

**COMMISSION OF ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW
STAFF REPORT
August 22, 2017, Meeting**

2. **COA-021082-2017** (Alexander HOA) **1101 West Grace Street
West Grace Street Old and Historic District**

Project Description: **Remove a wall at the rear of the property.**

Staff Contact: **C. Jeffries**

The applicant requests approval to remove a portion of a masonry wall at the rear of a Colonial Revival multifamily building in the West Grace Street City Old and Historic District. The applicant proposes to remove the wall due to disrepair and safety concerns. The wall is located between the alley and a small paved parking area at the rear of the property.

Staff recommends denial of the project as proposed. *The Richmond Old and Historic District Handbook and Design Review Guidelines* state that existing brick or stone walls should not be removed and that original walls should be retained and maintained (pg. 76, #1, 2). Though it is difficult to know when the wall was built, it is masonry and appears to have been in place for some time. The wall extends from the rear of the property and along the northwestern property line. The wall is in obvious disrepair and the applicant has provided documentation that the wall was cited by the City for defective maintenance. The applicant has also provided photographic evidence that the wall is in disrepair, including cracks, leaning, and missing bricks. As the *Guidelines* clearly state that masonry walls should be retained, staff cannot support the removal of the wall and suggests that the applicant repair the wall instead.

It is the assessment of staff that the application is not consistent with the Standards for Rehabilitation outlined 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 page cited above, adopted by the Commission for review of Certificates of Appropriateness under the same section of the code.