

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

15. **COA-031745-2017** (North Hill Renovations) **820 North 23<sup>rd</sup> Street**  
**Union Hill Old and Historic District**

**Project Description:** **Construct a new single-family home.**

**Staff Contact:** **M. Pitts**

**Surrounding Context:** The 800 block of North 23<sup>rd</sup> Street has limited remaining historic fabric. Across the street from the subject lot is a parking lot; two new 2-story, residential buildings; and a 2-story, Italianate, brick, mixed use structure. Adjacent to the subject lot is a 2-story, Italianate, frame double house with a full façade front porch. To the south of the historic structure are two new 2-story, residential buildings on irregular shaped lots.

The 2300 block of Burton Street functions as a street with structures that front Burton beginning at the corner of Burton and 23<sup>rd</sup> Streets. This block of Burton Street contains a row of attached, 3-bay, Colonial Revival dwellings with false mansard roofs and 2-bay front porches. Though it is a City street, Burton Street functions as an alley immediately adjacent to the property with the rear yards of the structures in the 2200 block of Venable Street facing Burton Street.

**Proposal:** The applicant requests approval for the construction of a new detached single-family house on an irregular shaped vacant lot at the corner of North 23<sup>rd</sup> and Burton Streets in the Union Hill Old and Historic District. The applicant is proposing a 2-story frame structure set on a concrete block foundation. The façade has a 3-bay composition and a 2-bay front porch. The front portion of the structure will have side gable roof clad in TPO. The applicant is proposing rear sections with staggered setbacks from Burton Street, shed roofs, and a small rear stoop. The proposed windows are 1/1 double hung wood windows.

**Previous Reviews:** The applicant came before the Commission for conceptual review and comment on January 23, 2018. During this review, the Commission and members of the public expressed concerns about the structure overshadowing the remaining historic structures on the block and the treatment of the Burton elevation. Commissioners encouraged the applicant to propose a setback and roof line in keeping with the historic structures and to treat the building as a corner structure with additional details on the Burton Street elevation.

**Modification to Plans:** The applicant has modified plans as follows from the previous review:

- Added a window in a light well on the Burton Street elevation at the basement level of the front section of the home.
- On Burton Street elevation of the rear section of the home, windows have been added. Specifically, paired transom windows have been added to the second story and paired double hung 1/1 windows have been added to the first story.
- Railing has been added to the rear porch.

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*.

**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 structure will align with the adjacent historic 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 structure is on a corner lot with only one adjoining building.

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

The structure addresses North 23<sup>rd</sup> Street. The proposed project is located on a corner lot and interacts with Burton Street through the presence of windows on the side elevation. The applicant has introduced additional glazing and created a true porch with a railing to respond to the Commission’s request for more details on the Burton Street elevation.

**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 2-bay front porch, a 3-bay composition, and a symmetrical facade. The side gable roof is a form found in the district and on structures on the subject block which have since been demolished.

**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 and front steps. The applicant has included human scale elements on the Burton Street elevation with a small rear porch.

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

The typical height of the surrounding buildings is 2 to 2 ½ stories. Per the context plan, the proposed structures height is compatible with the adjacent historic construction. The proposed 2 story structure is in keeping with the typical height of the surrounding buildings.

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

The proposed project does maintain the vertical alignment and the 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 fenestration is consistent with patterns in the district. While staff supports the increase in the number of windows on the Burton Street elevation, staff has concerns that the transom windows are not a building form found in the district. Staff recommends the transom windows be replaced with windows the same size as the windows on the first story.

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

The applicant did provided a dimensioned context elevation which shows that the porch floor lines and the proposed cornice heights are compatible.

**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 is consistent with frame structures in the district. Staff recommends that the visible side gable roof be clad in metal not the proposed TPO and the foundation be clad in brick to be more consistent with materials on historic structures in the district.

Staff recommends the following conditions for the proposed materials

- Details of the proposed porch columns be submitted for administrative review and approval.
- The siding be smooth and without a bead.

- The rear deck railing be Richmond rail and 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.
  - Paint and brick colors be submitted to staff for administrative review and approval.
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**Staff recommends approval of the project with conditions.** Staff finds the proposed project responded to the Commission's concerns and is a building form compatible with the historic structures in the district. The proposed structure does not detract from the limited remaining historic fabric on the block and addresses both North 23<sup>rd</sup> and Burton Streets.

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.