

**COMMISSION OF ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW  
STAFF REPORT  
June 26, 2018, Meeting**

11. **COA-034576-2018** (J. & A. Pardue) **3408 East Broad Street  
Chimborazo Park Old and Historic District**

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

**Staff Contact:** **C. Jeffries**

**Proposal:** The applicant seeks approval for the construction of a new detached single-family house on a vacant lot in the Chimborazo Park Old and Historic District. From East Broad Street, the proposed structure appears to be a 2-story brick structure set on a high, brick foundation, with a balcony and a recessed frame third story. A proposed rooftop deck will be enclosed by a wood railing with turned pickets. The structure has a 2-bay façade and a full façade front porch with classical detailing, a turned balustrade, and brick lattice below the decking. The façade has a dentiled cornice and ranked 2/2 triple windows. The front door will be wood with glazing, flanked with multi-lite sidelights with a single-light transom above. The window bay of the façade will project 1'-4". The rear of the dwelling appears to be four stories with a split-face block basement level. The dwelling will have 2/2 simulated divided lite wood and 1/1 fiberglass windows and cementitious siding on the sides and rear as well as the recessed upper story. The structure will have a low-pitched shed roof clad in TPO.

**Surrounding Context:** The proposed new construction will be located on the north side of East Broad Street on a narrow lot between two historic houses. Chimborazo Park is directly across East Broad Street from the subject lot. Buildings in the immediate area include houses with Late Victorian and Queen Anne stylistic elements. The adjacent property to the east at 3406 East Broad Street is one of the later historic houses in the block constructed in 1931 in the Classical Revival style. The single-family dwelling in a simplified Late Victorian Style at 3404 East Broad Street was approved by the Commission in 2015. The property at 3400 East Broad Street is representative of the more typical, demonstrative, frame, Late Victorian dwellings found in this prominent block fronting on Chimborazo Park.

**Previous Reviews:** The applicant came before the Commission on May 22, 2018, with a proposal to construct a 3-story, 2-bay home. Several of the Commissioners expressed concerns with the design and visibility of the third story and roof deck. Commissioners also voiced concerns regarding the mixture of siding and brick not being typical for the district, and encouraged the applicant to incorporate more architectural detail on the façade.

**Changes to the Plans:** The applicant has modified the project as follows in response to concerns raised during the previous review:

- The cornice on the façade has been simplified.

- The rooftop deck railing has been modified to more closely resemble a rooftop balustrade. The side railings have been replaced with a parapet wall, and the depth of the third story has been reduced by 4'. The applicant has submitted site-line drawings to demonstrate the visibility of the third floor.

In addition to the changes recommended during the previous review, the following changes have been made to the plans:

- The fenestration on the rear has been modified by replacing a double hung window with a transom, and replacing two sets of French doors with a triple and a double window. The windows in the rear are also 1/1 rather than the 2/2 previously proposed.

**Staff recommends deferral of the project.** Staff finds that the proposed design does not adequately address the Commission’s concerns raised during Conceptual Review of the project. The applicant continues to propose a building form not found in the district and a mix of materials which is also not consistent with historic patterns. Staff recommends that the project be deferred to allow the applicant the opportunity to modify the design to be more consistent with patterns found in the district.

The applicant is seeking **Final Review** for this project. 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 is shown as 16 ½ feet which will match the surrounding structures. The minimal side yard setbacks appear to match the structures on the block. The owner is seeking an administrative variance to the side yard setback requirement on this narrow lot.

    

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

The adjacent properties have similar setbacks.

    

**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 project utilizes some elements found on structures on the block including a front door with sidelights and transom, a full façade porch, and a 2-bay, asymmetrical façade. The majority of the houses on the block have decorative cornices and shed roofs or false mansard roofs. Staff finds that the proposed recessed third story and balcony are not building forms found within the district. The majority of structures on this block are 2 or 2 ½ stories with a gable or false mansard roof and dormers. The prominent roof lines and the emphasis on the projecting bay are dominant features in the district that are not reflected in the proposed design. The applicant has attempted to reduce the visibility of the third story, however, it will still be highly visible from Chimborazo Park. Staff finds that a design which utilizes a third story or a prominent roof line would be more appropriate for the district. The Commission may also wish to consider whether a rooftop deck would be more appropriate for a building with a very simplified or contemporary architectural style. Staff recommends the roof design or architectural details be revised to create a form more compatible with the district.

**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 decorative cornice, and front steps. Staff finds that the proposed rooftop balustrade is not an element found in the district. The dentiled trim on the third story also does not reflect a traditional cornice and should be eliminated from the design.

**New construction should respect the typical height of surrounding buildings**

The structure is similar in height to the structure to the west and significantly taller than the structure to the east. The block is characterized by a variation in heights, however structures are 2 or 2 ½ stories. The applicant has demonstrated that the third story will not be visible from the street, however staff has concerns it will be visible from the adjacent park.

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

The proposed dwelling is similar in width to the adjacent houses and maintains the 2-bay configuration, vertical alignment, and symmetry of the surrounding buildings.

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

The fenestration pattern on the rear elevation has been altered to remove two sets of French doors and replace a double hung window with a transom. Staff finds that the irregular fenestration pattern, with a varied mixture of window types and sizes, is not compatible with patterns in the district. Staff recommends the rear elevation be revised to be more compatible with patterns in the district. The revised design should be submitted to staff for administrative review and approval.

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

The porch and cornice heights appear to be compatible with the varying porch and cornice heights of the adjacent structures.

**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 applicant is proposing brick veneer on the façade and fiber cement siding on the sides and rear of the structure. This combination of materials is not consistent with buildings found on the block or in the district. The application notes that if the siding is not approved the preference is to clad the entire structure in siding. Staff recommends that the façade also be clad in clapboard siding and notes that the proposed architectural details would not be appropriate for a frame structure.

Staff also notes that the proposed brick screening under the front porch is not compatible with materials used in the District. Staff recommends that an alternate design or material be submitted for administrative review and approval.

It is the assessment of staff that the application is not consistent with the Standards for New Construction outlined in Section 30.930.7(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 code.