

**COMMISSION OF ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW
STAFF REPORT
November 22, 2016 Meeting**

15. **CAR No. 16-126** (D. Kapella)

**2400 East Franklin Street
St. John's Church Old and Historic District**

Project Description: **Construct a single family dwelling**

Staff Contact: **M. Pitts**

The applicant requests approval to construct a single family dwelling on a vacant lot in the St. John's Church Old and Historic District. The applicant appeared before the Commission at its January 26, 2016, for conceptual review of siting the dwelling at the top of the hill at the northwest corner of the lot adjacent to the alley and N. 24th Street. The Commission expressed their support for the proposed siting. The applicant returned to the Commission on April 26, 2016, seeking review and comment on the height, width and massing of the proposed single-family dwelling. The applicant proposed to construct a three-story dwelling with a basement that will not exceed the 35' height allowed under R-6 zoning with a foot print of approximately 36' x 36' and a simple, block-like form and massing. The Commissioners, in general, were supportive of the proposed height and massing. The Commission noted that the design could be contemporary and that all four sides of the structure should be treated as primary elevations. The applicant returned to the Commission for final review on August 23, 2016, with details of the proposed contemporary design. At that meeting, the Commission deferred the application to provide the applicant an opportunity to address the Commission's concerns with the compatibility of the proposed design. Specifically, the Commission requested the applicant address the following concerns: the fenestration specifically on the northeast and northwest elevations; the brick color; and the use and type of metal panels. Though the Commission appreciated the contemporary design, they wanted to see some elements that reflect the district.

The applicant has revised the plans in response to the Commission's comments as follows:

- The dark brick and siding from the previous application have been replaced with stucco.
- On the northwest elevation, additional ranked windows have been added and a flat porch roof has been added to define the front porch.
- On the northeast elevation, three symmetrical and evenly spaced bays with ranked windows have been added.
- On the southwest elevation, a window has been added to the basement level and all windows vertically align.
- On the southeast elevation, additional ranked windows have been added.
- Details of options for the proposed metal panels have been included.

The applicant is seeking final approval for the design. 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 proposed project’s setback from North 24th Street reflects the front yard setbacks of residential property 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 proposed project’s setback from North 24th Street reflects the front yard setbacks of residential property in the district.

New buildings should face the most prominent street bordering the site

The proposed home will address North 24th Street which is a prominent street bordering the west side of the lot. The Commission reviewed the siting during the January Conceptual Review and, at that time, expressed support of the building addressing North 24th Street rather than East Franklin 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.

Staff finds the massing, size, and roof shape are compatible with that found elsewhere in the district. The applicant has added ranked windows on all elevations to address staff’s concerns regarding the lack of symmetry in the project.

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

The applicant incorporates human scale elements including front stairs to a second floor porch.

New construction should respect the typical height of surrounding buildings

Heights in the surrounding area vary from two to three stories over raised basements. The proposed three story home with a 35’-4 1/2” height respects the building height of the existing buildings in the district.

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

The proposed project incorporates the typical three bay pattern and the symmetrical fenestration pattern found in the District. The applicant has reorganized the northeast, northwest, and southwest elevations in the typical three bay pattern. Additionally, the revised plans include vertical alignment of openings and symmetrical window placement.

- 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 similar size, regularly placed, and ranked. Though the windows on the southwest elevation differ in size from the other windows, the windows on the remaining elevations are all of a similar width. The applicant has addressed staff's concerns with large expanses of wall with no windows especially on the northwest and northeast elevations by incorporating additional vertically ranked windows.

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

The porch height is similar to other 2nd story porches 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 stucco, metal siding, glazing, and metal screening and railings. Though stucco is not the dominant building material in the area, it is a material that can be found in use throughout the district and was historically used on homes in the immediate vicinity that have since been demolished. The applicant has presented three options for the proposed metal siding. Staff recommends the applicant work with staff in consultation with the Commission's chair to administratively review and approve the proposed metal siding.

Staff recommends approval of the project with the noted conditions. The applicant has revised the plans to address the Commission's concerns that were raised in the previous review. Staff finds the proposed project is compatible with the historic district while clearly differentiated.

It is the assessment of staff that 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.