



**Staff Report**  
**City of Richmond, Virginia**



**Commission of Architectural Review**

10.COA-161194-2025	Conceptual Review	Meeting Date: 2/25/2025
Applicant/Petitioner	B. Tyler Sylvestro	
Project Description	Demolish an existing one- and one-half story rear portion of a building.	
Project Location		
Address: 711 North 26 <sup>th</sup> Street		
Historic District: Church Hill North		
<p>High-Level Details:</p> <p>The applicant requests approval to demolish the rear projection of a Greek Revival Style House circa 1855.</p> <p>The projection is one and a half stories with a gable roof, center chimney, and features a couple doors and vertically aligned windows, the upper windows being smaller than the lower ones.</p> <p>Historic documentation suggests that this addition may have been constructed between 1889 and 1905.</p>		
Staff Contact	Alex Dandridge, alex.dandridge@rva.gov, (804) 646-6569	
Previous Reviews	None.	
Staff Recommendations	Conceptual Review	

**Staff Analysis**

<b>CONCEPTUAL REVIEW</b>	
Surrounding Context	<p>The subject block retains much of its historic fabric on the east side, whereas the west side is an open parking lot except for a two-story masonry building on the southwest corner of M Street and North 26<sup>th</sup> Street. 711 North 26<sup>th</sup> Street is located mid-block on the east side North 26<sup>th</sup> Street and is the only Greek Revival Style dwelling. The east side of North 26<sup>th</sup> Street consists of two-story dwellings, mostly frame and Italianate, Queen Anne, and Second Empire in style. There is a grouping of three attached masonry dwellings at the southeast corner of M Street and North 26<sup>th</sup> Street. The streetscape includes medium sized trees, brick, and concrete sidewalks with granite curbs. The rear alley is gravel and lined by various types of wooden fences. There are a few auxiliary buildings that front the alley.</p>

Guideline Reference	Reference Text	Analysis
<p><b>Standards for Demolition, p. 82</b></p>	<p><i>According to Sec. 114-930.7(d) and 114-930.9 of the Historic Preservation Ordinance: The Commission shall not issue a Certificate of Appropriateness for demolition of any building or structure within an Old and Historic District unless the applicant can show that there are no feasible alternatives to demolition. The demolition of historic buildings and elements in Old and Historic Districts is strongly discouraged.</i></p> <p><i>Under the provisions of Sec. 32-930.7., the Commission shall approve requests for demolition when:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>1) There are no feasible alternatives to proposed demolition. "Feasible alternatives" include an appropriate new use and rehabilitation, relocation of the structure to a compatible site or re-sale of the property to an individual committed to suitable rehabilitation or relocation.</i></li> <li><i>2) A building or structure is deemed not to be a contributing part of the historic character of an Old and Historic District.</i></li> <li><i>3) The Commission deems that a building or structure has deteriorated beyond the point of feasible rehabilitation.</i></li> </ol> <p><i>In addition to the above criteria, the Commission has the authority to consider four other factors in arriving at decisions involving proposed demolitions:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>1) The historic and architectural value of a building.</i></li> <li><i>2) The effect that demolition will have on the surrounding neighborhood.</i></li> <li><i>3) The type and quality of the project that will replace the demolished building.</i></li> <li><i>4) The historic preservation goals outlined in the Master Plan and Downtown Plan.</i></li> </ol>	<p>The application states that the intention of the project is not to rehabilitate this portion of the building, therefore, no structural report or cost estimates of rehabilitation were provided for the Commission's consideration.</p> <p>The Guidelines suggest that the applicants who propose demolition show that there are no feasible alternatives to demolition.</p> <p>The application implies that rehabilitation, or addition, to this section of the building is not feasible because the current structure does not adequately serve the needs of the owners. Images submitted by the applicant show a deteriorated structural member as well as potentially inadequate footings.</p> <p>The primary portion of 711 North 26<sup>th</sup> Street is a two-story, frame, Greek Revival building circa 1855. It is three bays wide with a hipped roof, and a one-story, covered, single bay porch with fluted Doric columns and a wide entablature. The building's character and style are defined by its prominent Greek Revival elements.</p> <p>The rear portion of the dwelling is offset slightly to the south of the primary portion of the building and is much more vernacular in style. It is one and a half stories with a gable roof, center chimney, and features a couple doors and vertically aligned windows; the upper windows being smaller than the lower ones.</p> <p>Based on Historic documentation, there have been other auxiliary buildings on the site over time and this rear portion appears to have been constructed sometime between 1889 and 1905. It is not original to primary portion of the building but has gained significance and speaks to the historic evolution of the site.</p> <p>There have been changes to this rear portion overtime. The 1905 Sanborn Map shows that there was a one story covered porch that spanned the width of the north elevation. In addition, the original windows are no longer present, and openings have likely been altered/added/and removed. Nevertheless, the overall form of the building has likely remained the same.</p> <p>Many historic properties in Church Hill North have developed and changed over time; having auxiliary buildings come and go and additions constructed in various locations. It is Staff's finding that this portion of the building does contribute the overall historic character of the district, speaking to the more vernacular styles and later additions to buildings; however, it lacks significant architectural value, and does lack some of its historic integrity due to the number of alterations that appear to have taken place.</p> <p>The demolition would not have a negative impact on the character and streetscape of North 26<sup>th</sup> Street because the existing addition is set to the rear of the historic dwelling and minimally visible from the right-of-way. The</p>

		<p>Demolition would have an impact on the views of the property from the rear alley.</p> <p>The applicant is proposing a new addition in place of this rear portion of the building if the demolition is approved. The new addition would reference the existing projection in that it would be constructed in roughly the same footprint and would feature an asymmetrical gable roof.</p>
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## Figures

Figure 1. 711 North 26<sup>th</sup> Street Façade, February 2025.



Figure 2. View of existing rear addition from North 26<sup>th</sup> Street.





Figure 3. View of existing rear addition from the rear alley.



Figure 4. View of existing rear addition from the rear alley.



Figure 5. View of existing rear addition from the rear alley.



Figure 6. View of existing rear addition from the rear alley.



Figure 7. Historic Maps left to right: 1877, 1889, 1905

