

**COMMISSION OF ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW
STAFF REPORT
July 25, 2017 Meeting**

18. **COA-020210-2017** (E. Marshall) **2701 West Grace Street
West Grace Street Old and Historic District**

Project Description: **Reconstruct front porch columns and
roof with matching composite material.**

Staff Contact: **M. Pitts**

The applicant requests approval to replace the existing front porch on a Colonial Revival brick row-house in the West Grace Street Old and Historic District. The existing porch includes a portico with fluted Doric columns, a bracketed cornice with dentil molding, and a roof railing with square pedestals and a turned balustrade. The first floor of the porch also includes a turned balustrade and square pedestals. The applicant is proposing to demolish the existing porch structure and reconstruct the structure using composite materials. The proposed columns are 12" round, fluted, fiberglass columns which will match the existing in design. The applicant is proposing a PVC railing system.

The applicant came before the Commission on June 25, 2017, to reconstruct the front porch with composite materials. The Commission partially approved the application by approving the replacement of the 1st and 2nd story railings and the column capitals and bases, denying the replacement of the remainder of the porch, and recommending the remaining elements of the portico be retained and repaired. In their denial, the Commission noted that the applicant had not submitted sufficient evidence that the columns and porch roof and cornice were deteriorated beyond the point of repair. With this application, the applicant has submitted additional photographs to show the deterioration of the structure.

Staff recommends approval of the project with conditions. The *Richmond Old and Historic Districts Handbook and Design Review Guidelines* note that an entire porch should only be replaced if it is too deteriorated to repair or is completely missing and that the replacement should match the original as much as possible (pg. 67, #5). Staff finds the applicant has submitted adequate evidence that the columns are deteriorated as the photographs show that the columns have split and the wood has deteriorated near the bases. The *Guidelines* state that when replacing elements, materials that match the original in type, or are physically and chemically compatible substitute materials that convey the same appearance as the surviving elements, should be used (pg. 55, #7). Staff finds the proposed columns effectively convey the appearance of the historic columns.

For the porch roof, the decking and joists appear to be in poor condition. The applicant has not provided adequate evidence that the cornice has deteriorated

beyond repair. Staff recommends approval of the reconstruction of the existing porch roof with the condition that the existing cornice details be reused.

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.