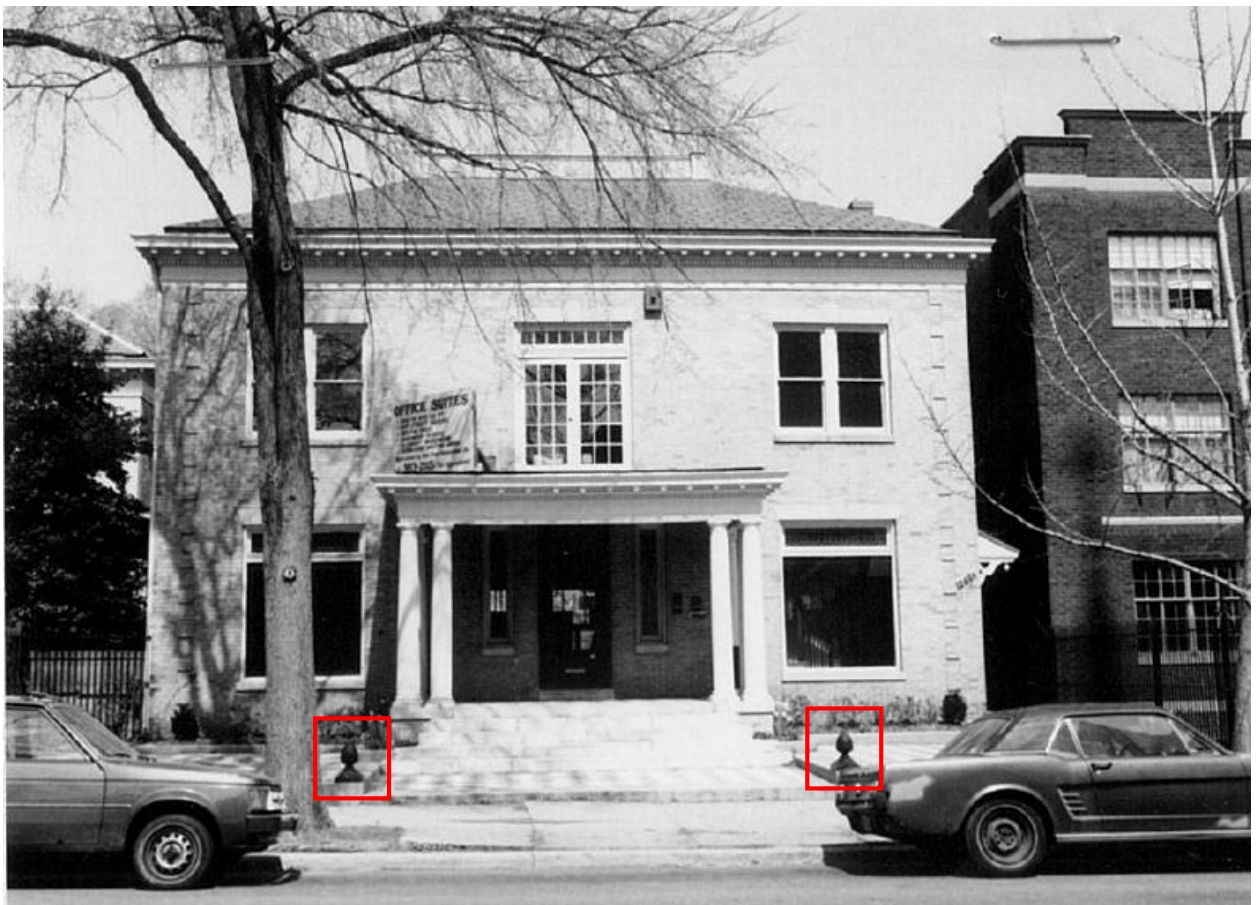
which matches the design shown in the house plans. The *Guidelines* state that documentation should be used to reconstruct missing elements (pg. 57, #7). As sufficient documentation of the missing balustrade exists, staff recommends that the roof balustrade be designed to match the photographic and historical documentation, rather than the new porch balustrade design.



1208 W. Franklin Street, 1969 or 1970, showing the missing roof balustrade

The applicant states that the original color of all trim was discovered through stripping paint layers to reveal the base layer. The applicant proposes to paint all trim the original beige color. As a specific color was not submitted, staff recommends the paint color for the trim be submitted for administrative review and approval.

The applicant also proposes to install a front-yard fence, to match an existing fence next door. Plans for the proposed fence were not submitted however based on the existing fence, the proposed fence may not meet zoning fence height restrictions. The *Guidelines* state that if not original to a site, new street-front fences, walls, and gates are not recommended. The applicant has submitted photographs of metal objects in the concrete which they believe is evidence of a fence. Based on the 1969-1970 photographs, these objects are most likely left from decorative finials which can be seen on both corners of the patio. There is no other evidence of a former fence around the patio. Based on this evidence and the recommendation for front yard fences in the *Guidelines*, staff cannot recommend approval of the proposed fence. If the Commission wishes to approve the fence, staff recommends plans and details of the proposed fence and gate be submitted for administrative review and approval to ensure the design is consistent with the existing fence.



1208 W. Franklin Street, 1969 or 1970

It is the assessment of staff that the application, with the conditions noted above, is partially consistent with the Standards for Rehabilitation outlined 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.