

**COMMISSION OF ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW  
STAFF REPORT  
September 26, 2017, Meeting**

2. **COA-021091-2017** (The Mount Carmel Baptist Church) **3200 East Broad Street  
Chimborazo Park Old and Historic District**

**Project Description:** **Construct a stoop for new chair lift on rear  
of structure, create new entrance.**

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

The applicant requests approval to construct a stoop and install a chair lift in the rear of this three story brick Gothic Revival church in the Chimborazo Park Old and Historic District. The applicant is proposing to convert an existing window opening into a door to access the four foot high stoop. The stoop will be faced in brick with an iron or metal handrail. Improvements to the concrete sidewalk along the building are also proposed, including a small concrete ramp to the street and an iron or metal railing.

**Staff recommends approval of the project with conditions.** *The Richmond Old and Historic District Handbook and Design Review Guidelines* state accessibility must be provided from a public street, parking lot, or sidewalk (pg. 77). The current proposal provides an accessible entrance to a public sidewalk and street. The church currently does not have an accessible entrance.

The *Guidelines* also state that “lifts are most often used in instances where there is not enough room for a ramp, or in cases where the architectural/historic significance of a building does not warrant the permanent addition of a ramp” (pg. 77). In 2012 an access ramp was approved for the 32<sup>nd</sup> street elevation of the structure. This proposal was a substantial alteration to a prominent entrance and elevation. The proposed stoop, lift and other site improvements will be minimally visible from the public right of way as they will be located in the rear of the structure in a narrow opening between the church and the adjacent building. The proposed alterations will be visible from the sidewalk and street, however they will be a minor alteration to a secondary elevation.

The applicant is proposing to create a new entrance in an existing window opening on the rear elevation. The *Guidelines* state that a new entrance may be made or an existing opening altered when it is not possible to modify an existing entrance (pg. 77). The new entrance will be minimally visible from the public right of way and is preferable to altering an entrance on a primary elevation. Staff recommends that the arch above the window and the sides of the window opening be maintained. Staff also recommends the brick, door and railing colors be submitted to staff for administrative review and approval.

It is the assessment of staff that the application, with the conditions noted above, is 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.