

Commission of Architectural Review
Reconstruction of Missing Historic Elements
Administrative Approval Guidelines

A. General Guidance:

The purpose of these administrative approval guidelines is to set out the circumstances when staff may approve the reconstruction of missing historic elements. These guidelines are a supplement to the existing *Guidelines* and are to be used in coordination with other relevant guidelines.

Federal historic preservation documents provide some good general guidance on the subject, specifically:

- Standard 6 of the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation* states that the replacement of missing features “shall be substantiated by documentary, physical, or pictorial evidence”.
- The National Park Service’s *Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings* states that the replacement of missing features is appropriate when the missing feature can be “accurately recovered in form and detailing through the process of carefully documenting the historical appearance.”
- The *Guidelines* go on to note that: “where an important architectural feature is missing ...if adequate historical, pictorial, and physical documentation exists so that the feature may be accurately reproduced ...then designing and constructing a new feature based on such information is appropriate.”

B. Items delegated for staff review

For purposes of these guidelines missing historic elements may include building materials, structural features, decorative elements, or landscape features that are original to the property. The Commission staff may approve a reconstruction of missing elements based on the following criteria:

1. There is strong photographic, physical, and/or documentary evidence demonstrating the materials, size, configuration, details, of missing historic elements that would allow them to be accurately reconstructed. Evidence of an accurate reconstruction is not limited to but may include any of the following types of documentation:

- Historical photographs that clearly show the missing feature
- Original documents pertaining to the construction history of the building
- Architectural inventory documentation, including assessment records, insurance policies, and historic inventories
- Visible outlines of the missing elements, known as architectural “ghosts”
- Structural supports of the missing elements, such as piers, pockets, footings, foundations, supports, etc.
- Architectural remnants that are attached to the building
- Architectural remnants on an attached or adjoining building

2. The installation of the missing historic elements will not obscure or damage existing historic features and/or materials.

3. Items approved by the Department of Historic Resources and/or the National Park Service as part of a rehabilitation tax credit project. (See administrative approve guidelines for rehabilitation tax credit projects for additional information.)

C. Items that will not be approved administratively by staff:

1. Any work that is defined as a substantial impact, including demolition.
2. The use of materials that do not meet the Commission *Guidelines*.

D. Adoption and Effect

These administrative approval guidelines were adopted by the Commission of Architectural Review on April 9, 2019. The adoption and implementation of these guidelines shall be consistent with Sec. 114-930.6(h) of the Code of the City of Richmond. These guidelines are deemed to be consistent with and a supplement to the *Old and Historic District Handbook and Design Review Guidelines*. These guidelines shall be in full effect and force until amended or rescinded by the Commission.