

**COMMISSION OF ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW
STAFF REPORT
October 25, 2016 Meeting**

1. **CAR No. 16-147** (P. King)

**2712 Monument Avenue
Monument Avenue Old and Historic District**

Project Description: **Replace existing brick wall on front patio
with metal railing.**

Staff Contact: **M. Pitts**

The applicant requests approval to remove an existing brick wall on the front landing and install a new metal railing on a home in the Monument Avenue Old and Historic District. The existing wall is minimally visible due to the existing vegetation and is constructed of brick in a running bond pattern with a brick cap. The wall is 2'-3 ½" in height. The applicant proposed to replace the wall with a simple black metal railing with pickets. The applicant prefers to install the railing at a height of 2'-3 ½" and has also presented an alternative height of 3' to meet code requirements. The applicant has stated that the wall is failing and resulting in drainage issues.

Staff recommends approval of the project. The *Richmond Old and Historic Districts Handbook and Design Review Guidelines* state entrances and porches should not be stripped of historic material and details (pg. 67, #8). The applicant has provided the original façade elevation of the home which does not include a railing or brick wall on the front landing. As this indicates that the brick wall was likely not original to the home, staff finds the removal of the wall is appropriate as the wall is not an historic feature. Staff recommend approval of the simple metal railing as the material is compatible with metal railings in the District including the railings on the stairs of the subject home. As the Guidelines acknowledge that that it may be difficult to maintain the original height of railings while meeting current building code (pg. 67, #6), staff recommends approval of the railing at either proposed height.

It is the assessment of staff that the application is consistent with the Standards for Rehabilitation 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.