

**COMMISSION OF ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW
STAFF REPORT
November 24, 2015 Meeting**

10. CAR No. 15-141 (D. Kleyman)

**812 N. 23rd Street
Union Hill Old and Historic District**

Project Description: Construct a new single-family dwelling

Staff Contact: K. Chen

The applicant requests approval to construct a single-family dwelling on a small, vacant irregularly shaped lot in the Union Hill Old and Historic District. The proposed building is two-stories in height and three-bays wide and of a traditional design.

The proposed building will be situated next to a paved parking lot and a new dwelling to the north. The structure will be a total of 24'-8" in height and 24'-6" in width. It will have side yard setbacks of 6' 4 ½" on the south and 3'-0" on the north, and front yard setback of 3'-4".

The applicant is seeking final approval for the design. 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.

Staff Findings based on Commission of Architectural Review Guidelines
STANDARDS FOR NEW CONSTRUCTION

All new residential and commercial construction, whether in the form of additions or entire buildings, should be compatible with the historic features that characterize their setting and context. To protect the context of the surrounding historic district, new construction should reference the materials, features, size, scale, proportions, and massing of the existing historic building or buildings in its setting. However, compatibility does not mean duplicating the existing buildings or environment. In order to avoid creating a false sense of history, new construction should also be discernible from the old. Perhaps the best way to think about a compatible new building (or addition) is that it should be a good neighbor; one that enhances the character of the existing district and respects its historic context, rather than being an exact (and misleading) reproduction of another building.

SITING

The new dwelling will be constructed to front 23rd Street, the prominent street bordering the site. The proposed front yard setback of 3'-4" which is smaller than the one remaining historic houses on the block that is setback 12'-0". The

adjacent new house at 814 will also be set back 3'-4". The narrow front yard setback meets code and is necessitated by the size and shape of the lot.

FORM

The proposed new building has an irregular footprint because of the size and shape of the lot. The form of the new construction is a two-story, three-bay traditional form with a one-bay front porch with square posts. The size of the narrow front yard setback will not allow for a full façade porch because street facing steps would encroach on the public sidewalk. The building is set on a low foundation and has a low-pitched (.75/12) pyramidal roof. The remaining historic house on the west side of the 800 block 23rd street is a two-story, four-bay double house with a shallow gable roof and a full facade front porch. The proposed building's design calls for a front porch which lends human-scale elements to the building's design.

HEIGHT, WIDTH, PROPORTION & MASSING

The proposed building will be a total of 24'-8" in height. The adjacent historic building is approximately 24'-0" in height and the cornices align. The proposed building design respects the typical vertical orientation of two-story residences in the district.

MATERIALS & COLORS

The applicant proposes smooth fiber cement siding with a 7" reveal, parged CMU foundation with brick veneer on the facade, brick porch piers with wood lattice panels, tongue-and-groove porch flooring, painted Richmond rail, fiber cement fascia boards with Fypon corbels, black EPDM porch roof, a membrane main roof, square front porch columns, 6-panel fiberglass front door with a 2-light transom above, rear fiberglass patio doors, and 2-over-2 MW Jefferson 300-series double-hung windows with simulated-divided-lights. The rear porch will have brick piers, square posts and Richmond rail. The applicant has proposed *HardiePlank* finished in "Harris Cream," which is similar to "Classic Yellow" found on the CAR paint color palette. The applicant is proposing white for all trim, doors and windows.

The air handling unit will be located on the north side of the building near the west corner.

Staff recommends approval of the project. The proposed infill project appears to be in keeping with the Standards for New Construction outlined in the *Guidelines*. It is the assessment of staff that the application is consistent with the Standards for New Construction outlined in Section 30.930.7(c) of the City Code, and 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.