

**COMMISSION OF ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW
STAFF REPORT
October 28, 2014 Meeting**

11. **CAR No. 14-119** (DGM Properties, LLC) **3603 E. Marshall Street
Chimborazo Park Old and Historic District**

Project Description: **Construct new single-family residence**

Staff Contact: **W. Palmquist**

The applicant requests approval to construct a new single-family residence on a vacant lot located in the Chimborazo Park Old and Historic District. The proposed building is a two-story structure with a flat roof that is similar to other Italianate-styled buildings found throughout the district.

The building is situated between two existing two-story homes on the south side of E. Marshall Street. The proposed building would be about 26' in height. The dwelling will have 3' side yard setbacks and a 15' front yard setback, which would align with the existing homes along this side of the block. The building will have a one-story front and rear porch. The applicant proposes smooth cement board siding with a 10 ¾" reveal, and a raised portion in the front of the structure, above the roof deck, composed of smooth cement board siding with a 4 ½" reveal. Other materials include wooden porch columns, Richmond rails, and steps, aluminum-clad casement windows with no divided lites and a fixed transom above, membrane porch and main roofs, painted aluminum gutter and downspout, parged concrete block foundation, wooden porch posts above concrete pier footings, and fiberglass doors.

The applicant is seeking final approval for the design. Commission staff reviewed the project through the lens of the Standards for New Construction on pages 44 and 45 and the Standards for Site Improvements on pages 66 and 67 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

New construction should be compatible with the historic features that characterize its setting and context. To protect the significance of the historic context, the new work should reference the historic materials, features, size, scale, proportions, and massing of its setting. However, new construction should be clearly discernible from the old to protect the authenticity of the historic district.

SITING

1. *Additions should be subordinate in size to the main structure and as inconspicuous as possible. Locating them at the rear or least visible side of the structure is preferred.*

This standard is not applicable.

2. *New infill construction should respect the prevailing front and side yard setback patterns of the surrounding block. The minimal setbacks evident in most districts reinforce the traditional street wall.*

The proposed 3' side yard setbacks will reflect the typical pattern along the block. The 15' front yard setback will match align the proposed building with those existing along the block, helping to create a unified street wall.

3. *New structures should face the most prominent street bordering the site.*

The proposed dwelling will face East Marshall Street, the most prominent street bordering the site.

FORM

1. *New construction should use a building form compatible with that found elsewhere in the immediate area. Building form refers to the specific combination of massing, size, symmetry, proportions, projections, and roof shapes that lend identity to a structure. Building form is greatly influenced by the architectural style of a given structure.*

The form of the building is typical of two-story Italianate buildings located in the Chimborazo Park Old and Historic District.

SCALE

1. *New construction should maintain the existing human scale of historic residential and commercial neighborhoods. The inappropriate use of monumentally-scaled buildings that overwhelm pedestrians at the street level is discouraged.*

The proposed building maintains the existing human scale of the neighborhood.

2. *New additions and infill structures should incorporate human-scale elements such as storefronts and porches into their design.*

The proposed design calls for a front porch that has a form that is comparable to other porches in the area. However, as most Italianate buildings have a hipped-style roof above the front porch, staff would recommend a similar design in place of the proposed flat roof.

HEIGHT, WIDTH, PROPORTION, & MASSING

1. *New construction should respect the typical height of surrounding houses and commercial structures.*

The proposed structure will be 26" tall at the ridge of the roof. The context rendering supplied by the applicant indicates that the height of the proposed building will be similar to, though slightly lower, than adjacent structures. The proposed building more closely matches the height of the existing Italianate building two properties to the east. In any case, the proposed building height is compatible with those existing along the block.

2. *New construction should respect the vertical orientation typical of commercial and residential properties in historic districts. New designs that call for wide massing of more than 30 feet should be broken up by bays.*

The design respects the typical vertical orientation of two-story residences in the district.

3. *Typical massing patterns throughout city historic districts are simple and block-like; therefore, new structures should avoid the use of staggered setbacks, towers, or elaborate balconies.*

The proposed massing is generally simple and block-like.

MATERIALS, COLORS, & DETAILS

1. *New construction should not cover or destroy original architectural elements.*

This standard is not applicable.

2. *Missing building elements should be replaced with new elements compatible in size, scale, and material to the original elements without creating a false historical appearance.*

This standard is not applicable.

3. *Materials used in new construction should be compatible with original materials used throughout the surrounding neighborhood.*

The applicant proposes smooth cement board siding with a 10 ¾" reveal, and a raised portion in the front of the structure, above the roof deck, composed of smooth cement board siding with a 4 ½" reveal. Other materials include wooden porch columns, Richmond rails, and steps, aluminum-clad casement windows with no divided lites and a fixed transom above, membrane porch and main roofs, painted aluminum gutter and downspout, parged concrete block foundation, wooden porch posts above concrete pier footings, and fiberglass doors. Staff recommends the use of double-hung windows in place of the

proposed casement windows with fixed transoms above, in order to be more compatible with buildings along this block and in the district. Staff has no objection to the proposed 1/1 grid pattern and aluminum-clad wood material.

4. *Paint colors for new additions should complement those of the primary structure. Paint colors used should be similar to the historically appropriate colors found in the immediate neighborhood and throughout the larger district.*

The applicant proposes a neutral-colored Hardiplank that is found on the Duron Exterior Preservation Palette. The applicant is advised to review the proposed paint color with staff once it is selected.

5. *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 application calls for smooth fiber cement siding for the dwelling. The siding should have a smooth finish (and not a faux grain), in accordance with the Commission's guidelines for synthetic materials.

6. *Vinyl windows are strongly discouraged and rarely permitted.*

The application proposes the installation of aluminum-clad wood windows.

Staff recommends approval of the project with conditions. 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 with the substitution of double-hung windows in place of the proposed casement windows with transom above, as well as a hipped-style front porch roof in place of the proposed flat roof. Also, staff recommends that the applicant add a decorative element to the front of the building, either to the cornice, porch frieze, or porch railings, in order to differentiate the structure from other Italianate new construction which is occurring throughout the district.

It is the assessment of staff that, with the condition above, the application is consistent with the Standards for New Construction outlined in Section 114.930.7(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.