

**COMMISSION OF ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW
STAFF REPORT
June 28, 2016 Meeting**

16. CAR No. 16-097 (Blane, LLC)

**508 W. Marshall Street
Jackson Ward Old and Historic District**

Project Description: Construct a new single family dwelling

Staff Contact: K. Chen

The applicant requests conceptual review and comment to construct a new single family dwelling on a vacant lot in the Jackson Ward Old and Historic District.

The proposed new construction will be a two-story, three-bay, frame, Italianate-style dwelling with a full façade front porch and bracketed cornice. The dwelling will be set on a parged block foundation with brick porch piers. The porch will have a Richmond rail, 4x4 turned posts, and a hipped-roof covered with either membrane or metal roofing. Flat lock metal or black membrane would be acceptable. It will have cementitious siding with an 8" reveal and 1/1, aluminum clad windows. The dwelling will have a 15' front yard setback, the side yard setbacks will be approximately 4' on each side, and the dwelling will be approximately 25'-5" tall.

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 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.

Staff found that the proposed new construction is largely compatible with the historic features that characterizes its setting and context. The setting and context is a mixture of brick and frame, two-story, three-bay, Italianate dwellings with many full façade porches and a variety of bracketed and/or paneled cornices. Some of the houses are set near grade and others have raised basements which lends an interesting vertical rhythm to the block faces. There also seems to be some variety in the front yard setbacks. The application suggests that “the style of the house is intended to mimic the adjacent house” which is not necessarily an approach encouraged by the *Guidelines*. Perhaps, a less historicist approach would be more compatible.

The following items will need to be included for final review:

- 1) A site plan with dimensions showing the setbacks of the adjacent properties and their relationship to the proposed new construction. Location of trash and recycling containers and exterior HVAC units and screening if required.
- 2) Vertical dimensions indicating the placement of windows above finished-floor elevations.
- 3) A dimensioned context drawing illustrating the vertical relationship of the proposed new construction and the adjacent buildings.
- 4) Color selections, compatible with page 58 of the *Guidelines* for either an Italianate-style dwelling or a simpler frame vernacular structure.