

**COMMISSION OF ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW
STAFF REPORT
May 23, 2017, Meeting**

9. **COA-016781-2017** (E. Woodman) **2243 West Grace Street
West Grace Street Old and Historic District**

Project Description: **Replace attic vent with a window.**

Staff Contact: **M. Pitts**

The applicant requests approval to replace a louvered attic vent in a dormer on the front façade of a home in the West Grace Street Old and Historic District. The applicant proposes to replace the round louvered vent with glazing in the existing opening. This change is to accommodate the renovation of the currently unfinished attic to a playroom. The structure has been altered over the years due to fires that have occurred at the property and subsequent rehabilitation projects, though staff has been unable to find photographic evidence of any alterations that have occurred to this front dormer.

Staff recommends denial of the project. *The Richmond Old and Historic District Handbook and Design Review Guidelines* state that original wooden features should be retained (pg. 55, #2), and any restoration should be based on pictorial, historical or physical documentation (pg. 55, #7). Though round attic vents in façade dormers are not characteristic of homes of a similar style in District, staff has not found physical or photographic evidence that this opening was previously a window. As the louvered opening does not appear to be a modern addition, staff cannot recommend approval of the change in materials to this opening. Staff recommends the applicant install glazing behind the louvered opening which would not require Commission approval.

It is the assessment of staff that the application is not 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 page cited above, adopted by the Commission for review of Certificates of Appropriateness under the same section of the code.