

**COMMISSION OF ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW
STAFF REPORT
March 22, 2015 Meeting**

11. **CAR No. 16-041** (F. Cava)

**2519 West Grace Street
West Grace Street Old & Historic District**

Project Description:

**Construct a two story front porch
and install a new cornice.**

Staff Contact:

M. Pitts

The applicant requests approval to construct a two story front porch and install a cornice on the front façade of a home in the West Grace Street Old and Historic District. When the applicant purchased the property, the cornice and upper portion of the façade had fallen off of the building and destroyed the front porch. The applicant is proposing to install a new cornice to match the historic cornice. The applicant is proposing to install a new two story front porch with a brick foundation, brick piers, and round columns.

Staff recommends partial approval of the project with conditions. The *Richmond Old and Historic Districts Handbook and Design Review Guidelines* state that the replacement of missing features should be substantiated by documentary, physical, or pictorial evidence (pg. 55, #7). The applicant is proposing to replicate the historic cornice which can be seen in photographs of the property from 2014. Staff recommends approval of the reconstruction of the cornice with the condition that it be constructed of wood and painted white to match the historic cornice.

The *Guidelines* note that when replacing a missing porch, replacements should match the original as much as possible and should be based on documentary evidence. Prior to its demolition as a result of the upper story collapse, the porch at the home was a small single story landing with concrete stairs to the sidewalk. Though staff has been unable to find photographic evidence of the original porch on the façade of the structure, ghosting on the façade and the presence of a window which is sized for a door indicate that a two story full length porch was present on the building prior to the small single story landing. On the subject block, there are two other similar homes that have retained their full façade front porches. These homes have columns above square wooden pedestals and turned balustrades. The applicant has not submitted documentation to support the proposed design to include the use of the brick piers and Richmond rail. Additionally, the applicant has not submitted proposed materials, and staff has been unable to determine if the existing concrete stairs will be removed. For these reasons, staff is unable to recommend approval of the proposed 2 story porch at this time. Staff recommends that the applicant revise their application to include more details on materials and documentation to provide justification for their design.

It is the assessment of staff that the application, with the condition above, is partially consistent with the Standards for Rehabilitation and New Construction outlined in Sections 30-930.7(b) and 30-930.7(c) of the City Code, and 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.