

**COMMISSION OF ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW
STAFF REPORT
June 23, 2015 Meeting**

13. **CAR No. 15-079** (J. Stone)

**104 North Boulevard
Boulevard Old and Historic District**

Project Description:

Replace existing porch railing

Staff Contact:

M. Pitts

The applicant seeks approval to replace the existing porch railing and stair handrails with a new porch railing and handrails to match the visually appearance of the existing railing on the front of a structure within the Boulevard Old and Historic District. The proposed railing will be powder coated white aluminum and 36" in height. The applicant proposes 1" square pickets, 3" square pyramid capped posts, and 3" wide top rails. The stair hand rail will be redesigned to be located within in the existing brick walls to provide a consistent handrail for the length of the steps. The current porch railing is in poor condition and is being supported by two by fours which prevent the structure from collapsing.

Staff recommend approval of the project. The *Richmond Old and Historic Districts Handbook and Design Review Guidelines* states, "when the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature shall match the old in design, color, texture, and other visual qualities and, where possible, materials" (p. 67 #7). The existing porch railing is severely deteriorated as is apparent through the improvised support system. The applicant is proposing to replicate the design of the existing railing. The *Guidelines* also provide for the use of substitute materials in cases of unavailability of skilled craftsmen or where newer growth wood would cause deterioration at a faster rate than first-growth timber (p. 57). Staff finds that the powder coated aluminum construction of the railings would be a successful substitute for wood, especially given the fact that there is no porch roof over the railing, and it would therefore be more susceptible to deterioration by the elements.

It is the assessment of staff that the application is consistent with the Standards for Rehabilitation outlined in Section 114-930.7(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.