

**COMMISSION OF ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW  
STAFF REPORT  
August 28, 2018 Meeting**

**10. COA-039896-2018** (J. Phelps)

**101 North Boulevard  
Boulevard Old and Historic District**

**Project Description:** **Install wheelchair lift on rear elevation.**

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

The applicant requests approval to install a wheelchair lift on the rear elevation of the existing building. The existing building is a two-and-one-half story, two-family residence. The building is masonry with a one-story porch that spans the length of the three-bay façade. On the rear elevation is a two-bay, two-story porch. The porch bays match the fenestration patterns with a three-bay configuration on the ground level and a two-bay configuration on the second level. The second story has Richmond railings on all three sides. The rear of the property is enclosed with a wood privacy fence.



101 North Boulevard, rear elevation.

The applicant proposes to install a ramp and wheelchair lift in order to provide necessary wheelchair access to the second story. The small ramp will not be visible from the public right of way. The lift will be located on the outer bay of the rear elevation. The track the lift runs on will be placed close to the porch. The entire mechanism will be anchored to the exterior wall. A 5 inch floor will be installed on the second story porch to raise the floor flush with the threshold of the door. A section of the railing will be removed to install an access gate, and a railing extension, 6 inches above current, will be installed above the existing Richmond rail.

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

The Building and Site Accessibility – Handicap Accessibility section of the Guidelines (pg 79) provides the following guidance: Regrading is appropriate in cases where the change in elevation between an existing slope and a step or steps is not great and meets ADA requirements. Appropriate regrading efforts should cover, but not remove or eliminate, original masonry steps. Staff finds that the ramp meets the guidelines for site accessibility.

The *Guidelines* also state that: platform lifts and inclined stair lifts are most often used in instances where there is not enough room for a ramp, or in cases where the architectural/historic significance of a building does not warrant the permanent addition of a ramp. Staff finds that the wheelchair lift meets the Guidelines as there is likely not sufficient room to build a two-story ramp making a lift preferable and less visually intrusive.

Staff recommends approval on the condition that the lift mechanism be installed in such a way that does not damage the existing masonry including anchoring to the mortar, not the brick.

It is the assessment of staff that, with this condition, 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.