

**COMMISSION OF ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW  
STAFF REPORT  
December 15, 2015 Meeting**

7. **CAR No. 15-131** (J. Gross) **2123 East Marshall Street**  
**Church Hill North Old and Historic District**

**Project Description:** **Construct a new rear porch and  
install roof mounted mechanical equipment.**

**Staff Contact:** **M. Pitts**

The applicant requests approval to install a roof mounted condenser and to replace an existing staircase from the second floor with a second story balcony at the rear of the structure in the St. John's Church Old and Historic District. The applicant is proposing to install the rooftop mechanical equipment on the western corner of the roof and screen the equipment with a fence constructed with vertical siding with a 6" reveal. The applicant is proposing to remove an existing staircase at the rear which is in disrepair. A second story 6' by 12' balcony is to be installed at the rear. The porch will be opaquely stained Colonial Revival Grey. The plans provide two options for the railing which are the pickets installed on the outside of the rails or the pickets installed on the inside of the rails. The applicant is also proposing a gabled roof awning over the door. The applicant is also proposing to paint the trim Roycroft Copper Red which is a color included in the Commission's paint palette and, therefore, has been administratively approved by staff.

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

**Rooftop Mechanical Equipment**

The *Richmond Old and Historic District Handbook and Design Review Guidelines* rooftop units should be located so that they are minimally visible from the public right-of-way, and screening should be considered (pg.64). The applicant is proposing to locate the equipment at the corner of the roof that is the furthest from both East Marshall Street and North 22<sup>nd</sup> Street. Though the equipment will be visible from North 22<sup>nd</sup> Street, the applicant will screen the equipment. Staff recommends approval of the installation of the mechanical equipment with the condition that the screening be painted or opaquely stained in a color to be administratively approved by staff.

**2<sup>nd</sup> Floor Deck**

The *Richmond Old and Historic Districts Handbook and Design Review Guidelines* indicate that, "Decks should not alter, damage or destroy significant site elements of the property," and that, "Decks should complement the architectural features of the main structure without creating a false historical appearance. Decks should be painted or stained a neutral color that complements one or more of the colors found on the main structure" (pg. 48 # 1-

2). The proposed deck does not alter or destroy any historic fabric as the existing stairs do not appear original to the structure and are in poor condition. The deck is appropriately sized for the structure and small rear yard and will be opaquely stained a grey color. The Guidelines note that typical deck railings, consisting of nailed-up stock elements, are not approved as they are not based on a compatible historical model found in the District (pg. 46, #2). The second story gabled roof awning over the door to the deck is not something typically found in the District. For these reasons, staff recommends approval of the deck with the condition that the applicant use a standard Richmond rail design that is more compatible with the district, or that the applicant place the proposed pickets on the inside of the handrail for a more finished appearance and that no awning is to be installed over the 2<sup>nd</sup> story rear door.

It is the assessment of staff that the application, with the conditions above, is consistent with the Standards for Rehabilitation outlined in Section 30.930.7(b) of the City Code, and 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 code.