

**COMMISSION OF ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW  
STAFF REPORT  
April 24, 2018, Meeting**

11. **COA-033455-2018** (Cheney Creek, LLC) **3020 East Franklin Street  
St. John's Church Old and Historic District**

**Project Description:** **Construct two single family attached homes.**

**Staff Contact:** **M. Pitts**

**Proposal:** The applicant requests approval to construct two new attached single family homes on a vacant lot in the St. John's Church Old and Historic District. The lot is currently wooded and slopes away from East Franklin Street. The applicant is proposing to construct two 3-story attached single family dwellings which will be approximately 35' in height from the street grade. The façade of the dwellings will be identical with each dwelling will have a projecting bay with paired windows on the upper stories and a recessed bay with a single window. The structure will be approximately 36' in width and will have a 15' front yard setback. The entries are recessed into the projecting bays, and the applicant is proposing a front porch for each dwelling with a flat membrane roof to cover the entry and the window in the recessed bay. The windows will be single lite, composite, casement windows of varying sizes. The structure will be clad in fiber cement panels and fiber cement siding.

**Surrounding Context:** The project site is located near the terminus of East Franklin Street at North 31<sup>st</sup> Street adjacent to the CSX right of way. East Franklin Street is developed with one historic structure, a free standing, Late-Victorian, frame, two-story, three-bay dwelling on the north side of the street; two 2-story concrete block apartment buildings; and several new single family and attached single family homes. The new construction on the street consists of three-story frame dwellings. Further to the east, facing N. 31st Street are two rows of frame Late-Victorian dwellings. To the west facing N. 29th Street are densely developed blocks of predominately three-bay brick dwellings built in the mid to late nineteenth century that are two to four stories in height.

**Previous Reviews:** On December 19, 2018, the Commission conceptual reviewed the applicant's request to construct of two attached single family homes. The Commission was general supportive of the proposed project and focused the discussion on potential changes to the composition of the façade. Several Commissioners recommended the applicant alternate the location of the projecting and recessed bays as was encouraged in the staff report. Additionally, Commissioners commented that it may be more appropriate to locate the entrance in the recessed bay and encouraged more details be added to the façade such as porch which spans the width of the structure.

The applicant has made the following changes to the plans in response to the Commission's comments:

- Changed the composition of the façade by proposing two identical homes rather than the previously approved mirrored composition.
- Porch roof for each dwelling has expanding to cover the window in the recessed bay.
- Altered the fenestration on the secondary elevations to include removing the transom windows.

The applicant is seeking **Final Review** for this project. Commission staff reviewed the proposed construction 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 new houses will have a 15 foot front yard setback and approximately 3 foot side yard setbacks. The homes will align with the adjacent new construction.

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

The structure matches the setback of the existing new construction to the west. Per the Sanborn Maps, the subject lot and the lot to the east were never previously developed.

**New buildings should face the most prominent street bordering the site**

The new buildings are oriented towards East Franklin Street, the prominent street bordering the site.

**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 new construction uses a building form similar to other double houses in the district with projecting bays and full façade front porches on each unit.

**New construction should incorporate human-scale elements such as cornices, porches and front steps.**

The proposed new dwellings maintain the existing human scale found in the surrounding area through the incorporation of porches, cornices, and front steps. Staff recommends details of the proposed cornice be provided for administrative review and approval.

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

The new houses are approximately 35' in height. They are isolated at the end of a sparsely developed street which is now dominated with new construction of a similar height as to that proposed. The height is similar to the historic homes at the top of the hill facing Libby Park which are two to four stories in height.

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

The applicant has responded to staff's concerns by modifying the composition of the façade to allow the homes to read as 2-bay homes with one projecting bay rather than single bay homes with a two bay connector. Staff recommends that a site plan which provides dimensions of the projecting bay be submitted for administrative review and approval as these dimensions are not included in the submitted plans. The design maintains vertical alignment of openings on all visible elevations.

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

The windows on structures in the district are typically of a similar size, regularly placed, and ranked. Staff recommends the windows on the façade should be the same size including the windows in the recessed portion of the structure, and the head heights of the windows on the façade align. The front entry composition is not typical of the rhythm found in the district. Staff recommends the attached window be extended to the ground to read as a side lite rather than a window adjacent to a door.

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

The porch and cornice heights are compatible with buildings in the district.

**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 proposed construction utilizes composite windows and cementitious panels and siding. Staff recommends the siding be smooth and without a bead. These materials are compatible with original materials in the district.

**Staff recommends approval of the project with conditions.** Staff finds the proposed project responded to the Commission's concerns and is a building form compatible with the historic structures in the district and the new construction on the subject block.

It is the assessment of staff that, with the acceptance of the stated conditions, the application is 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.