

**COMMISSION OF ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW  
STAFF REPORT  
September 25, 2018 Meeting**

3. **COA-041211-2018** (D. Woods) **2023 West Grace Street  
West Grace Street Old and Historic District**

**Project Description:** **Replace existing two-story deck structure  
with a new two-story deck structure.**

**Staff Contact:** **C. Jones**

The existing structure is a 2 ½-story brick Colonial Revival home. At the rear of the home is a 2<sup>nd</sup> story porch constructed of pressure treated wood. This application is the result of enforcement activity as a previously installed two-story deck was demolished and new two-story deck installed without prior approval.

The applicant has not provided dimensions of the new structure. It spans two of the three rear bays and extends a noticeable distance past the building face. A simple wooden stair provides access to the first floor deck and two-story stairway provides access to the second story deck. The deck is constructed of treated wood, currently unstained. The two decks and the stairs have a typical railing with nailed-up pickets. The applicant has indicated that he rebuilt the deck to match the original deck, staff believes it might not meet the Zoning Ordinance and encouraged the applicant to work with the zoning department staff.

**Relevant Guidelines:**

Pg. 46, Form, #1	1. New construction should use a building form compatible with that found elsewhere in the historic district.
Pg. 51, Decks #s 2-4	2. Decks should be painted or stained a neutral color that complements one or more of the colors found on the main structure. 3. Deck design may include vertical picket balustrades or contemporary railing that is in scale with the house and the deck. 4. Deck sub-decking should be screened with wood lattice work or with brick piers.

**Staff recommends approval of the project with conditions.**

**Removal of the Existing Porch:** The *Guidelines* note that demolition of historic elements is discouraged though it can be permitted when the element is deemed to not be a contributing part of the historic character of the District (pg. 82). A rear porch does not appear on the Sanborn maps for the property dating from the 1950s. Staff does not find that the prior porch was a character defining, contributing feature to the historic structure and recommends approval of the demolition of this element.

**Installation of a New 2-Story Deck:** The *Guidelines* state that new construction should use a building form compatible with that found elsewhere in the historic district (pg. 46, Form #1). The two-story rear porch structure is a form found in the

district. The location of the proposed structure is consistent with the Commission's *Guidelines* for decks (pg. 51) as it is in the rear and smaller in scale than the historic residence. Staff recommends approval of the rear two-story deck noting that the design for the deck may be adjusted to accommodate zoning setback requirements.

Staff finds that the railing for the deck does not meet the *Guidelines*. Staff further finds that unpainted/untreated material does not meet the *Guidelines*.

Staff recommends approval of the two-story deck (noting the design may change to meet zoning setback requirements) with the following conditions: the applicant submit for administrative approval a railing design that meets the *Guidelines*, for example Richmond rail, and a paint or opaque stain in a neutral color that complements one or more of the colors found on the main structure.

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