

9. COA-084823-2021

PUBLIC HEARING DATE

January 26, 2021

PROPERTY ADDRESS

515-517 North 28th Street

DISTRICT

Church Hill North

APPLICANT

Bertha, LLC

STAFF CONTACT

C. Jeffries

Commission of Architectural Review

STAFF REPORT

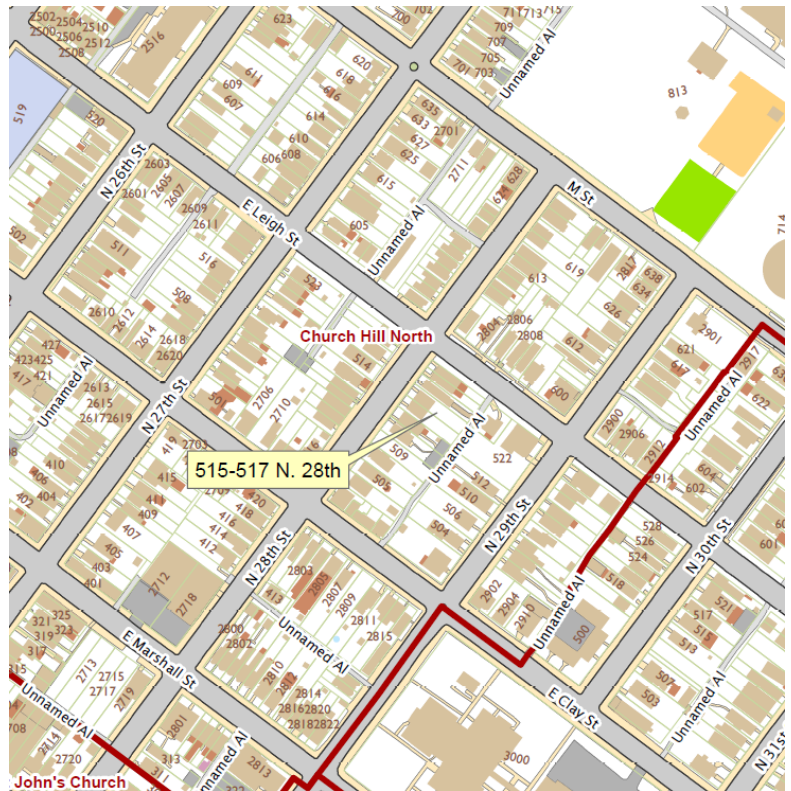


PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Demolish existing rear section and construct a new two-story rear addition and garage.

PROJECT DETAILS

- The applicant is proposing alterations to two homes in the Church Hill North City Old and Historic District.
- The existing building is a two-story frame Greek Revival double house built ca. 1880.
- The applicant proposes to demolish an existing 1-story massing at the rear of both homes, and construct a 2-story addition with a hipped roof. Each side of the addition will be approximately 47' by 21'.
- A 1½ story garage for each property is also proposed in the rear yards.
- Proposed materials for the addition and garages include:
 - Fiber cement siding
 - Aluminum clad windows
 - Parged foundations
 - Composite or fiber cement trim
 - Asphalt shingles
 - Insulated steel garage door
- For the existing building, the applicant proposes to remove existing asphalt cladding and restore and paint the underlying wood clapboard. Painting and repair work is also proposed on the façade.



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STAFF RECOMMENDATION

PARTIAL APPROVAL WITH CONDITIONS

PREVIOUS REVIEWS

The Commission conceptually reviewed the project at the December 2020 meeting. The Commission expressed concern with the size and massing of the addition. Commissioners also voiced their concerns regarding the proposed roof and window designs of the addition.

STAFF RECOMMENDED CONDITIONS

- The applicant work with staff to reduce the massing of the addition by reducing the overall length and width of the addition.

- The porch roof be revised to differentiate the porch and the addition, and the revised design be submitted to staff for review and approval.
- The solid walls between the rear porches be eliminated from the design.
- Window and door specifications be submitted for administrative approval.
- The fiber cement siding be smooth and unbeaded.
- The windows in the addition be of a contemporary design.
- Any additional information regarding the repair work required for the existing building be submitted for administrative approval.
- All proposed paint colors be submitted for administrative approval.
- Staff recommends **denial** of the proposed garages, and recommends the applicant either work with staff to gain administrative approval for the previously proposed design, or return to the Commission for consideration of a different design that reduces the mass and height of the buildings.

STAFF ANALYSIS

Standards for Demolition, pg. 82	<p><i>Under the provisions of Sec. 32-930.7., the Commission shall approve requests for demolition when:</i></p> <p>1) <i>There are no feasible alternatives to the 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</i></p> <p>2) <i>A building or structure is deemed not to be a contributing part of the historic character of an Old and Historic District.</i></p> <p>3) <i>The Commission deems that a building or structure has deteriorated beyond the point of feasible rehabilitation.</i></p>	<p>The applicant is proposing to demolish an existing 1-story massing at the rear of the homes. This section of the building has a gable roof, side porches, and a central chimney. Though the date of construction of this section of the building is unknown, it does appear on the 1905 Sanborn map of the property. The applicant has submitted a statement from a structural engineer that indicates that this section of the building is structurally deficient. <u>Staff recommends approval of the proposed demolition.</u></p>
Standards for New Construction, Materials and Colors, pg. 47	<p>1. <i>Additions should not obscure or destroy original architectural elements.</i></p>	<p>Staff notes that the demolition of the rear wall has been reduced slightly. Staff continues to have concerns regarding the extent of the demolition of the rear wall of the existing building.</p> <p>The roof plan indicates the roof of the addition will not impact the historic chimney or roof ridge.</p>
Standards for New Construction, Siting, pg. 46	<p>1. <i>Additions should be subordinate in size to their main buildings and as inconspicuous as possible. Locating additions at the rear or on the least visible side of a building is preferred.</i></p>	<p>The proposed addition is located at the rear, and is inset from the side walls of the existing building. However, the addition is located at the back of the building and will be visible from East Leigh Street given its overall length.</p>
Standards for New Construction, Form, pg. 46	<p>1. <i>New construction should use a building form compatible with that found elsewhere in the historic district. Building form refers to the specific combination of massing, size, symmetry, proportions, projections and roof shapes that lend identity to a building. Form is greatly influenced by the architectural style of a given structure.</i></p>	<p>The applicant has changed the roof of the addition from a hipped roof to a shed roof. Staff finds the proposed shed roof is in keeping with additions found throughout the district.</p> <p>The applicant has reduced the solid massing of the addition and added a rear porch to the design. Staff finds the addition is still significantly larger than the historic building</p>

and, though the solid massing has been reduced, it still overwhelms the existing historic building. Staff notes that, typical of the Greek Revival style, this building has a narrow, vertical form and that the proposed addition adds a mass that results in a significant change in this form. Staff notes that the revisions have resulted in a building that is longer overall than proposed during the conceptual review. Staff recommends the applicant work with staff to reduce the overall form and massing of the addition by reducing the overall length and width of the addition.

Standards for New Construction, Form, pg. 46

3. New residential construction and additions should incorporate human-scale elements such as cornices, porches and front steps into their design. In Richmond, porches were historically an integral part of residential design and provide much of the street-level architectural character of Richmond's historic districts.

Staff notes that rear porches were added to the design, which is consistent with historic buildings found throughout the district. However, the design of the porch is not in keeping with historic rear porches.

Staff finds that the proposed extension of the addition roof over the porches is not consistent with historic patterns. Porch roofs are typically separate from the main roof and do not include an area of siding on the sides. Staff recommends the porch roof be revised to differentiate the porch and the addition, and the revised design be submitted to staff for review and approval.

Staff also finds that the proposed solid wall between the rear porches is not consistent with historic patterns and contributes to the appearance of solid massing at the rear of the building. Staff recommends the solid walls between the rear porches be eliminated from the design. The applicant may also wish to consider constructing two separated rear porches, which would be consistent with historic patterns.

Standards for New Construction, Materials and Colors, pg. 47

2. Materials used in new residential construction should be visually compatible with original materials used throughout the district.

The plans do not include specifications for proposed windows and doors. Staff recommends specifications be submitted for administrative approval.

Standards for New Construction, Materials and Colors, pg. 47

4. 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 plans indicate that fiber cement siding is proposed for the addition. Staff recommends the fiber cement siding be smooth and unbeaded.

Standards for New Construction, Doors and Windows, pg. 49	<i>1. The size, proportion and spacing patterns of door and window openings on a new addition should follow patterns established by the original building. Windows on most commercial and residential properties throughout Old and Historic Districts have a vertical orientation. Wide, horizontal so-called "picture windows" on new additions are strongly discouraged.</i>	Windows proposed for the addition are generally consistent with the building and patterns found throughout the district.
Standards for Rehabilitation, pg. 59	<i>10. While it is acceptable to use salvaged materials as in-kind replacement, adding features or salvaged architectural elements that suggest an inaccurate or undocumented sequence of construction should be avoided because this confuses our understanding of the evolution of Richmond's historic built environment.</i>	Staff finds that the proposed 2/2 windows on the rear addition are not consistent with historic patterns and would confuse the understanding of the evolution of this historic building. <u>Staff recommends the windows in the addition be of a contemporary design.</u>
Standards for Rehabilitation, pg. 59	<i>2. Retain original wood features such as cornices, brackets, window and doorway surrounds, sashes and doors. Maintain the historic reveal or exposure of the siding and trim, as it is an important character-defining feature.</i>	The plans indicate that the historic building will be painted and repaired as required. The plans state that the front porch railings will be replaced with wood Richmond rail, which is consistent with the guidelines. On a site visit to the property, staff confirmed that a number of repairs are necessary. <u>Staff recommends any additional information regarding the repair work required for the existing building be submitted for administrative approval.</u>
Standards for Rehabilitation, pg. 59	<i>3. Retain original metal features such as cast iron porches and steps, metal cornices, roofs, roof cresting, window sash, entablatures, columns, capitals, window hoods and hardware and the color and finish of all original materials.</i>	Staff notes that the existing metal roof on the front of the building may require repair. <u>Staff recommends any additional information regarding the painting or repair of the historic roof be submitted for administrative approval.</u>
Paint colors, pg. 64	<i>Wood-frame Buildings (including Stucco-clad buildings) 18C, Georgian, Federal, and Greek Revival styles: White, Spanish Brown, Yellow Ochre, Stone, Buff, Light Grey, Green-Grey, Medium Blue</i>	The application indicates that the applicant has chosen "olive" and "pacific blue." Staff was unable to locate Hardiplank colors that matched the listed colors and <u>recommends all proposed paint colors be submitted for administrative approval.</u> Staff notes that appropriate body colors for Greek Revival houses are neutrals and lighter colors.
Standards for New Construction, Residential Outbuildings, pg. 51	<i>1. Outbuildings, including garages, sheds, gazebos and other auxiliary structures, should be compatible with the design of the primary building on the site, including roof slope and materials selection. 2. Newly constructed outbuildings such as detached garages or tool sheds should respect the siting, massing, roof profiles, materials and colors of existing outbuildings in the neighborhood.</i>	Staff finds the proposed garages are not consistent with outbuildings found throughout the district and are not subordinate to the existing building. The proposed garages are taller than the proposed addition and the footprint has been increased from the design that was conceptually reviewed. Though there was historically a 1½ story detached outbuilding located on the property, it was in the location of the proposed addition, and was

3. *New outbuildings should be smaller than the main residence and be located to the rear and/or side of the property to emphasize that they are secondary structures.*

4. *Prefabricated yard structures are discouraged. Screening will be considered as a mitigating factor for the installation of these structures. However, prefabricated structures will still be reviewed for compatibility using the criteria developed in this section.*

the only outbuilding on the property.

Staff notes that the previously proposed garages were consistent with the guidelines and were appropriate for the district and subject block. Staff recommends denial of the proposed garages, and recommends the applicant either work with staff to gain administrative approval for the previously proposed design, or return to the Commission for consideration of a different design that reduces the mass and height of the buildings.

It is the assessment of staff that, with the conditions above, the application is consistent with the Standards for Rehabilitation and New Construction outlined in Section 30-930.7 (b) and (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 the code.

FIGURES



Figure 1. 515-517 North 28th Street, façade



Figure 2. 515-517 North 28th Street, rear elevation



Figure 3. Rear massings on subject alley



Figure 4. Rear massings on subject alley

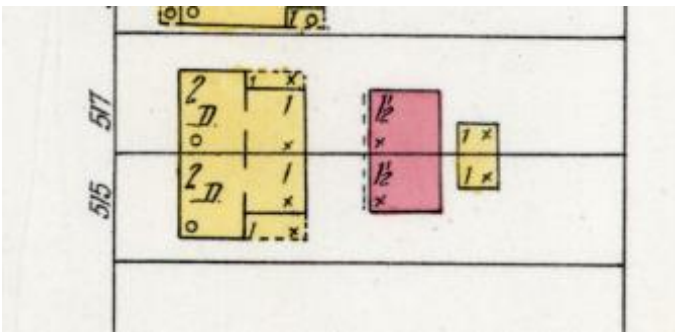


Figure 5. 1905 Sanborn Map

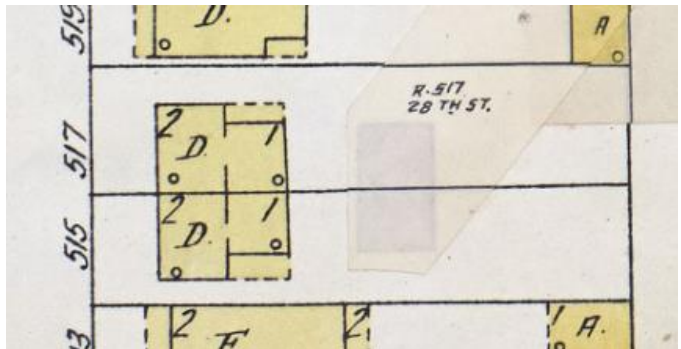


Figure 6. 1950 Sanborn Map