

**COMMISSION OF ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW
STAFF REPORT
May 24, 2016 Meeting**

18. **CAR No. 16-086** (C. White)

**625 N. 27th Street
Church Hill North Old and Historic District**

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

Staff Contact: **K. Chen**

The applicant requests approval to construct a new single family dwelling on a vacant lot in the Church Hill North Old and Historic District.

The applicant proposes to construct a 2 ½-story, 3-bay frame dwelling that is a contemporary adaptation of the Greek Revival and Colonial Revival-style dwellings found throughout the district. The dwelling will be set on a low, “Vintage Black” brick foundation. The smooth, un-beaded Hardie siding will be Light Mist, similar in appearance to Colonial Revival Gray, #5 on the CAR approved palette. There will be a 1-story, 1-bay portico at the entrance with Doric columns and a standing seam metal shed roof. There will be ranked, 1/1, vinyl clad windows on the façade with flanking, louvered shutters. The shutters and porch steps will be painted Needlepoint Navy, #33 on the CAR palette. The 2-panel front door with an upper lite and transom will be painted Rembrandt Ruby, #25 on the CAR palette. There will be a gable roof with a steeper pitch at the front and longer, shallower angle to the rear. The front roof will be clad with standing seam metal painted Black Fox, #36 on the CAR palette. The rear portion of the roof will be clad with architectural shingles. There will be a simple crown molding at the edge of the roof and two, front gable dormers. The windows and all of the trim unless otherwise noted will be painted or prefinished in white. There will be a two-story porch on the rear of the dwelling.

The applicant is seeking final approval for the design. 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.

SITING

The dwelling will be constructed facing North 27th Street the prominent street adjacent to the parcel. The dwelling will have a front yard setback of approximately 12' to align with the adjacent dwellings. The side yard setbacks will be approximately 3'-4" which meet zoning requirements and reflect the narrow side yards found in the district.

FORM

The gable roofed, 2 ½ story, 3-bay gable roofed massing is a form found throughout the Church Hill North district. The proposed dwelling is located on an eclectic block with a wide variety of house forms that vary from a pair of frame Queen Anne-style dwellings, a brick Colonial Revival attached dwelling with a mansard roof, and a raised Greek Revival. The entrance portico creates a human scale and relates to the variety of porches and portico found on the block.

HEIGHT, WIDTH, PROPORTION & MASSING

As stated above the block displays a variety of architectural styles, heights, widths, proportions and massing. The 3-bay width is among the most common width seen on both sides of the street. Roof forms vary from shallow gable, mansard, and shed roof with examples of steep gables with dormers in close proximity. The proposed dwelling will be 35'-6" to the apex of the gable. The flanking dwellings are lower at 26'-6" and 24'-6" but there are taller houses at the north end of the block. Care has also been taken to align the porch and cornice of the proposed dwelling with the porch and cornice line of the house to the south (right). The application includes complete dimensions for the windows and the placement of the window heads and sills on all elevations of the building.

MATERIALS & COLORS

Selected materials and colors are all found in the *Guidelines* and appropriate for new construction.

Staff recommends approval of the project. The proposed infill project appears generally to be in keeping with the Standards for New Construction outlined in the *Guidelines*. Staff recommends that approval be conditioned:

- The wood screen surrounding the mechanical units in the side yard be painted or opaquely stained because it will be visible from the primary street. The color should be submitted to staff for administrative approval. *Guidelines, Fences & Walls pg. 74, # 5*
- The wood shutters must be functional (mounted on hinges) and not nailed or fixed to the wall surface. *Guidelines, Shutters pg. 66, #21*

It is the assessment of staff that with the acceptance of the above conditions 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.