



**Staff Report**  
**City of Richmond, Virginia**



**Commission of Architectural Review**

6.COA-161195-2025	Final Review	Meeting Date: 2/25/2025
Applicant/Petitioner	Lewis Little	
Project Description	Rebuild a deteriorated, rear, multi-story deck with a new, larger, multi-story deck.	
Project Location		
Address: 806 North Arthur Ashe Boulevard		
Historic District: Boulevard		
<p><b>High-Level Details:</b></p> <p>The applicant is rehabilitating a brick, Colonial Revival apartment building circa 1920.</p> <p>The applicant proposes to remove a rear, three-story, wooden deck, replacing it with a new, larger three-story deck.</p> <p>The deck is located at the rear of the building and is more utilitarian than ornate.</p> <p>The wooden components of the existing deck do not appear to be original; however, the brick piers supports do. The porch is likely still within in its original footprint.</p>		
Staff Recommendation		
Staff Contact	Alex Dandridge, alex.dandridge@rva.gov, (804) 646-6569	
Previous Reviews	None.	
Conditions for Approval	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The new porch have either a wooden Richmond Rail design, or another Commission approved material that better resembles wood than the proposed black, powder coated aluminum.</li> <li>• The new porch have similar detailing and molding on the roof as the existing.</li> <li>• The original brick piers under the porch be retained, even if no longer structural, to reference the original width of the rear porch.</li> <li>• The new porch have a finished appearance with no exposed hardware or nailed-up pickets. Porch to be painted or stained a color that compliments the budling.</li> </ul>	

## Staff Analysis

Guideline Reference	Reference Text	Analysis
<p><b>New Construction, Porches and Porch Details, pg. 49</b></p>	<p>2. <i>When designing a new railing for a new infill building, or for an existing building which has lost its railing and for which no documentary or physical evidence survives, the balusters in the traditional Richmond rail are generally rectangular in section (with the narrow dimension facing the street) or square. The baluster is fitted into the recess in the top rail and a sloped bottom rail. Typical deck railings, consisting of nailed-up stock elements, are not approved as they are not based on a compatible historical model found in Richmond's Old and Historic Districts.</i></p> <p>3. <i>New porch railing designs, compatible with the overall design of the building, will also be considered.</i></p>	<p>The applicant proposes to remove a rear, three-story, wooden porch and replace it with a new, larger three-story wooden porch.</p> <p>The existing rear porch appears to have its original dimensions 11' x 8' substantiated by ghosting on the face of the building, City Assessor records, and the 1925 Sanborn Map; however, most of the wooden elements have been replaced with new, modern wood. The brick piers at the base appear to be the original.</p> <p>The applicant will remove the existing 11' x 8' multi-story porch and replace it with one that is 27'8" x 8', more than doubling its width. Many of the districts historic multi-family buildings have rear porches similar to the size of 806 North Boulevard's extant rear porch. Some exceptions to this would be the rear porches at 2828 Monument Avenue and 101-103 South Arthur Ashe Boulevard which have rear, full-width, multi-story porches.</p> <p>Staff finds that the rear porches are obscured from the public right-of-way and enlarging them would not radically alter the appearance of the building.</p>
<p><b>Building Elements, Porches, Entrances &amp; Doors, Entrance and Porch Removal, Replacement and Reconstruction, pg. 71</b></p>	<p>4. <i>Do not remove or radically change entrances and porches important in defining the building's overall historic character. Front and side porches are architecturally more ornate than utilitarian back porches.</i></p> <p>5. <i>The entire porch should only be replaced if it is too deteriorated to repair or is completely missing; replacements should match the original as much as possible.</i></p> <p>6. <i>When restoring a railing or balustrade there may be difficulty in maintaining the original height while meeting current building code. Always consult with the building department.</i></p> <p>7. <i>When replacing a railing on a historic building which has lost its railing, the first step is to look for documentary evidence which records the appearance of that railing. If no documentary evidence survives, look for physical evidence (this may benefit from the help of a design professional).</i></p> <p>8. <i>Do not strip entrances and porches of historic material and details that should be retained in any repair or partial replacement.</i></p>	<p>While the Guidelines speak against removing or radically changing entrances and porches that are important to defining a building's overall character, the porch in question is a rear, utilitarian porch that is not as ornate as the building's large front portico and balconies.</p> <p>The porch isn't necessarily important to defining the building's character but does speak to its use as an apartment building with small rear balconies on each unit.</p> <p>Furthermore, the porch is located on the rear; floors two and three being minimally visible from the public right-of-way, and the first floor being completely obscured by rear accessory buildings that front the alley.</p> <p>The existing porch features nailed-up wooden pickets, a modern alteration. The new porch is proposed to have a black powder coated aluminum railing.</p> <p>To be in-keeping with other rear, porches in the district, <u>Staff recommends that the new porch have either a wooden Richmond Rail design, or another Commission approved material that better resembles wood than the proposed black, powder coated aluminum.</u></p> <p><u>Staff Recommends that the new porch have similar detailing and molding on the roof as the existing.</u></p> <p><u>Staff recommends that the original brick piers under the porch be retained, even if no longer structurally, to reference the original width of the rear porch.</u></p>

9. Existing entrances or porches should not be removed when an historic structure has been reoriented to accommodate a new use.

Staff recommends that the new porch have a finished appearance with no exposed hardware or nailed-up pickets. Porch to be painted or stained a color that compliments the building.

It is the assessment of staff that, with the conditions above, the application is consistent with the Standards for Rehabilitation and New Construction outlined in Section 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.

## Figures



Figure 1. Rear porch



Figure 2. Rear porch



Figure 3. Façade. Google Streetview, September 2023.