

**COMMISSION OF ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW  
STAFF REPORT  
October 28, 2014 Meeting**

16. **CAR No. 14-116** (J. Crone & T. Helmkamp) **506 and 510 West 19<sup>th</sup> Street  
Springhill Old and Historic District**

**Project Description:** **Construct two new single-family dwellings**

**Staff Contact:** **J. Hill**

The applicants request approval to construct two new single-family dwellings on two adjacent vacant lots located in the Springhill Old and Historic District. The proposed houses are being considered together for conceptual review. For final review in the future, staff recommend two separate applications. The two houses convey something of the variety of housing types found in the district. The materials appear to be compatible with those found in the district and appropriate for new construction. Both buildings have brick foundations, porches with metal roofs, cement-fiber siding and architectural shingles on the main body of the houses. The house at 510 also has cement-fiber shake shingle in the front gable of the façade. The material for the windows was not specified. A variety of roof forms are present throughout the district, and the neighborhood features some other Commission-approved residences that have been constructed since the designation of the local historic district in 2006.

The applicant is seeking **Conceptual Review** for this project. Conceptual review is covered under Sec. 114-930.6(d) of the City Code: *The commission shall review and discuss the proposal with the applicant and make any necessary recommendations. Such Conceptual Review shall be advisory only.* Commission staff reviewed the project through the lens of the Standards for New Construction on pages 44 and 45 and the Standards for Site Improvements on pages 66 and 67 of the *Richmond Old and Historic District Handbook and Design Review Guidelines* and the resulting comments follow.

**Staff Findings based on Commission of Architectural Review Guidelines**

**STANDARDS FOR NEW CONSTRUCTION**

*New construction should be compatible with the historic features that characterize its setting and context. To protect the significance of the historic context, the new work should reference the historic materials, features, size, scale, proportions, and massing of its setting. However, new construction should be clearly discernible from the old to protect the authenticity of the historic district.*

## **SITING**

1. *Additions should be subordinate in size to the main structure and as inconspicuous as possible. Locating them at the rear or least visible side of the structure is preferred.*

This standard is not applicable.

2. *New infill construction should respect the prevailing front and side yard setback patterns of the surrounding block. The minimal setbacks evident in most districts reinforce the traditional street wall.*

The site plan provided for Commission review does not include the existing building at 502. Although the existing attached dwellings on the block are widely spaced, the next submission should demonstrate consistent setbacks with the porch and house at 502 West 19<sup>th</sup> Street.

3. *New structures should face the most prominent street bordering the site.*

The proposed dwellings will appropriately face West 19th Street.

## **FORM**

1. *New construction should use a building form compatible with that found elsewhere in the immediate area. Building form refers to the specific combination of massing, size, symmetry, proportions, projections, and roof shapes that lend identity to a structure. Building form is greatly influenced by the architectural style of a given structure.*

As noted, there are a variety of building forms present in the district. The size, symmetry, projections and roof shapes appear to be compatible with forms found elsewhere in the district. The proportions of 506 make it appear to be narrower and taller than other historic buildings in the district.

## **SCALE**

1. *New construction should maintain the existing human scale of historic residential and commercial neighborhoods. The inappropriate use of monumentally-scaled buildings that overwhelm pedestrians at the street level is discouraged.*

The proposed buildings maintain the existing human scale of the neighborhood.

2. *New additions and infill structures should incorporate human-scale elements such as storefronts and porches into their design.*

The proposed designs include front porches at both addresses.

## **HEIGHT, WIDTH, PROPORTION, & MASSING**

1. *New construction should respect the typical height of surrounding houses and commercial structures.*

The heights of the proposed buildings are not provided. In the elevation showing the relative heights with the existing dwelling at 502, the building at 506 stands out for its greater height. The height may appear exaggerated because the drawing is an elevation; in perspective the attic story will recede. The new houses also seem narrow compared to existing houses in the district that are often built closer to the lot lines with a historically smaller sideyard setback.

2. *New construction should respect the vertical orientation typical of commercial and residential properties in historic districts. New designs that call for wide massing of more than 30 feet should be broken up by bays.*

The houses in Springhill are not as consistently vertical in orientation as those of the City's older and denser historic districts. The façades could be less vertical in their narrowness and still respect the proportion and massing typical of this district.

3. *Typical massing patterns throughout city historic districts are simple and block-like; therefore, new structures should avoid the use of staggered setbacks, towers, or elaborate balconies.*

The inappropriate elements listed in this standard are not present in the proposed designs.

## **MATERIALS, COLORS, & DETAILS**

1. *New construction should not cover or destroy original architectural elements.*

This standard is not applicable.

2. *Missing building elements should be replaced with new elements compatible in size, scale, and material to the original elements without creating a false historical appearance.*

This standard is not applicable.

3. *Materials used in new construction should be compatible with original materials used throughout the surrounding neighborhood.*

The design calls for brick foundations, Hardiplank siding, and architectural asphalt shingles, all of which appear to be consistent with the Standards for New Construction. The use of the shake shingles appears to be appropriate for this building type in this district. Some care should be taken in handling the transition from the shingles to the siding on the façade of 510. The column and porch

decking materials were not specified. Staff suggest that pilaster or half-posts be used against the face of the houses to complete the porch designs. The height of the privacy fence may be limited by zoning to six feet.

4. *Paint colors for new additions should complement those of the primary structure. Paint colors used should be similar to the historically appropriate colors found in the immediate neighborhood and throughout the larger district.*

The applicant has not yet indicated color selections.

5. *Vinyl, asphalt, and aluminum siding are not permitted for use in City Old and Historic Districts. Other synthetic siding materials with a smooth, untextured finish may be allowed in limited cases, but approval by the Commission is always required.*

The application does not indicate the use of vinyl, asphalt or aluminum siding. The cement-fiber siding proposed for use should have a smooth finish.

6. *Vinyl windows are strongly discouraged and rarely permitted.*

The application does not specify the materials for the windows.