

**COMMISSION OF ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW
STAFF REPORT
February 27, 2018, Meeting**

10. **COA-0229971-2018** (Eastern Edge Development) **2108 ½ East Broad Street
St. John's Church Old and Historic District**

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

Staff Contact: **M. Pitts**

Proposal: The applicant requests approval for the construction of a new detached single-family house on a vacant lot in the St. John's Church Old and Historic District. From East Broad Street, the proposed structure appears to be a 2-story frame structure set on a raised brick foundation. The structure has a 2-bay façade and a full façade front porch with round columns, a hipped roof, and Richmond rail. The façade has a composite cornice. The applicant continues the traditional design of the façade for approximately 19 feet of the side elevations by extended the brick basement level and incorporating 2/2 double hung windows in similar size to the windows on the façade for this portion of the side elevations. For the minimally visible portions of the side elevation and rear of the structure, the applicant proposes a more contemporary design with varying window sizes, a spiral staircase, metal railings, and a visible east to west sloping shed roof. The rear portion of the structure will be clad in fiber cement lap siding for all three levels. The applicant is proposing a 19' by 24' garage at the rear of the property. The garage will be 11'-6" in height and will have brick side walls, a rear wall clad in cementitious siding, a metal garage door, and a shed roof that slopes to the rear.

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. The two flanking houses are frame, two-story, 2-bay vernacular Italianate-style dwellings with decorative porches, window hoods and cornices. The majority of the houses on this side of the street have shallow gable roofs. In addition to the historic structures, there is a three story multifamily home near the intersection of North 21st Street. The structures across the street include a mix of Italianate and Greek Revival masonry and frame homes that are 2 to 3 stories in height. Due to the slope and street, the grade greatly varies from North 21st to North 22nd Streets.

Previous Reviews: The applicant came before the Commission on October 24, 2017, with a proposal to construct a 3-story, 2-bay home. The home included a full façade porch with a low sloped hipped roof. Several of the Commissioners expressed concerns with the three-story height and encouraged the applicant to consider setting a two-story structure on an English basement. The Commission encouraged the applicant to propose a contemporary design.

The applicant returned to the Commission on December 19, 2017 with a 3-story home with a contemporary design. While the Commissioners expressed differing opinions on the contemporary design, they consistently continued to express concerns regarding the three-story height. The Commission encouraged the applicant to draw inspiration from the way the historic structures across Broad Street address the topography and height and to examine putting the 1st floor partially in the ground.

The applicant returned to the Commission on January 23, 2018, and in response to the Commission's, staff's, and neighborhood concerns, the applicant substantially changed the design of the façade. The height of the proposed structure was reduced as the applicant proposed an English basement. The applicant proposed a more traditional design with a full façade porch and vertically aligned double hung windows. At the meeting, the Commission was generally supportive of the project, but encouraged the applicant to lower the building height and specifically requested that the height of the porch be lowered to be at the height of the adjacent structure to the east. In response to the Commission's concerns about the height porch in comparison the adjacent structure up the hill being inappropriate, the applicant has provided examples of this condition found in the district. The applicant did not modify the design that was reviewed in January, but has provided more details of the secondary elevations and the garage.

Primary Structure: 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 consistent with the setbacks of the adjacent structures. The side yard setbacks are consistent with the minimal side yard setbacks found on properties in the District.

 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 elements found on structures on the block including a shed roof, full façade porch, a 2-bay composition, a symmetrical façade, and an English basement. The applicant maintains the traditional elements on the visible portions of the side elevation by incorporating the brick basement level and double hung windows on the first approximately 19 feet of the side elevations.

- 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 simple cornice, and front steps.

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

Though the proposed project is taller than the adjacent structures, the applicant has substantially reduced the overall height of the structure when compared to the previous submittals. The height difference with respect to 2108 East Broad Street is exaggerated due to the change in grade. The structures on the subject block of East Broad Street vary in height as there are several taller homes with English basements on the south side of the street in addition to the two story historic homes and three story new construction on the north side of the street. The applicant has provided images of the varying heights found in the district and the subject block to respond to the Commission's concerns regarding the height. Staff believes that the proposed height is consistent with the diversity of heights found on the block.

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

The project is narrower than the historic structures on the block due to lot size constraints. The proposed façade does maintain 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 typical fenestration pattern in the district includes evenly spaced ranked windows. The proposed façade fenestration is consistent with patterns in the district. While the rear of the structure incorporates a more contemporary design with varying window sizes and configurations, the vertical alignment of the windows is maintained throughout the structure.

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

Due the slope of the street, the porch heights do not align. The proposed porch height appears to be consistent with the structures across Broad Street which have English basements. The cornice height is taller than the adjacent buildings but is compatible with the heights of taller buildings on the block. The Commission recommended that the porch height align with the porch of the structure to the east as Commissioners noted that this would be a more consistent development pattern found in the district. Though the porch heights increase with the grade of the street on the subject side of the block, porch heights vary throughout the district regardless of grade including on adjacent structures on the south side of the subject block. Staff finds the proposed porch and cornice heights when compared to the adjacent buildings are compatible with the variation found on adjacent structures 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 frame construction with a brick basement and aluminum clad wood windows is consistent with structures in the District. Staff recommends the following conditions regarding materials:

- The siding be smooth and without a bead.
- Details of the porch and deck railings be submitted for administrative review and approval.
- Paint and brick colors be submitted for administrative review and approval.
- The rear the deck be painted or opaquely stained a neutral color that complements one or more of the colors found in the main structure to be reviewed and approved by staff.

Staff recommends approval of the single-family home with conditions. Staff finds the proposed project is a building form compatible with the historic structures in the district. Though the applicant did not directly respond to the Commission encouraging reducing the height of the structure to align the porch with that of the adjacent porch, the applicant presented evidence that the diversity of the heights is a characteristic of the district. Staff finds that with the traditional façade, the structure is compatible with structures in the district and will not detract from the historic structures on the street.

Garage: The design of the proposed garage is consistent with the Commission's Guidelines for Residential Outbuildings (pg. 51). The garage is subordinate to the primary structure and located at the rear of the property. The design of the garage is consistent with the design of single story brick garages found throughout the district. Staff recommends details of the garage door be submitted for administrative review and approval.

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.