

**COMMISSION OF ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW
STAFF REPORT
December 19, 2017, Meeting**

7. **COA-027097-2017** (Eastern Edge Development) **2108 ½ East Broad Street
St. John's Church Old and Historic District**

Project Description: **Construct a new 3-story single family dwelling.**

Staff Contact: **M. Pitts**

The applicant requests conceptual review and comment for the construction of a new detached single family house on a vacant lot in the St. John's Church Old and Historic District.

The proposed new construction will be located on the north side of East Broad Street on a narrow lot between two historic houses. The two flanking houses are frame, two-story, 2-bay vernacular Italianate-style dwellings with decorative porches, window hoods and cornices. The majority of the houses on this side of the street have shallow gable roofs. In addition to the historic structures, there is a three story multifamily home near the intersection of North 21st Street. The structures across the street include a mix of Italianate and Greek Revival masonry and frame homes that are 2 to 3 stories in height. Due to the slope and street, the grade greatly varies from North 21st to North 22nd Streets.

The applicant came before the Commission on October 24, 2017, with a proposal to construct a 3-story, 2-bay home. The home included a full façade porch with a low sloped hipped roof. Several of the Commissioners expressed concerns with the three story height and encouraged the applicant to consider setting a two story structure on an English basement. The Commission encouraged the applicant to propose a contemporary design.

With this application, the applicant is proposing a 3-story structure to be clad in brick or composite siding. The fenestration of the façade consists of three attached openings centered on the elevation and recessed from the building wall on each level. The applicant is proposing a front porch and a second story balcony on the façade. The structure will have a front yard setback to align with the adjacent homes and 2'-4" and 1'-2" side yard setback. Per the site plan, the applicant is proposing an inset side porch and a large rear deck.

The applicant is seeking **Conceptual Review** for this project. 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 46-51 of the *Richmond Old and Historic District Handbook and Design Review Guidelines* utilizing the checklist below.

S=satisfies

D=does not satisfy

NA=not applicable

S **D** **NA**

New infill construction should respect the prevailing front and side yard setback patterns in the surrounding district

The front yard setback matches the adjacent properties. The minimal side yard setbacks are consistent with the adjacent structures. The project does not meet the required side yard setbacks and will require a variance.

Where the adjoining buildings have different setbacks, the setback for the new building should be based on the historical pattern for the block

The siting is consistent with the adjacent buildings.

New buildings should face the most prominent street bordering the site

The structure addresses East Broad Street.

New construction should use a building form compatible with that found elsewhere in the district. Form refers to the combination of massing, size, symmetry, proportions, projections and roof shapes that lend identity to a building.

The tall and narrow structure is not a building form commonly found in the district. The proposed design details were in response to the Commission’s request for a more contemporary design. The applicant has include a front porch, a symmetrical façade, and a cornice which are characteristic of the district. The proportions of the proposed front porch in relation to the façade are not characteristic of the subject block as the porches on the surrounding structures are either full façade porches or small entry porticos. The proposed structure is longer than the adjacent buildings though it has a depth similar to the new construction at 2102-2104 East Broad Street.

New construction should incorporate human-scale elements such as cornices, porches and front steps.

The proposed project incorporates human-scale elements including a front porch, a simple cornice, and front steps.

New construction should respect the typical height of surrounding buildings

The proposed project is taller than the adjacent structures, and the height difference with respect to 2108 East Broad Street is exaggerated due to the change in grade. The structures on the subject block of East Broad Street vary in height as there are several taller homes with English basements on the south side of the street in addition to the two story historic homes and three story new construction on the north side of the street.

Though staff recognizes that height is consistent with the diversity of heights found on the block, the Commission expressed serious concerns with the height of the structure as presented at the October meeting. Staff believes the changes to the design do not de-emphasize the height of the structure as was requested by the Commission and recommends the applicant alter the plans to minimize the height. Staff encourages the applicant to consider incorporating an English basement in the design in order to achieve the desired development in a manner that minimizes the height in a form found on the subject block.

- New construction should respect the typical width, organization of bays, vertical alignment and symmetry of surrounding buildings.**

The project is narrower than the historic structures on the block due to the lot size constraints. Though the proposed triple windows are not characteristic of the district, the windows are vertically aligned and symmetrically placed. Staff finds the proposed triple windows respond to the Commission's request for a more contemporary structure and reference a projecting three sided bay which is found in the district.

- The size, proportion, and spacing patterns of doors and window openings should be compatible with patterns established in the district.**

The typical fenestration pattern in the district includes evenly spaced ranked windows. Though the proposed triple windows are not characteristic of the district, the windows are vertically aligned, symmetrically placed, and of a similar proportion to the historic structures. Staff finds the proposed triple windows respond to the Commission's request for a more contemporary structure and are compatible with patterns in the district.

- Porch and cornice heights should be compatible with adjacent buildings**

Due the slope of the street, the porch heights do not align. The proposed porch height from grade appears to be consistent with the adjacent structures. The cornice height is taller than the adjacent buildings but is compatible with the heights of taller buildings on the block. The Commission has expressed concerns with the overall height of the structure reviewed in October which the currently proposed plans do not address.

- Materials used in new construction should be visually compatible with original materials used throughout the district. Vinyl, asphalt, and aluminum siding are not permitted.**

The proposed brick and siding options are consistent with the brick and frame structure on the subject block.

The following items will need to be included for final review (please refer to the Commission's New Construction Checklist and Required Dimensions document for additional details):

1. Fully dimensioned elevations

2. Roof plan
3. List of windows and doors to include size, material, and design
4. Description of all materials (attach specification sheets if necessary)
5. Site plan to include parking, trash, and mechanical equipment locations
6. Dimensioned context elevation
7. Statement of how the *Richmond Old and Historic District Handbook and Design Review Guidelines* informed the proposed work.