

**COMMISSION OF ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW
STAFF REPORT
September 26, 2017, Meeting**

12. COA-023280-2017 (M. Freund)

**101 North 29th Street
St. John's Church Old and Historic District**

Project Description:

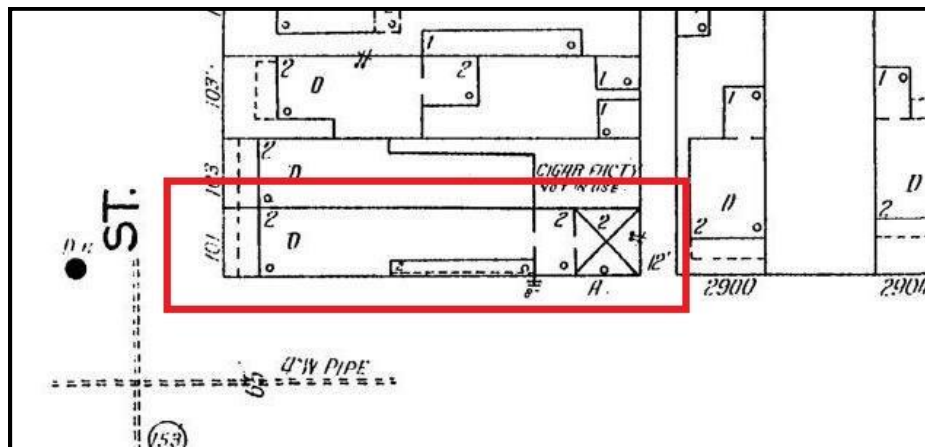
**Enclose side porches and
construct a rear addition.**

Staff Contact:

M. Pitts

The applicant requests approval to rehabilitate and construct a rear addition on a structure at the northeast corner of North 29th and East Franklin Streets in the St. John's Church Old and Historic District.

The existing structure is a 2-story, 3-bay, brick Italianate row house with a shed roof and a full façade front porch. The structure has a secondary entrance and a 2-story porch that front on East Franklin Street. At the rear of the existing structure are the remnants of a two-story carriage house. The historic carriage house included windows and vehicular doors that addressed East Franklin Street. The second floor of the carriage house was connected to the basement of the primary structure by a shed roof. The carriage house was partially demolished in 1982 when a vehicle collided with the structure. The Commission approved the dismantling of the structure with the condition that the structure be rebuilt when economically feasible.



Sheet 00351 of the 1925 Sanborn Map

Immediately to the south of the subject property at 19 North 29th Street is a three-story brick structure with multiple dependencies which have been connected to the primary structure over time. The collection of building parts decrease in height as they step down East Franklin Street.

The applicant came before the Commission on March 28, 2017 for conceptual review and comment for the enclosure of the side porch, the construction of a 4-

story addition, and the construction of a 2-story attached garage. The Commission had multiple concerns regarding the project design which are summarized below:

- Commissioners had concerns that the proposed porch enclosure was not appropriate as the porch is a major feature of the property and enclosing the porch changes the feel of the building. Additionally, the Commission had concerns that the applicant was proposing to demolish the bearing wall behind the porch.
- Commissioners noted that the proposed addition was too massive and did not step down like other buildings in the District.
- With the massive addition and extending the building to the alley, the balance between the subject building and the attached dwelling is lost. A shorter addition may be more appropriate.
- Commissioners inquired about the location of trash receptacles and mechanical equipment.

On June 27, 2017, the applicant returned to the Commission with revised plans for a second round of conceptual review. The revised plans reduced the height of the addition from four to two stories, shortened the proposed addition and garage, and presented two alternatives for the porches off of the existing rear building wall: a second story balcony with a metal awning and cable railing and a full elevation second story covered porch with boxed columns and wooden Richmond rail to match the rear porch of the adjacent structure.

At the June review, Commissioners continued to express concerns regarding the enclosure of porches on a primary elevation. Commissioners' opinions varied on the options for the porches at the rear. Some Commissioners expressed concerns that the porch which replicated the adjacent porch diminished the significance of the historic porch while other Commissioners were supportive of the design which used a building form found in the district.

On August 22, 2017, the applicant returned to the Commission with revised plans for a third round of conceptual review. The revised plans altered the rear porch to accommodate an elevator shaft and altered the details and glazing on the porch enclosure to incorporate columns and railings that more closely replicate the existing columns and railings. Commissioners expressed serious concerns regarding the proposed elevator shaft and recommended it be constructed within the existing structure. Commissioners still had concerns regarding a porch enclosure on a prominent side elevation and recommended additional glazing and wider columns. In general, the Commission was comfortable with the proposed garage.

With this application for final review, the applicant has revised the plans as follows:

- Increased the glazing for the porch enclosure.
- Relocated the door to the addition.

- Removed the elevator shaft. The elevator is proposed to be located in the footprint of the existing structure.
- Removed the roof of the rear balcony and reduce the depth of the balcony.

CAR staff has spoken with zoning staff regarding the proposed project. Zoning staff has noted that the project exceeds lot coverage requirements and does not meet the setback requirements from both East Franklin Street and the property line to the northeast. Zoning staff anticipates that the project would require a Special Use Permit as the necessary exceptions would likely exceed the authority of the Board of Zoning Appeals

Staff recommends approval of the project with conditions.

Porch Enclosure: During previous conceptual reviews, the Commission raised serious concerns about the removal of the open two story porch as it is a highly visible character defining feature of this prominent corner structure, and the *Guidelines* state not to enclose porches on primary elevations (pg. 69, #12). Though the porch details have been altered and replaced through the years, there has historically been a two-story open porch at the location of the existing porch. The applicant responded to some of the Commission's concerns by retaining portions of the bearing wall and by incorporating details and the proportions from the existing two story porch. The Commission's guidelines for porch enclosures note that glazing and porch details are recommended (pg. 71, #13), and the proposed enclosure meets these guidelines. The applicant has responded to concerns raised by the Commission during the August review by increasing the size of the proposed windows. Staff recommends the column width be increased to be consistent with the existing columns as recommended by Commissioners during the August review. Staff recommends approval of the porch enclosure as the applicant has designed the enclosure to convey the historic appearance of a covered first story porch and an open second story porch through the use of expansive glazing and porch details. As the floor plans for the second story do not match the proposed elevations, staff recommends the Commission approve the proposed elevations, and the floor plans be revised to reflect the elevation.

Addition/Garage: The *Guidelines* state that additions should be subordinate to their main structure and be as inconspicuous as possible (pg. 44, Siting #1). The applicant has responded to the Commission's concerns regarding the four story elevator tower by locating the proposed elevator in the interior of the existing building. The *Guidelines* note that the design of garages should relate to the primary structure and outbuildings in the district (pg. 48). The proposed 2-story garage is consistent with brick carriage houses found in the district and the demolished carriage house at the subject property and is compatible with the primary structure. Staff recommends the rooftop railing should be the proposed metal railing for the entire East Franklin Street frontage rather than incorporating a brick wall to minimize the height of the propose garage. The historic carriage house at the site had openings that engaged East Franklin Street. Though staff encouraged the applicant to consider a vehicular opening on the East Franklin

Street elevation to maintain the human scale along the street and utilize the historic curb cut, the applicant has stated that the depth of the garage would not accommodate vehicle parking if the entrance was to address East Franklin Street. Staff recommends details of the proposed garage door be submitted for administrative review and approval.

Rear Balcony: The Commission's Guidelines discourage cutting new openings into historic structures (pg. 69, #8). Additionally, the Guidelines note that documentation to include pictorial and physical documentation should be used when reconstructing missing elements (pg. 59, #7). Staff is unable to find documentation of any openings on the upper story at the rear or evidence of porches or balconies at the rear of the structure. As this will be a highly visible alteration from the rear on a wall that historically had no projections or openings at this level, staff recommends the proposed upper story balcony and door not be incorporated in the projects design.

It is the assessment of staff that with these conditions, 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.