

**COMMISSION OF ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW  
STAFF REPORT  
June 28, 2016 Meeting**

17. **CAR No. 16-098** (D. Carey)

**713 N. 24<sup>th</sup> Street  
Union Hill Old and Historic District**

**Project Description:** **Demolish an attached single family dwelling  
and construct a new single family dwelling**

**Staff Contact:** **K. Chen**

Demolition

The applicant requests approval to demolish an attached single family dwelling in the Union Hill Old and Historic District. The 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. A report by a structural engineer has been submitted which states in part: "Based upon the degree of damage and the lack of adequate support systems, it is our opinion that the structure cannot be 'repaired' but will need to be re-built."

The City Code offers the following with regards to demolition:

*The commission of architectural review shall not issue a certificate of appropriateness for demolition of any building or structure within an old and historic district, unless the applicant can show that there are no feasible alternatives to demolition. The demolition of historic buildings and elements in old and historic districts is strongly discouraged. The demolition of any building deemed by the commission to not be a part of the historic character of an old and historic district shall be permitted. The demolition of any building that has deteriorated beyond the point of being feasibly rehabilitated is permissible, where the applicant can satisfy the commission as to the infeasibility of rehabilitation.*

Pages 78-79 of the *Richmond Old and Historic Districts Handbook and Design Review Guidelines* offer further guidance when considering the demolition of a building within a City Old and Historic District, including the historic and architectural value of the building and the effect that demolition will have on the surrounding neighborhood.

**Staff recommends approval of the partial demolition of the dwelling.** Staff finds that while the building is deteriorated, it still possesses historic architectural

fabric including the veranda with square post and dentil molding, and the overall form and massing. Staff is also concerned about the impact of the demolition and new construction on the adjacent attached dwelling. The porch, façade, party wall, and roof form should be retained to minimize the impact on the adjacent property and to retain the remaining historic fabric left that is associated with an antebellum structure that defines the architectural significance of the Union Hill Historic District.

It is the assessment of staff that the application for the full demolition of the dwelling is not consistent with the Standards for Demolition in Section 30-930.7(d) 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 the code.

### New Construction

Conceptual review is covered under Sec. 114-930.6(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: Residential” on pages 44 and 45 of the *Richmond Old and Historic District Handbook and Design Review Guidelines* and the resulting comments follow.

### **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.*

## **SITING, FORM, HEIGHT, WIDTH, PROPORTION & MASSING**

If the front portion of the dwelling is retained and repaired/renovated or the new construction replicates the front portion of the dwelling, within the existing footprint, with a larger two-story addition to the rear, then the standards for siting, form, height, width, proportion, and massing should be met.

## **MATERIALS & COLORS**

Proposed materials include smooth, un-beaded Hardie Plank lap siding with a 7" reveal in Boothbay Blue with smooth Hardie trim in Artic White. If possible historic wood siding should be retained on the façade. If Hardie is approved then the reveal should match the historic siding on the attached dwelling. Page 58 of the *Guidelines* recommends the following color scheme for a Greek Revival dwelling – wall colors: white, pale natural colors (stone, gold, yellow, tan, and gray), trim work: white, tan, dark greens, and grays.

The front door is shown as a smooth, fiberglass, twin half-light door with two base panels and two lights. A solid four panel door would be more in keeping with the period and style of the dwelling and the single light transom should be restored. The rear door is a smooth, fiberglass  $\frac{3}{4}$  light door with two base panels and a single light. The windows are proposed to be an aluminum clad, 6/6, simulated divided light, double hung sash. The front windows should match the size and placement of the front windows on the attached dwelling to the north. The front door will be Roycroft Mist Gray and the windows and rear door will be white. The window size and placement on the north elevation should be uniform.

The porch deck is proposed to be Azek tongue and groove, pvc decking boards. The columns and trim will be Fypon, the roof will be black IPDM membrane and there will be a Richmond rail. The square columns and dentil molding appear to be original and should be repaired and retained if possible.

The drawings indicate that the roof will be shingle and the written description says that it will be IPDM membrane. It is recommended that standing seam metal be used on the front slope to match the attached dwelling to the north.

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

- 1) A site plan showing the location of exterior components of the HVAC system and trash and recycling containers and screening if required.
- 2) Dimensioned elevations indicating the relationship between the front gable roof and the rear shed roof.