

**COMMISSION OF ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW  
STAFF REPORT**

**December 15, 2015 Meeting**

**19. CAR No. 16-005** (D. Kapella)

**2400 E. Franklin Street  
St. John's Church Old and Historic District**

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

**Staff Contact:** **K. Chen**

The applicant requests conceptual review of the siting of a free standing single family dwelling to be constructed on a vacant lot located in the St. John's Church Old and Historic District that offers a variety of challenges. The parcel consists of a hill that rises from Franklin Street on the south to an alley behind Grace Street on the north. The lower portion of the lot, fronting Franklin Street, has a steep grade consisting of a 30' rise over 50' which makes placing a building close to Franklin Street extremely difficult if not unfeasible. The land uses along Franklin Street were historically industrial. The historic industrial buildings have been converted to multifamily or condos. The land uses at the top of the hill are single family residences. The parcel is currently zoned M-1 that does not permit single family construction. The owners are seeking rezoning to R-6 zoning which would permit single family construction. The zoning requires that the lot have public street frontage but does not necessarily require that the building address the street.

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.

The site plans suggests placing the house at the top of the hill where the parcel is bordered by an alley behind the dwellings that face East Grace Street to the north and North 24<sup>th</sup> Street on the west. North 24<sup>th</sup> Street terminates south of its intersection with the alley. The *Guidelines* suggest that a new building should face the most prominent street bordering the site. The lot currently has a Franklin Street address, if the building is placed at the top of the hill it could face N. 24<sup>th</sup> Street, the prominent street bordering the west side of the lot in this area. The front and side yard setbacks will be dictated by the rezoning but the *Guidelines* would suggest that the existing setback along 24<sup>th</sup> Street be respected.