

**COMMISSION OF ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW
STAFF REPORT
April 26, 2016 Meeting**

18. **CAR No. 16-055 (D. Kapella)** **2400 E. Franklin Street
St. John's Church Old and Historic District**

Project Description: **Construct a single family dwelling**

Staff Contact: **K. Chen**

The applicant requests conceptual review and comment to construct a new, single-family dwelling on a vacant lot in the St. John's Church Old and Historic District. The applicant appeared before the Commission at its December 15, 2015 for conceptual review of siting the dwelling at the top of the hill at the northwest corner of the lot adjacent to the alley and N. 24th Street. The applicant is now seeking review and comment on the height, width and massing of the proposed single-family dwelling.

The applicant is proposing to construct a three-story dwelling with a basement that will not exceed the 35' height allowed under R-6 zoning. A foot print of approximately 36' x 36' is being proposed to minimize the amount of grading required on the steep lot. The form and mass being proposed is simple and block like. As stated in the previous conceptual review the building will meet the setbacks required by zoning and the prevailing patterns in the neighborhood. The applicant submitted a detailed analysis of the prevailing patterns in the vicinity of the proposed new construction. Heights vary from two to three stories over raised basements. With the exception of the adjacent Bellevue school, the typical width is three bays, approximately 33' feet, with a rectangular foot print of approximately 65'. The typical massing is block like with few projects except for front porches and in some instances rear or side porches and the occasional projecting bay.

The applicant is seeking **Conceptual Review** for this project. Conceptual review is covered under Sec. 30-930.6(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: Residential" on pages 44 and 45 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

All new residential and commercial construction, whether in the form of additions or entire buildings, should be compatible with the historic features that characterize their setting and context. To protect the context of the surrounding historic district, new construction should reference the materials, features, size, scale, proportions, and massing of the existing historic building or buildings in its setting. However, compatibility does not mean duplicating the existing buildings or environment. In order to avoid creating a false sense of history, new construction should also be discernible from the old. Perhaps the best way to think about a compatible new building (or addition) is that it should be a good neighbor; one that enhances the character of the existing district and respects its historic context, rather than being an exact (and misleading) reproduction of another building.

Staff finds that the proposed 3-story height, not to exceed 35', and the 36' width and simple, block massing meets the *Guidelines* to protect the context of the surrounding historic district, by referencing the size, scale, proportions, and massing of the existing historic building or buildings in its setting.