

**COMMISSION OF ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW
STAFF REPORT
July 25, 2017, Meeting**

6. **COA-019798-2017** (D. Carey)

**713 North 24th Street
Union Hill Old and Historic District**

Project Description: Construct a new attached single family home.

Staff Contact: M. Pitts

The applicant requests approval to construct a new attached single family home on the site of an existing attached single family home in the Union Hill Old and Historic District. The existing dwelling is one half of a double house built ca. 1860 and is the center building of a group of three pairs of dwellings built between 1848 and 1860 that are representative of the vernacular Greek Revival dwellings that typify Union Hill architecture. The pair to the south have been demolished.



713-715 N. 24th Street, photo taken ca. 1965

The existing structure has deteriorated to the point that the Commissioner of Buildings has declared the structure an imminent danger to public safety and has ordered the immediate demolition. As noted in the Commission's Guidelines on page 78, the Commission has no decision-making authority in the demolition of this unsafe structure and, therefore, will not be reviewing its demolition.

The applicant came before the Commission on May 23, 2017, for conceptual review and comment on the construction of a new structure. The Commission reviewed the applicant's request to construct a new single family home which will replicate the front gable of the historic home and include a large addition with a shed roof that will be offset closer to the side property line. The Commissioners raised the following concerns during the conceptual review:

- The proposed bump out is an unusual building form.
- The porch details should be saved and reused.
- The Commission had concerns about the impact of the demolition and proposed new construction on the attached home.
- The Commission was confused about the proposed roof line.

In response to the Commission’s and staff’s concerns the applicant has modified the plans as follows:

- The south building wall no longer steps out towards the side property line.
- The applicant is proposing to reuse the existing porch trim and columns.
- The 1/1 windows on the façade have been replaced with wood windows with a 6/6 lite configuration.
- Window sizes for windows on the rear and side elevations have been minimally altered.

With this application, the applicant is proposing to construct a new single family home which will replicate the front gable of the historic home and include a large addition with a shed roof. The applicant is proposing to align the two bay façade and front porch with that of the neighboring home. The gable roof and porch roof will be clad in standing seam metal. The front porch will include the existing wood columns, wood Richmond rail, and tongue and groove wooden decking. The gable roof portion of the structure will be 16 feet long and approximately 23’-4” in height at the roof ridge. The shed roof portion of the structure will be approximately 48’ in length. The structure will be clad in smooth fiber cement siding with a 6” reveal. The applicant is proposing to install 6/6 windows on the façade and 1/1 wood windows on the side and rear elevations. The applicant is proposing a wooden deck at the rear of the 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 44 and 45 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 applicant is proposing to align the structure with the adjacent property as it will be attached to the structure.

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

The proposed structure is an attached structure which will align with the adjoining structure.

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

The structure addresses North 24th 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 gable roof portion of the project is of a similar scale to the existing structure. The applicant has incorporated the full façade porch and the two bay organization on the façade that characterize the existing double house.

The applicant has revised the plans to address staff's concerns with building form by removing the offset of the shed roof portion of the structure and aligning the south building wall of the shed roof portion with the building wall of the gable roof portion. The structure reads as a side gable home with a rear two story shed roof addition which is a building form found in the district. Staff's does have concerns regarding where the transition from the gable to the shed roof is located. From the roof view and side elevations provided, it appears both the gable and shed roofs will align with that of the attached structure though these plans do not appear to accurately represent the existing conditions of the neighboring home. Staff recommends the Commission condition their approval on the gable roof, shed roof, and the transition on the proposed structure align with that of the existing attached home.

As decks which project past the side building wall of structures are not a building form found in the district, staff recommends the south side of the deck align with the south building wall.

Staff additionally has concerns that the length of the building is not consistent with the historic structures in the district as it is much longer, and the mass of this element dwarfs the front gable portion of the structure. The proposed plans were not revised to address these concerns.

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

The new construction incorporates human-scale elements including a front door and front porch.

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

The typical heights of the surrounding buildings are 2 stories. The proposed structure is two stories and matches the height of the attached home.

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

The project is of similar width to single family homes on the block, and the façade of the structure includes the vertical alignment and symmetry of the attached home. Staff recommends this vertical alignment be continued in the visible first bay of windows on the side elevation.

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

The proposed windows are of typical size, proportion, and spacing patterns found in the district. The applicant has responded to staff's comment that the windows on the façade be 6/6 windows to be consistent with the attached house and with Greek Revival homes in the district by proposing 6/6 wood windows on the façade.

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

The porch and cornice heights are the same as the adjacent attached structure. Staff has concerns about the ability of the applicant to effectively align the porch and cornice heights of the proposed structure with that of the adjacent home if the existing home is completely demolished. Staff encourages the applicant to consider retaining elements of the façade of the existing home to include the framing to ensure the roof line and walls of the proposed and existing neighboring structure align so that the structure continues to read as a double house.

- 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 will use smooth fiber cement siding; wood doors; wood windows; membrane roofing; standing seam metal roofing, and a CMU foundation clad in brick on the façade. Staff finds the materials are compatible with the frame structures found in the district with the following conditions:

- As prefabricated standing seam metal roof systems would not be appropriate for the gable nor the porch roof, staff recommends the applicant install a hand formed standing seam metal roof for the gable roof, and a metal roof with flat-lock seams or a membrane roof for the porch roof.
- The brick cladding of the foundation be extend through the gable portion of the structure.
- The windows be wood, true or simulated divided lite windows with interior and exterior muntins and a spacer bar.
- As material details were not include, staff recommends the doors and railings be wood.
- Paint colors be submitted for administrative review and approval.
- The siding be smooth and unbeaded.

Staff recommends approval of the project with a condition. The proposed infill project appears generally to be in keeping with the Standards for New Construction outlined in the Guidelines as the project is largely compatible with the historic features that characterizes its setting and context. The applicant has modified the application to respond to the Commission's concerns. Staff recommends the applicant attempt to retain as much historic fabric as possible including the framing to help align the proposed building with the attached home. Though concerns were not raised during conceptual review, the Commission may wish to consider if the building length and lot coverage are appropriate for the Union Hill Old and Historic District.

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.