

1. COA-082846-2020

PUBLIC HEARING DATE

December 15, 2020

PROPERTY ADDRESS

515-517 North 28th Street

DISTRICT

Church Hill North

APPLICANT

Bertha, LLC

STAFF CONTACT

C. Jeffries

Commission of Architectural Review

STAFF REPORT

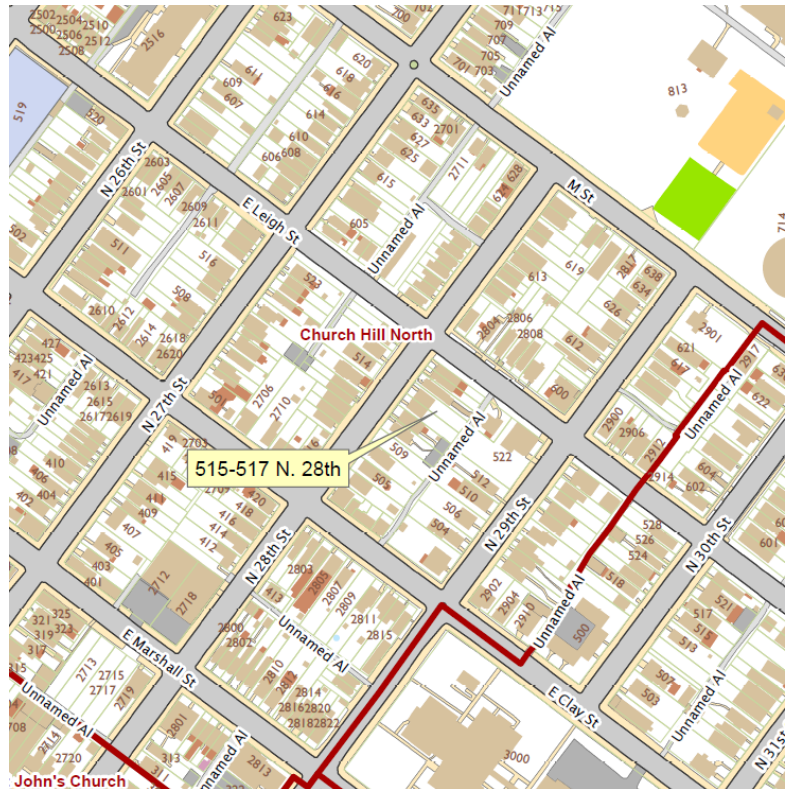


PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Demolish existing rear section and construct a new two-story rear addition.

PROJECT DETAILS

- The applicant is proposing alterations to two homes in the Church Hill North City Old and Historic District.
- The existing building is a two-story frame Greek Revival double house built ca. 1880.
- The applicant proposes to demolish an existing 1-story massing at the rear of both homes, and construct a 2-story addition with a hipped roof. Each side of the addition will be 44' by 21'.
- A one-story garage for each property is also proposed in the rear yards.
- Proposed materials for the addition and garages include:
 - Fiber cement siding
 - Aluminum clad windows
 - Parged foundations
 - Composite or fiber cement trim
 - Asphalt shingles
 - Insulated steel garage door
- For the existing building, the applicant proposes to remove existing asphalt cladding and restore and paint the underlying wood clapboard. Painting and repair work is also proposed on the façade.



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CONCEPTUAL REVIEW

The applicant is seeking **Conceptual Review** for this project. Conceptual review is covered under Sec. 30-930.6(d) of the City Code: The commission shall review and discuss the proposal with the applicant and make any necessary recommendations. Such Conceptual Review shall be advisory only. Commission staff reviewed the project through the lens of the "Standards for New Construction" on pages 44, and 46-56 of the Richmond Old and Historic District Handbook and Design Review Guidelines utilizing the Guidelines presented below.

PREVIOUS REVIEWS

None.

SURROUNDING CONTEXT

The subject block contains a mix of Georgian Revival and Italianate homes, with some recent construction, primarily on the east side of the block.

STAFF COMMENTS

- Staff has the following recommendations regarding the proposed design:
 - The roof shape be altered to be more consistent with the building and district
 - The overall solid massing of the proposed addition be reduced
 - An alternate roofing material be selected for the addition and garages
 - The transom windows be eliminated from the rear bays of the side elevations
 - The windows in the addition be a contemporary design
- Staff requests the following information be submitted for final review:
 - additional information such as photographs or an engineer’s report indicating the building’s structural integrity
 - a roof plan
 - a dimensioned context site plan
 - window and door specifications
 - total height of the proposed garages
 - additional information regarding repair work on the existing building
 - color swatches for the proposed colors

STAFF ANALYSIS

Standards for Demolition, pg. 82

Under the provisions of Sec. 32-930.7., the Commission shall approve requests for demolition when:

- 1) *There are no feasible alternatives to the proposed demolition. “Feasible alternatives” include an appropriate new use and rehabilitation, relocation of the structure to a compatible site or re-sale of the property to an individual committed to suitable*
- 2) *A building or structure is deemed not to be a contributing part of the historic character of an Old and Historic District.*
- 3) *The Commission deems that a building or structure has deteriorated beyond the point of feasible rehabilitation.*

The applicant is proposing to demolish an existing 1-story massing at the rear of the homes. This section of the building has a gable roof, side porches, and a central chimney. Though the date of construction of this section of the building is unknown, it does appear on the 1905 Sanborn map of the property. The application and plans mention that this area of the building is in disrepair; however, only one photograph was submitted with the application. Staff is unable to determine whether the proposed demolition meets the requirements for demolitions listed in the City Old and Historic District ordinance. Staff requests the applicant submit additional information such as photographs or an engineer’s report indicating the building’s structural integrity for final review.

Standards for New Construction, Materials and Colors, pg. 47

1. Additions should not obscure or destroy original architectural elements.

Staff has concerns regarding the extent of the demolition of the rear wall of the existing building. The demolition plan indicates that all doors and windows will be removed from the rear wall, and the new addition will obscure the entire wall.

A roof plan was not submitted with the application, and staff has concerns with the interaction of the roof of the addition and the existing roof and chimney. Staff requests a roof plan be submitted for final review.

Standards for New Construction, Siting, pg. 46

1. Additions should be subordinate in size to their main buildings and as inconspicuous as possible. Locating additions at the rear or on the least visible side of a building is preferred.

The proposed addition is located at the rear, and is inset from the side walls of the existing building.

Staff finds the proposed addition is not subordinate in size to the remaining main

Standards for New Construction, Form, pg. 46	<p><i>1. New construction should use a building form compatible with that found elsewhere in the historic district. Building form refers to the specific combination of massing, size, symmetry, proportions, projections and roof shapes that lend identity to a building. Form is greatly influenced by the architectural style of a given structure.</i></p>	<p>building. The footprint of the proposed addition is 42'x44' (1848 SF) while the existing building is approximately 44'x16' (704 SF), making the addition more than 2.5 times larger than the existing building. <u>Staff finds the proposed addition does not meet the guidelines for additions and recommends the overall massing of the addition be reduced.</u></p> <p>The addition is located at the back of the building; however, it will be visible from East Leigh Street.</p>
Standards for New Construction, Form, pg. 46	<p><i>3. New residential construction and additions should incorporate human-scale elements such as cornices, porches and front steps into their design. In Richmond, porches were historically an integral part of residential design and provide much of the street-level architectural character of Richmond's historic districts.</i></p>	<p>Staff finds that the proposed addition is not in keeping with the historic building form in terms of size, massing, and roof shape.</p> <p>Though a context site plan was not submitted with the application, assessor's records indicate that 519 N 28th Street is approximately 52' long, and 513 N 28th Street is 49' long. Staff finds that the proposed total length of approximately 60' is not in keeping with the surrounding building forms. Staff finds the typical length of two-story buildings on the subject block is between 40 and 50 feet.</p>
Standards for New Construction, Materials and Colors, pg. 47	<p><i>1. Additions should not obscure or destroy original architectural elements.</i></p>	<p>Staff finds the proposed hipped roof of the addition is not in keeping with additions found in the district, which typically have gable or shed roofs. Staff also notes that the existing rear massing has a gable roof. <u>Staff recommends the applicant consider altering the proposed roof shape to be more consistent with the building and district.</u></p>
Standards for New Construction, Materials and	<p><i>2. Materials used in new residential construction should be visually compatible with original materials used throughout the district.</i></p>	<p>Staff notes that many historic rear massings, including the existing 1-story section, incorporate side or rear porches. <u>Staff recommends the applicant consider reducing the overall solid massing of the proposed addition, which could be achieved by incorporating side or rear porches into the design.</u></p> <p>Staff has concerns regarding the extent of the demolition of the rear wall of the existing building.</p> <p>The plans do not include specifications for proposed windows and doors. <u>Staff requests specifications be submitted for final review.</u></p>

Standards for New Construction, Materials and Colors, pg. 47

4. Vinyl, asphalt, and aluminum siding are not permitted for use in City Old and Historic Districts. Other synthetic siding materials with a smooth, untextured finish may be allowed in limited cases, but approval by the Commission is always required.

The plans indicate that fiber cement siding is proposed for the addition. Staff recommends the fiber cement siding be smooth and unbeaded. Staff also finds that the proposed 3-tab asphalt shingles are not consistent with historic building materials and recommends the applicant explore alternate roofing materials for final review.

Standards for New Construction, Doors and Windows, pg. 49

1. *The size, proportion and spacing patterns of door and window openings on a new addition should follow patterns established by the original building. Windows on most commercial and residential properties throughout Old and Historic Districts have a vertical orientation. Wide, horizontal so-called "picture windows" on new additions are strongly discouraged.*

Windows proposed for the addition are generally consist with the building and patterns found throughout the district. Staff finds that the transom windows located in the rear bays of side elevations are not consistent with historic patterns, and will be visible from the alley and East Leigh Street. Staff recommends these two transom windows be eliminated from the side elevation designs.

Standards for New Construction, Residential Outbuildings, pg. 51

1. *Outbuildings, including garages, sheds, gazebos and other auxiliary structures, should be compatible with the design of the primary building on the site, including roof slope and materials selection.*
2. *Newly constructed outbuildings such as detached garages or tool sheds should respect the siting, massing, roof profiles, materials and colors of existing outbuildings in the neighborhood.*
3. *New outbuildings should be smaller than the main residence and be located to the rear and/or side of the property to emphasize that they are secondary structures.*
4. *Prefabricated yard structures are discouraged. Screening will be considered as a mitigating factor for the installation of these structures. However, prefabricated structures will still be reviewed for compatibility using the criteria developed in this section.*

Staff finds the proposed garages are consistent with the main building as well as outbuildings found throughout the district, with the exception of the asphalt roof, which is not consistent with historic materials. Staff recommends the applicant consider a different roof material and the total height of the garages, as well as door and window specifications, be submitted for final review.

Standards for Rehabilitation, pg. 59

10. *While it is acceptable to use salvaged materials as in-kind replacement, adding features or salvaged architectural elements that suggest an inaccurate or undocumented sequence of construction should be avoided because this confuses our understanding of the evolution of Richmond's historic built environment.*

Staff finds that the proposed 2/2 windows on the rear addition are not consistent with historic patterns and would confuse the understanding of the evolution of this historic building. Staff recommends the windows in the addition be of a contemporary design.

Standards for Rehabilitation, pg. 59

2. *Retain original wood features such as cornices, brackets, window and doorway surrounds, sashes and doors. Maintain the*

The plans indicate that the historic building will be repaired as required. On a site visit to the property staff confirmed that a number of

historic reveal or exposure of the siding and trim, as it is an important character-defining feature.

repairs are necessary, including the entry porticos and steps, cornice, gutters, and windows. Staff requests additional information regarding the repair work required for the existing building be submitted for final review.

Standards for Rehabilitation, pg. 59

3. Retain original metal features such as cast iron porches and steps, metal cornices, roofs, roof cresting, window sash, entablatures, columns, capitals, window hoods and hardware and the color and finish of all original materials.

Staff notes that the existing metal roof on the front of the building may require repair. Staff requests any additional information regarding the painting or repair of the historic roof be submitted for final review.

Paint colors, pg. 64

Wood-frame Buildings (including Stucco-clad buildings) 18C, Georgian, Federal, and Greek Revival styles: White, Spanish Brown, Yellow Ochre, Stone, Buff, Light Grey, Green-Grey, Medium Blue

The application indicates that the applicant has chosen "olive" and "pacific blue." Staff was unable to locate Hardiplank colors that matched the listed colors and requests that color swatches be submitted for final review. Staff notes that appropriate body colors for Georgian houses are neutrals and lighter colors.

FIGURES



Figure 1. 515-517 North 28th Street, façade



Figure 2. 515-517 North 28th Street, rear elevation



Figure 3. Rear massings on subject alley



Figure 4. Rear massings on subject alley

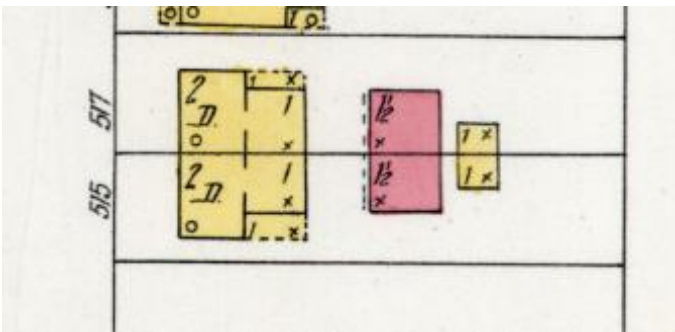


Figure 5. 1905 Sanborn Map

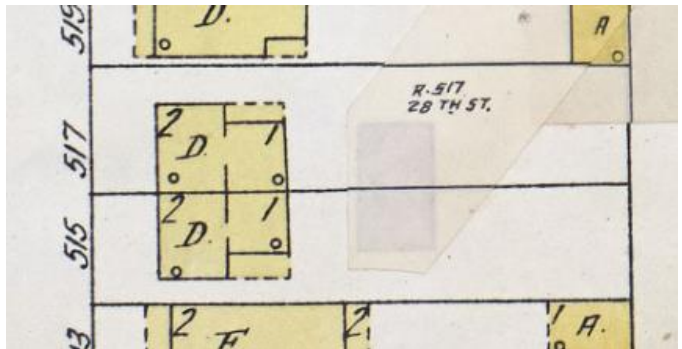


Figure 6. 1950 Sanborn Map