

## 7. COA-045485-2018

PUBLIC HEARING DATE

December 18, 2018

PROPERTY ADDRESS

2327 Monument Avenue

DISTRICT

Monument Avenue

APPLICANT

N. & S. Ruffin

STAFF CONTACT

C. Jeffries

# Commission of Architectural Review

## STAFF REPORT

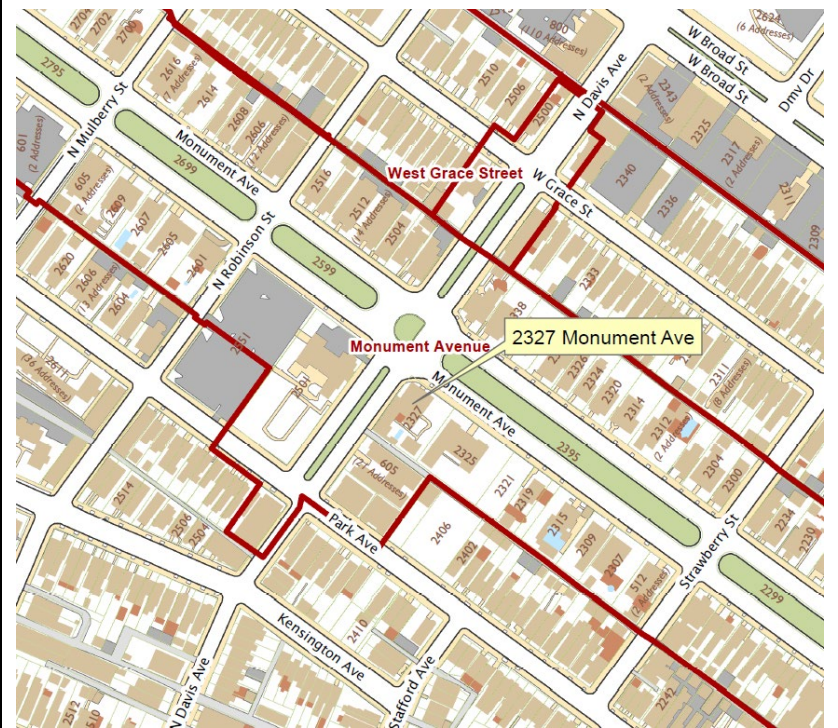


### PROJECT DESCRIPTION

**Restore front stoop and stairs, install metal gate and shutters.**

### PROJECT DETAILS

- The applicant requests approval to restore the front stairs and install a metal gate at a home in the Monument Avenue City Old and Historic District. The applicant is also proposing to install shutters on the Davis Avenue elevation.
- The home is a 2 ½ story brick Colonial Revival building designed by Walter Dabney Blair, constructed in 1913.
- The applicant proposes the following work as part of the front stair rehabilitation:
  - Replace the existing limestone treads and brick landing on the front stairs.
  - Remove a black handrail at the lower landing.
  - Install a gate in the opening of an existing fence.



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### STAFF RECOMMENDATION

**APPROVE WITH CONDITIONS**

### PREVIOUS REVIEWS

None.

### STAFF RECOMMENDED CONDITIONS

- The replacement shutters be wood, paneled on the first story and louvered on the second story, painted black, mounted on hinges, and sized to fit the window opening. Staff recommends that new shutters only be installed where there is physical evidence of historic shutters.
- The proposed gate be denied.
- The applicant work with staff to determine if the steps can be repaired and submit additional documentation on their condition. Only the steps that are beyond repair be replaced in-kind.

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## STAFF ANALYSIS

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Shutters #21-23, pg. 70

21. *Wood shutters must be functional (mounted on hinges) and not nailed or fixed to the wall surface.*  
22. *Metal and vinyl shutters are not recommended, particularly for the front façades of buildings.*  
23. *Shutters should only be used on windows that show evidence of their use in the past. Replacement shutters should match the existing ones, or be compatible with the style of the structure, and be sized to fit the window.*

Staff recommends that the replacement shutters be wood, painted black, mounted on hinges, and sized to fit the window opening.  
Staff recommends the new shutters match the historic shutters and be paneled on the first story and louvered on the second story.

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Shutters #24, pg. 70

24. *Do not use shutters on composite or bay windows.*

Staff was unable to find a historic photograph of the Davis Avenue elevation of the home. However, staff finds that some windows, such as the triple windows on the side elevation, have no physical evidence of previous shutters. Staff recommends that replacement shutters only be installed where there is physical evidence of historic shutters.

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Fences #3, pg. 78

*If not original to a site, new street-front fences, walls, and gates should be compatible with the historic structure in design, materials, and location, and should be based on physical or documentary evidence from the site.*

Staff recognizes that public safety is a concern for residents of City Old and Historic Districts and of Richmond in general; however, staff does not feel that public safety should be used to justify changes that are inconsistent with the guidelines, such as the proposed gate. Staff feels that the applicant should seek to address security through less structural means such as lighting or security devices that would not change the character of the property.

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Fences #5, pg. 78

*Some districts, such as Monument Avenue and West Grace Street, more rarely had fences.*

Fences around the front yards of houses in the Monument Avenue Old and Historic District are not an original feature, or one that was planned for at the time the development took place. Gates and fences were commonplace in Richmond's early to mid-19th century neighborhoods. By the early twentieth century a lack of enclosures became the hallmark of residential development. As the Monument Avenue Old and Historic District reflects this aesthetic the installation of the gate as proposed is out of keeping with the district. There are no other street-front gates present on this block of Monument Avenue.

Staff finds that the existing front-yard fence was installed sometime between 2001 and 2007 and was unable to find records of CAR approval of the fence. Photographic documentation indicates that there historically was not a front yard fence at this home (see

Fences #5, pg. 78	<i>In the event of a conjectural fence, the design should seek simplicity, rather than elaboration.</i>	Figure 1). <u>Staff recommends denial of the proposed gate.</u> The proposed ornate design of the gate is not appropriate for the structure or the District and is contrary the Guidelines which call for simplified gate designs and not elaborate conjectural designs.
Standards for Rehabilitation #7, Pg. 59	<i>Repair damaged elements instead of replacing them. Use materials that match the original.</i>	The applicant has stated that the limestone steps need to be replaced. Some of the steps do appear cracked, however others are in good condition and limestone can be repaired. <u>Staff recommends the applicant work with staff to determine if the steps can be repaired and submit additional documentation on their condition. Only the steps that are beyond repair should be replaced in-kind.</u>
Entrances #1, pg. 71	<i>Elements that are damaged or loose should be repaired to match the detail of the existing original fabric.</i>	

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

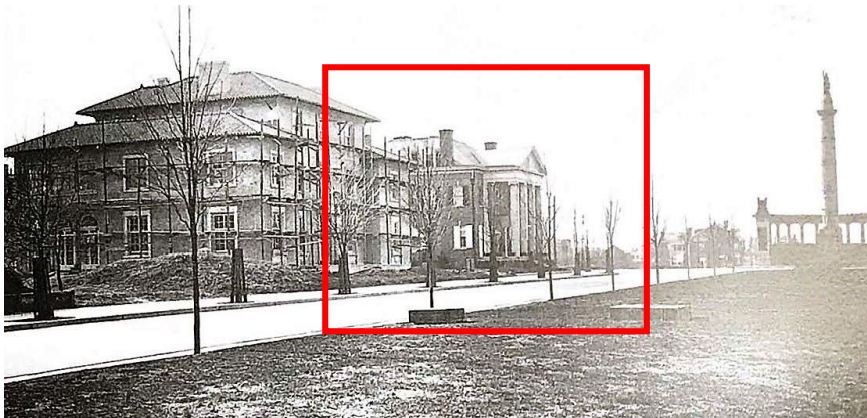


Figure 1. 2327 Monument Ave, ca. 1924



Figure 2. 2327 Monument Ave, ca. 2001



Figure 3. 2327 Monument Ave, 2018



Figure 4. Front steps, 2327 Monument Ave



Figure 5. Windows on Davis Ave elevation with no shutter hardware.



Figure 6. Windows on Davis Ave elevation with shutter hardware.