

**COMMISSION OF ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW
STAFF REPORT
May 27, 2014 Meeting**

9. **CAR No. 14-40** (Michaux, LLC)

**308 N. 21st Street
Shockoe Valley Old and Historic District**

Project Description:

**Revise design previously-approved
plans for new single-family dwelling**

Staff Contact:

C. Easterling

The applicant requests approval of changes made to the design of this new residence located in the Shockoe Valley Old and Historic District. The Commission of Architectural Review granted conditional approval on March 26, 2013, for a new single-family dwelling at a vacant lot in the district. During the middle of the construction of the project, staff noted a number of discrepancies between what was being built and what the Commission had approved. The applicant returned to the Commission on April 22, 2014, and obtained approval of some of the changes made to the project, but the Commission requested that the applicant return with additional information about the cornice and brackets on the front of the building, and a revised proposal for the rear of the building.

The applicant has returned to the Commission with two options for the rear window openings. Both options would utilize the existing first and second floor openings. One option is to install a row of three two-over-two windows with simulated divided lites in the opening. The second option is to use slightly wider paired windows. The applicant has provided a 3-D rendering of the cornice which depicts brackets positioned in a manner similar to historic cornices in the immediate area.

Staff recommends approval of the project with a condition. The *Richmond Old and Historic Districts Handbook and Design Review Guidelines* does not provide much guidance concerning window patterning on new freestanding construction. The *Guidelines* notes that windows on most historic properties have a vertical orientation, and advises against the use of wide, horizontal picture windows on new additions (pg. 47, #1). The existing rear windows on the new house on 21st Street appear to be more suburban in character. Staff is not opposed to allowing the applicant to utilize the existing window openings, and both the triple- and double-window openings appear to create more of a vertical orientation. The new windows must have exterior simulated divided lites.

After seeing a mock-up of the cornice at the site, it appears to staff that the cornice of the new building is compatible with not only the proportions of the infill residence, but also the existing buildings on the block.

It is the assessment of staff that, with the condition noted above, the work outlined in the proposal complies 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 page cited above, adopted by the Commission for review of Certificates of Appropriateness under the same section of the code.