

**COMMISSION OF ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW
STAFF REPORT
December 19, 2017 Meeting**

6. **COA-027272-2017** (M. Jarreau) **3000-3006 E. Franklin Street
St. John's Church Old and Historic District**

Project Description: **Modify approved plans for three attached single family dwellings.**

Staff Contact: **M. Pitts**

The applicant requests approval to modify previously approved plans for the construction of three attached single family homes in the St. John's Church Old and Historic District. On June 28, 2016, the Commission approved the construction of a three story frame structure with two story side porches on the east and west elevations and a two story porch on the façade of the recessed center dwelling. The subject property was a vacant lot and at the time of the original review there was one other dwelling on the north side of the street at 2904 East Franklin Street. Since the approval, a single family home has been constructed immediately to the west and a single family home and two attached single family homes have been constructed to the east. Across East Franklin Street, the lots are developed with concrete block apartment buildings.

The applicant is submitting revised plans as during preparation for construction, existing site topography was examined and it was determined that the amount of fill and grading that would be required to build the structure as shown on the approved plans would unnecessarily lift the site and create a steep grade or retaining condition against new structures to the east. The applicant has revised the building elevations to respond to the grade as follows:

- South Elevation: The side porch for the eastern unit will no longer be accessible from East Franklin Street. There will be an additional four stairs to access the front porch of the eastern unit.
- East Elevation: The full basement level with windows and a full lite door is now visible. The basement level will be clad in brick for the first bay and fiber cement siding for the remainder of the elevation.
- West Elevation: Wooden lattice is proposed under the proposed porch structure and the visible portion of the basement level will be clad in fiber cement siding and brick.
- North Elevation: This elevation will not be visible from the public right of way.

Staff recommends approval of the project with a condition. The proposed infill project appears generally to be in keeping with the Standards for New Construction outlined in the *Guidelines* (pg. 46-47) and is consistent with the

original approval. The proposed alteration creates a structure that appears as a four story structure from the east elevation. The Guidelines note that new residential construction should respect the typical height of surrounding residential buildings (pg. 47, Height, Width, Proportion, & Massing #1). Given the lack of immediate historic context in this area, staff finds the proposed height is appropriate as it is consistent with the residential structures at the corner of 29th and East Franklin which are 2 to 3 stories set on raised foundations, and the structure continues to read as a three story structure along East Franklin Street. The Guidelines note that materials used in new construction should be compatible with original materials used throughout the district (pg. 47, Materials & Colors #2). As raised foundations in the district are not clad in siding, staff recommends the visible basement level on the east and west elevations be clad in brick for the entire elevation.

It is the assessment of staff that the application is consistent with the Standards for New Construction outlined in Section 30.930.7(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 code.