

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 not compatible with the historic features that characterizes its setting and context. The setting and context is characterized by two-story, three-bay, frame, Late-Victorian style dwellings. The new construction references materials and features found in its setting – namely the use of frame, a brick foundation, and classical ornamentation. However, the use of textured fiber cement siding and trim does not meet the *Guidelines*. Staff also found that the size, scale, proportions, and massing are not compatible with the existing historic buildings in its setting. There are few three-story buildings and no examples of three-story porches in the area. Many of the details such as elliptical fan lights and square pier with pedestal bases are also rarely seen in the Union Hill district. There are a few examples of elliptical fan lights and columns on pedestal bases near Chimborazo Park and on Chimborazo Boulevard. Staff found the scale and details more appropriate to an apartment building Monument Avenue and not the smaller scale frame dwellings found in Union Hill. Staff also found the mixture of traditional elements such as double-hung windows and classical ornamentation and more contemporary items such as awning windows to be incongruous. The heavy reliance on Colonial Revival-style elements on the façade are not features found in the district.

Staff was also concerned about the large American Elm in the northeast corner of the property. Luke McCall, the City Arborist, has identified the tree as “an outstanding specimen that has existed in that location for quite a long time.” He further stated that it would be extremely detrimental to the tree if construction were to take place underneath its canopy. The site plan included with the application does not locate the tree or provide any indication of its fate. On page 73, the *Guidelines* state that: *Mature trees contribute to the character of Old and Historic districts, provide visual interest, reduce the negative impacts of parking areas and ease the effects of temperature and wind conditions. Every effort should be made to maintain and preserve them.*

Staff has not reviewed the conceptual design with Zoning for compliance.

General Comments:

Hardie or other fiber cement siding and trim must be smooth and un-beaded

Windows must be true divided or simulated divided light

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

- 1) A site plan showing the setbacks of the adjacent properties and their relationship to the proposed new construction. The site plan should also locate the American Elm and the extent of its canopy in relationship to the new construction and the size of the site plan should be increased so the dimensions are clearly visible. Location of trash receptacles.
- 2) Plan dimensions showing the depth of the front porch and steps. The material of the steps and railings also needs to be included.
- 3) Vertical dimensions indicating the relationship of the finished grade to the height of the foundation and porch as well as the height of the peak of the roof.
- 4) Dimensions for the windows and doors and their placement above finished-floor elevation.
- 5) A dimensioned context drawing illustrating the vertical relationship of the proposed new construction and the adjacent buildings.
- 6) Details and dimensions for all trim and decorative elements
- 7) Materials, details and dimensions for mechanical equipment screening
- 8) A detailed statement of how the project conforms to the *Guidelines*.