

ISSUE: Certificate of Appropriateness for alterations (after-the-fact)

APPLICANT: Andrew and Margaret Warrell

LOCATION: Old and Historic Alexandria District
211 Prince Street

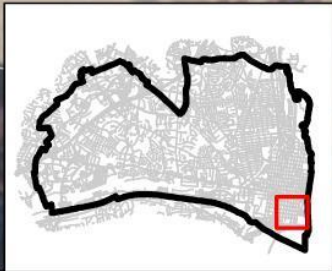
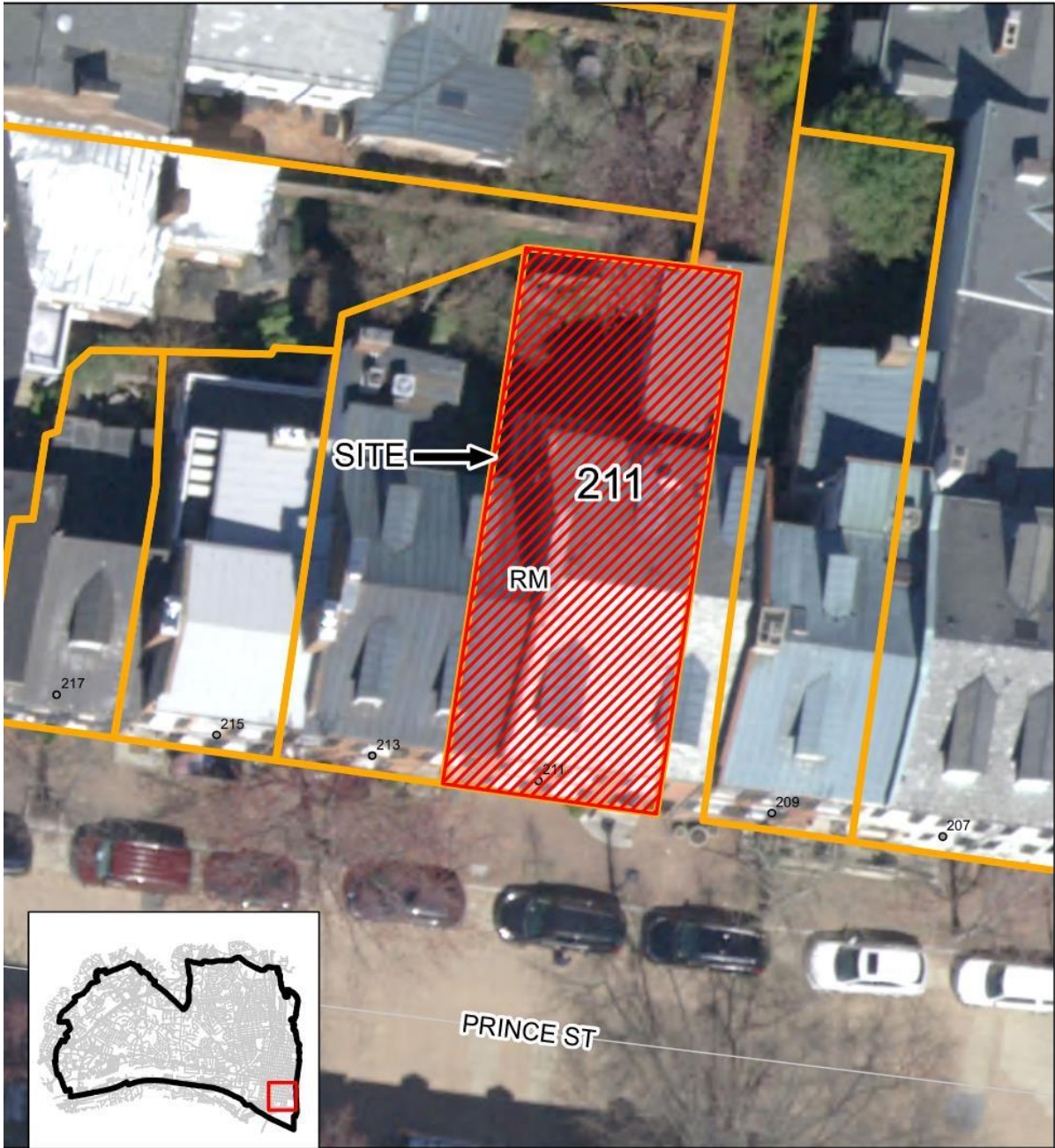
ZONE: Residential Townhouse Zone

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends denial of the Certificate of Appropriateness, as submitted.

GENERAL NOTES TO THE APPLICANT

1. **APPEAL OF DECISION:** In accordance with the Zoning Ordinance, if the Board of Architectural Review denies or approves an application in whole or in part, the applicant or opponent may appeal the Board's decision to City Council on or before 14 days after the decision of the Board.
2. **COMPLIANCE WITH BAR POLICIES:** All materials must comply with the BAR's adopted policies unless otherwise specifically approved.
3. **BUILDING PERMITS:** Most projects approved by the Board of Architectural Review require the issuance of one or more construction permits by Department of Code Administration (including signs). The applicant is responsible for obtaining all necessary construction permits after receiving Board of Architectural Review approval. Contact Code Administration, Room 4200, City Hall, 703-746-4200 for further information.
4. **ISSUANCE OF CERTIFICATES OF APPROPRIATENESS AND PERMITS TO DEMOLISH:** Applicants must obtain a copy of the Certificate of Appropriateness or Permit to Demolish PRIOR to applying for a building permit. Contact BAR Staff, Room 2100, City Hall, 703-746-3833, or preservation@alexandriava.gov for further information.
5. **EXPIRATION OF APPROVALS NOTE:** In accordance with Sections 10-106(B), 10-206(B) and 10-307 of the Zoning Ordinance, any Board of Architectural Review approval will expire 12 months from the date of issuance if the work is not commenced and diligently and substantially pursued by the end of that 12-month period.
6. **HISTORIC PROPERTY TAX CREDITS:** Applicants performing extensive, certified rehabilitations of historic properties may separately be eligible for state and/or federal tax credits. Consult with the Virginia Department of Historic Resources (VDHR) prior to initiating any work to determine whether the proposed project may qualify for such credits.



BAR#2023-00211
211 Prince Street



0 5 10 20 Feet

I. APPLICANT'S PROPOSAL

The applicant requests a Certificate of Appropriateness to install custom black wrought iron guardrails on the existing steps. Staff notes that the application is an after-the-fact request, the railings were installed without approval and a violation letter was sent to the property owner on May 4, 2023 (ZEN2023-00063).

Site context

The alley to the north, behind the subject property, is private. The railings are located on the front elevation and will be visible from the public right-of-way.

HISTORY

According to Ethelyn Cox in her book *Historic Alexandria Virginia Street by Street*, Captain John Harper constructed the house in the summer of **1793**. The three-bay, three-story Federal style house consists of a masonry main block and a 1 ½ -story masonry ell at the rear. The ell was expanded to a 2 ½ -story masonry ell in 1962 (permit #18516).

Previous BAR Approvals

9/27/2022 – The Board approved a Permit to Demolish and encapsulate (BAR2022-00315)

7/11/1977 – Approved for chimney repair (permit #33556).

7/12/1967 – The Board approved the replacement of the iron steps and stoop with limestone steps.

1/8/1962– Approved for replacement of plaster, brickwork, flues, and cornices. Repair of dormers, roof, gutters, downspouts, and main building windows (permit #17974).

4/13/1943 – Approved for two windows on the rear wall (permit #4994). 9/8/1939 – Approved for roof replacement (permit #3196).

8/29/1931- Approved for new composition roof (permit #36).

III. ANALYSIS

The *Design Guidelines* state that stoops, steps, and railings are important functional elements of the entrances to buildings and should be appropriate to the historic style of the structure. While the installed railings don't hide, obscure, or cause the removal of historic architectural details, the style is not appropriate for this federal-style townhouse. Federal style guardrails should be of a simple design with minimal ornamentation. Decorative cast iron railings like the one installed at 211 Prince Street are a common feature of high-style Victorian buildings. Some examples of appropriate railings on historic federal buildings in Virginia are below.



Photo 1: 207 Prince St., Alexandria, VA



Photo 2: 133 North Fairfax St., Alexandria, VA



Photo 3: 1813 E. Grace St., Richmond, VA

Staff recommends denial of the application as submitted. The applicant must remove the inappropriate guardrails and install historically appropriate guardrails that comply with the Board's Design Guidelines and Policies.

STAFF

Amirah Lane, Historic Preservation Planner, Planning & Zoning
Tony LaColla, AICP, Land Use Services Division Chief, Planning & Zoning

II. CITY DEPARTMENT COMMENTS

Legend: C- code requirement R- recommendation S- suggestion F- finding

Zoning

C-1 Proposed railings for existing exterior stairs will comply with zoning.

Code Administration

C-1 Building permit is required, the handrail design shall comply with VCC sec. 1014

Transportation and Environmental Services

R-1 The building permit must be approved and issued prior to the issuance of any permit for demolition, if a separate demolition permit is required. (T&ES)

R-2 Applicant shall be responsible for repairs to the adjacent city right-of-way if damaged during construction activity. (T&ES)

- R-3 No permanent structure may be constructed over any existing private and/or public utility easements. It is the responsibility of the applicant to identify any and all existing easements on the plan. (T&ES)
- F-1 After review of the information provided, an approved grading plan is not required at this time. Please note that if any changes are made to the plan it is suggested that T&ES be included in the review. (T&ES)
- F-2 If the alley located at the rear of the parcel is to be used at any point of the construction process the following will be required:
For a Public Alley - The applicant shall contact T&ES, Construction Permitting & Inspections at (703) 746-4035 to discuss any permits and accommodation requirements that will be required.
For a Private Alley - The applicant must provide proof, in the form of an affidavit at a minimum, from owner of the alley granting permission of use. (T&ES)
- C-1 The applicant shall comply with the City of Alexandria's Solid Waste Control, Title 5, Chapter 1, which sets forth the requirements for the recycling of materials (Sec. 5-1-99). (T&ES)
- C-2 The applicant shall comply with the City of Alexandria's Noise Control Code, Title 11, Chapter 5, which sets the maximum permissible noise level as measured at the property line. (T&ES)
- C-3 Roof, surface and sub-surface drains be connected to the public storm sewer system, if available, by continuous underground pipe. Where storm sewer is not available applicant must provide a design to mitigate impact of stormwater drainage onto adjacent properties and to the satisfaction of the Director of Transportation & Environmental Services. (Sec.5-6-224) (T&ES)
- C-4 All secondary utilities serving this site shall be placed underground. (Sec. 5-3-3) (T&ES)
- C-5 Any work within the right-of-way requires a separate permit from T&ES. (Sec. 5-2) (T&ES)
- C-6 All improvements to the city right-of-way such as curbing, sidewalk, driveway aprons, etc. must be city standard design. (Sec. 5-2-1) (T&ES)

Alexandria Archaeology

- F-1 No archaeological oversight is required for this project.

V. ATTACHMENTS

1 – Supplemental Materials

2 – Application for BAR2023-00211: 211 Prince Street

BAR CASE# _____
(OFFICE USE ONLY)

ADDRESS OF PROJECT: 211 PRINCE ST, ALEXANDRIA, VA 22314

DISTRICT: Old & Historic Alexandria Parker - Gray 100 Year Old Building

TAX MAP AND PARCEL: _____ ZONING: _____

APPLICATION FOR: (Please check all that apply)

CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS

PERMIT TO MOVE, REMOVE, ENCAPSULATE OR DEMOLISH
(Required if more than 25 square feet of a structure is to be demolished/impacted)

WAIVER OF VISION CLEARANCE REQUIREMENT and/or YARD REQUIREMENTS IN A VISION
CLEARANCE AREA (Section 7-802, Alexandria 1992 Zoning Ordinance)

WAIVER OF ROOFTOP HVAC SCREENING REQUIREMENT
(Section 6-403(B)(3), Alexandria 1992 Zoning Ordinance)

Applicant: Property Owner Business (Please provide business name & contact person)

Name: ANDREW & MARGARET WARRELL

Address: 211 PRINCE ST

City: ALEXANDRIA State: VA Zip: 22314

Phone: 2024519457 E-mail: atwarrell@gmail.com

Authorized Agent (if applicable): Attorney Architect _____

Name: _____ Phone: _____

E-mail: _____

Legal Property Owner:

Name: ANDREW WARRELL

Address: 211 PRINCE ST, ALEXANDRIA, VA 22314

City: ALEXANDRIA State: VA Zip: 22314

Phone: 2024519457 E-mail: atwarrell@gmail.com

BAR CASE# _____
(OFFICE USE ONLY)

NATURE OF PROPOSED WORK: *Please check all that apply*

- NEW CONSTRUCTION
- EXTERIOR ALTERATION: *Please check all that apply.*
 - awning
 - doors
 - lighting
 - other HANDRAILS
 - fence, gate or garden wall
 - windows
 - pergola/trellis
 - HVAC equipment
 - siding
 - painting unpainted masonry
 - shutters
 - shed
- ADDITION
- DEMOLITION/ENCAPSULATION
- SIGNAGE

DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED WORK: *Please describe the proposed work in detail (Additional pages may be attached).*

HANDRAILS: BLACK WROUGHT IRON CUSTOM MADE FOR
EXISTING STEPS

SUBMITTAL REQUIREMENTS:

Check this box if there is a homeowner's association for this property. If so, you must attach a copy of the letter approving the project.

Items listed below comprise the **minimum supporting materials** for BAR applications. Staff may request additional information during application review. Please refer to the relevant section of the *Design Guidelines* for further information on appropriate treatments.

Applicants must use the checklist below to ensure the application is complete. Include all information and material that are necessary to thoroughly describe the project. Incomplete applications will delay the docketing of the application for review. Pre-application meetings are required for all proposed additions. All applicants are encouraged to meet with staff prior to submission of a completed application.

Demolition/Encapsulation : *All applicants requesting 25 square feet or more of demolition/encapsulation must complete this section. Check N/A if an item in this section does not apply to your project.*

- N/A
- Survey plat showing the extent of the proposed demolition/encapsulation.
- Existing elevation drawings clearly showing all elements proposed for demolition/encapsulation.
- Clear and labeled photographs of all elevations of the building if the entire structure is proposed to be demolished.
- Description of the reason for demolition/encapsulation.
- Description of the alternatives to demolition/encapsulation and why such alternatives are not considered feasible.

Additions & New Construction: Drawings must be to scale and should not exceed 11" x 17" unless approved by staff. Check N/A if an item in this section does not apply to your project.

- ^{N/A} Scaled survey plat showing dimensions of lot and location of existing building and other structures on the lot, location of proposed structure or addition, dimensions of existing structure(s), proposed addition or new construction, and all exterior, ground and roof mounted equipment.
- FAR & Open Space calculation form.
- Clear and labeled photographs of the site, surrounding properties and existing structures, if applicable.
- Existing elevations must be scaled and include dimensions.
- Proposed elevations must be scaled and include dimensions. Include the relationship to adjacent structures in plan and elevations.
- Materials and colors to be used must be specified and delineated on the drawings. Actual samples may be provided or required.
- Manufacturer's specifications for materials to include, but not limited to: roofing, siding, windows, doors, lighting, fencing, HVAC equipment and walls.
- For development site plan projects, a model showing mass relationships to adjacent properties and structures.

Signs & Awnings: One sign per building under one square foot does not require BAR approval unless illuminated. All other signs including window signs require BAR approval. Check N/A if an item in this section does not apply to your project.

- ^{N/A} Linear feet of building: Front: _____ Secondary front (if corner lot): _____.
- Square feet of existing signs to remain: _____.
- Photograph of building showing existing conditions.
- Dimensioned drawings of proposed sign identifying materials, color, lettering style and text.
- Location of sign (show exact location on building including the height above sidewalk).
- Means of attachment (drawing or manufacturer's cut sheet of bracket if applicable).
- Description of lighting (if applicable). Include manufacturer's cut sheet for any new lighting fixtures and information detailing how it will be attached to the building's facade.

Alterations: Check N/A if an item in this section does not apply to your project.


- ^{N/A} Clear and labeled photographs of the site, especially the area being impacted by the alterations, all sides of the building and any pertinent details.
- Manufacturer's specifications for materials to include, but not limited to: roofing, siding, windows, doors, lighting, fencing, HVAC equipment and walls.
- Drawings accurately representing the changes to the proposed structure, including materials and overall dimensions. Drawings must be to scale.
- An official survey plat showing the proposed locations of HVAC units, fences, and sheds.
- Historic elevations or photographs should accompany any request to return a structure to an earlier appearance.

ALL APPLICATIONS: Please read and check that you have read and understand the following items:

- I understand that after reviewing the proposed alterations, BAR staff will invoice the appropriate filing fee in APEX. The application will not be processed until the fee is paid online.
- I understand the notice requirements and will return a copy of the three respective notice forms to BAR staff at least five days prior to the hearing. If I am unsure to whom I should send notice I will contact Planning and Zoning staff for assistance in identifying adjacent parcels.
- I, the applicant, or an authorized representative will be present at the public hearing.
- I understand that any revisions to this initial application submission (including applications deferred for restudy) must be accompanied by the BAR Supplemental form and revised materials.

The undersigned hereby attests that all of the information herein provided including the site plan, building elevations, prospective drawings of the project, and written descriptive information are true, correct and accurate. The undersigned further understands that, should such information be found incorrect, any action taken by the Board based on such information may be invalidated. The undersigned also hereby grants the City of Alexandria permission to post placard notice as required by Article XI, Division A, Section 11-301(B) of the 1992 Alexandria City Zoning Ordinance, on the property which is the subject of this application. The undersigned also hereby authorizes the City staff and members of the BAR to inspect this site as necessary in the course of research and evaluating the application. The applicant, if other than the property owner, also attests that he/she has obtained permission from the property owner to make this application.

APPLICANT OR AUTHORIZED AGENT:

Signature: 

Printed Name: ANDREW J. WARRELL

Date: 05/14/2023

OWNERSHIP AND DISCLOSURE STATEMENT

Use additional sheets if necessary

1. Applicant. State the name, address and percent of ownership of any person or entity owning an interest in the applicant, unless the entity is a corporation or partnership, in which case identify each owner of more than three percent. The term ownership interest shall include any legal or equitable interest held at the time of the application in the real property which is the subject of the application.

Name	Address	Percent of Ownership
1. ANDREW & MARRIE WARRELL	211 PRINCE ST ALEXANDRIA, VA 22314	100%
2.		
3.		

2. Property. State the name, address and percent of ownership of any person or entity owning an interest in the property located at _____ (address), unless the entity is a corporation or partnership, in which case identify each owner of more than three percent. The term ownership interest shall include any legal or equitable interest held at the time of the application in the real property which is the subject of the application.

Name	Address	Percent of Ownership
1.		
2.		
3.		

3. Business or Financial Relationships. Each person or entity listed above (1 and 2), with an ownership interest in the applicant or in the subject property is required to disclose any business or financial relationship, as defined by Section 11-350 of the Zoning Ordinance, existing at the time of this application, or within the 12-month period prior to the submission of this application with any member of the Alexandria City Council, Planning Commission, Board of Zoning Appeals or either Boards of Architectural Review.

Name of person or entity	Relationship as defined by Section 11-350 of the Zoning Ordinance	Member of the Approving Body (i.e. City Council, Planning Commission, etc.)
1.		
2.		
3.		

NOTE: Business or financial relationships of the type described in Sec. 11-350 that arise after the filing of this application and before each public hearing must be disclosed prior to the public hearings.

As the applicant or the applicant's authorized agent, I hereby attest to the best of my ability that the information provided above is true and correct.

05/14/2023 ANDREW WARRELL

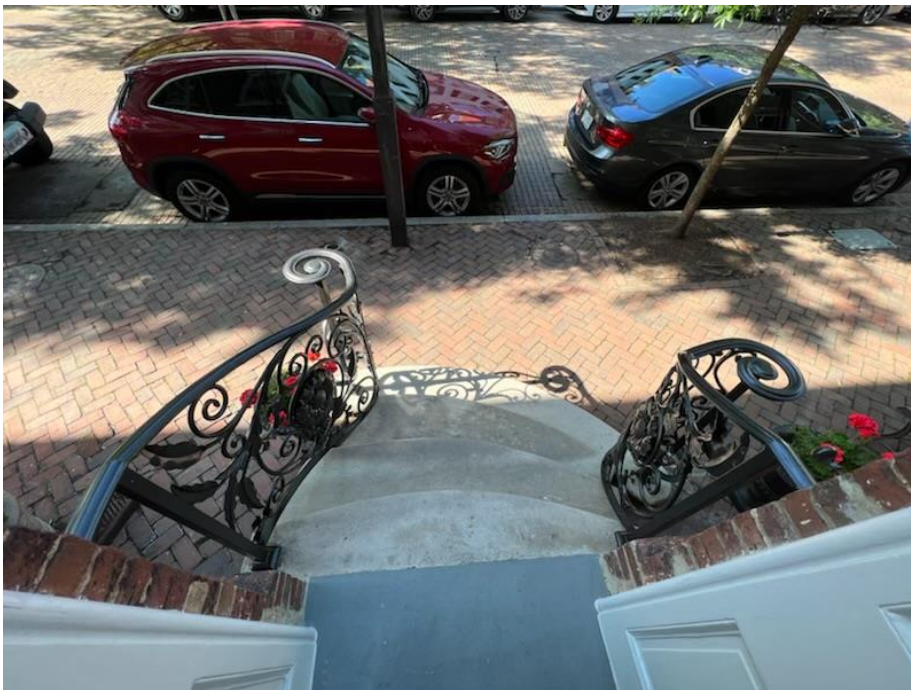
 Date Printed Name



 Signature



Street view of 211 Prince Street with new handrails on existing steps



Looking from top of stairs



Side view with dimensions



Front view from closer point

Response to concern on handrails

Thank you for bringing to our attention the alteration that occurred at 211 PRINCE ST without Board of Architectural Review (BAR) or BAR staff approval. We apologize for any inconvenience or violation of the zoning ordinance that this alteration may have caused. We were unaware of this requirement and were acting under the false impression that approval was covered by the approval of plans submitted as part of the wider renovation. We am sure you understand our lack of familiarity with the details of the rules and regulations and please forgive us our over-sight.

We now understand that a Certificate of Appropriateness is required for alterations that are visible from the public way. We would like to assure you that we take this requirement very seriously and are committed to complying with relevant regulations. As per the provisions in the process, we request the approval for the design given that we believe it meets the BAR standards and requirements.

Both and Margie and I feel a strong sense of obligation and responsibility to steward our historic home responsibly and thoughtfully. We have worked hard to ensure that our renovation is not only in compliance with governing regulations but also retains and honors the character of the house.

During our renovation we did significant repairs to the front steps of our house which had been damaged in multiple places but we retained the existing design which is asymmetrical with a bi-directional curvature. We also repaired in wooden architraves around the front door and entrance step which were rotten but all was replaced/repared in kind to ensure the appearance wasn't altered in any way.

In deciding to install handrails to improve the safety of ingress and egress to the house, we wanted to source handrails consistent with the design of the stairs and colonial period of our home.

The first step in this process was to select the color and materials used for the handrails. Here is a copy of some of the research we leveraged in making our selection.

The North-East United States has a rich history of wrought and cast iron handrails, which is further exemplified by some examples of the oldest wrought or cast iron handrails in the North East United States.

1. The Hancock-Clarke House in Lexington, Massachusetts, has a wrought iron handrail that dates back to the mid-18th century
2. The John Brown House in Providence, Rhode Island, has a cast iron handrail that dates back to the late 18th century
3. The Fraunces Tavern in New York City has a cast iron handrail that dates back to the late 18th century
4. The James Brice House in Annapolis, Maryland, has a wrought iron handrail that dates back to the early 19th century
5. The John Jay Homestead in Katonah, New York, has a wrought iron handrail that dates back to the early 19th century.

These handrails are not only beautiful examples of craftsmanship but also serve as a reminder of the history of the North-East United States.

As you are no doubt aware, there are several examples of cast or wrought iron handrails throughout Alexandria further demonstrating the choice of materials. Furthermore, the handrails are almost always painted black, so both material and color were a fairly-straight forward selection.

Next, we needed to ensure that the rails were constructed in a manner that was consistent with the existing stair design which, as stated above, has an asymmetrical curvature (ie. compound curves rather than a single radius curve) that is not common in Old Town. Factory made or standard handrails would not have been appropriate, so we arranged to have them custom built so that they curved consistent with the existing stair design.

Having clearly established, material color and construction method, the final design feature was to select the style and motif would complement and enhance the entrance to our home and bridge the relatively new stairs (installed in the 1970s) with the older dwelling.

Motif usage varies widely through the old town area but we wanted to ensure that our selection was again in keeping with the period and the stately nature of the largest house built by John harper between the homes at 209, 211 & 213 on Gentry Row.

Again, we looked to research of the period to act as a guide including the following.

The use of floral designs in wrought iron during the period from 1780 to 1830 was very popular in the North- East United States. This period saw the rise of the neoclassical style, which incorporated classical motifs from ancient Greece and Rome, including floral designs. The use of floral designs in wrought iron was particularly popular in **handrails**, gates, and fencing.

Floral designs in wrought iron during this period were often inspired by natural forms, such as leaves, flowers, and vines. These designs were incorporated into the ironwork in a variety of ways, such as in the balusters, newel posts, and handrail brackets of handrails, as well as in the decorative elements of gates and fencing. The floral designs were often paired with other decorative elements, such as scrolls, volutes, and acanthus leaves, to create a harmonious and elegant appearance.

Some notable examples of floral designs in wrought iron from this period include;

1. The handrails of the John Brown House in Providence, Rhode Island
2. The Hancock-Clarke House in Lexington, Massachusetts. These handrails feature intricate floral designs that are typical of the neoclassical style and are still admired today for their beauty and craftsmanship.

Then as additional examples within the immediate area

1. One example of a historic handrail design with a floral pattern in relation to George Washington is the handrail at Mount Vernon, his Virginia estate. The handrail features a floral pattern with acanthus leaves, which were a popular design motif in 18th-century Virginia.
2. Another example is the floral handrail design at the United States Capitol Building in Washington D.C. The Capitol Building features numerous handrails with floral patterns, including a handrail in the Senate wing that has a pattern of oak leaves and acorns, which are symbols of strength and endurance.
3. Additionally, the White House, which is located in Washington D.C., has several handrails with floral patterns. For example, the handrail on the staircase leading to the State Dining Room features

a floral pattern of vines and leaves, which was a popular design motif during the 19th century.

Several neighbors on our street, including our immediate neighbor Don Kelly (213 Prince St) and Latane Montague (207 Prince St, resident of Fairfax-Moore House) have expressly stated that they believe the stair rails greatly enhance the entrance to our home, pay tribute its history and to the stately nature of Gentry Row. They have both offered to provide written endorsement if requested.

Thank you for allowing us to present how the chosen handrails are suitable for entrance to our house and in fact compliment the framing of the entrance. Please approve the Certificate of Appropriateness and once again we apologize for our oversight in not obtaining the certificate prior to installation.

Yours sincerely

Andrew & Margie Warrell