



Commission of Architectural Review

5. COA-187659-2026	Final Review	Meeting Date: 7/28/2026
Applicant/Petitioner	Drew Barnocky	
Project Description	Construct new rear addition.	
Project Location		
Address: 517 W 21st St		
Historic District: Springhill		
High-Level Details: This applicant requests approval to construct a single-story rear addition to a Craftsman Style home built circa 1910. The house has a metal roof with a covered front porch with square columns. The addition will include Hardi plank siding, a metal seam roof, wood trim and soffit, half round gutters, and six-over-one lite windows. The addition will also include a projecting side porch. The addition will be partially visible from W 21st Street and the alley.		
Staff Recommendation	Approval, with Conditions	
Staff Contact	Gregory Kerr, Gregory.Kerr@RVA.gov, (804)646-5806	
Previous Reviews	N/A	
Staff Recommendations	Staff recommends the following: - Add a simple rail to the porch stairs, such as a Richmond rail; final railing design and materials to be submitted for staff review and approval. - The new Hardi Plank siding to be smooth and unbeaded; final siding specifications to be submitted to staff for review and approval. - Approve the proposed material strategy; final schedule of materials to be submitted for staff review and approval - The brick piers of the new porch to match the style and color of the brick piers on the existent front porch - Proposed windows to feature true or simulated divided lites; final window and door specifications submitted to staff for review and approval.	

Staff Analysis

Guideline Reference	Reference Text	Analysis
Standards for New Construction, Siting, pg. 46	<i>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.</i>	The addition will be constructed off the rear of the home, minimally visible from the public right of way, with the exception of the side porch which is substantially set back from the main road. The addition is being constructed in the most inconspicuous location possible. The current home is increasing from a total square footage of 1157 sq ft to 2399 sq ft, with the addition being 1242 sq ft in total. The addition will include a basement level. The scope of work also includes the renovation of the existing basement. This will result in an increased basement square footage from 285 sq ft to 798 sq ft. <u>Staff recommends approval of the siting and scale of the addition.</u>
Standards for New Construction, Form, pg. 46	<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>	The new addition will be minimally visible from the primary street, the most visible part being the proposed side porch off the addition. The addition is appropriately differentiated from the existing historic home through the changes in siding reveal and profile, height of the roof's ridge, and restrained ornamentation that does not seek to mimic the existing architecture. The proposed screened porch is appropriately simple in design and subordinate to the historic building. It features square posts, screened openings, and a screen door, with restrained detailing that complements the character of the main building. Staff previously advised the applicant to minimize ornamental features on the addition, and the submitted design successfully reflects this recommendation.
		The porch stair includes three risers. As per zoning requirements, stairs with three or more risers would require a code-compliant handrail. <u>Staff recommends adding a simple rail to the porch stairs, such as a Richmond rail; final railing design and materials to be submitted for staff review and approval.</u>
The Secretary of the Interior Standards for Rehabilitation, pg. 4	<i>9. New additions, exterior alterations or related new construction shall not destroy historic materials that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible with the massing, size, scale and</i>	The addition will be constructed in a location that will not obscure any character-defining features of the building. Based on the plans, in order to construct the rear addition, a small utilitarian porch will be removed in addition to a window. Staff finds that these elements are not character-defining features of the historic building, and that their removal will not

	<i>architectural features to protect the historic integrity of the property and its environment.</i>	diminish the building's historic character. The addition is located so that it does not obscure or alter the primary façade or other significant architectural features. <u>Staff recommends approval of the partial demolition required to construct the new addition.</u>
Standards for New Construction, Materials & Colors, pg. 47	<i>1. Additions should not obscure or destroy original architectural elements.</i> <i>2. Materials used in new residential construction should be visually compatible with original materials used throughout the district.</i> <i>3. Paint colors for new additions should complement the historically appropriate colors used on the primary structure. Paint colors used should be like the historically appropriate colors already found in the district (see Painting Section starting on page 60).</i> <i>5. Rooftop mechanical equipment should be located as discretely as possible to limit visibility. In addition, appropriate screening should be provided to conceal equipment from view. When rooftop railings are required for seating areas or for safe access to mechanical equipment, the railings should be as unobtrusive as possible, in order to minimize their appearance and visual impact on the surrounding district</i>	The proposed addition and porch will be clad in 3 ½ inch exposure Hardi Plank siding, while the primary house is clad in original BB siding. Using a siding with a differentiated width and profile will help distinguish the new construction from the historic. <u>Staff recommends that the new Hardi Plank siding be smooth and unbeaded; final siding specifications to be submitted to staff for review and approval.</u> The proposed addition will feature a rear facing gable roof form and a side porch with a shed roof. The roof is proposed to be standing seam metal painted brick red. The ridge of the addition's roof will be below that of the primary building's eave. <u>Staff finds that the proposed roofing material and color are compatible with the main house, while the difference in height helps maintain the addition as subordinate.</u>
Standards for New Construction: Materials & Colors, page 47	<i>2. Materials used in new residential construction should be visually compatible with original materials used throughout the district.</i>	The exterior materials for the proposed addition and porch will be Hardi plank siding with wood trim, and standing seam metal roofing. The proposed addition will also incorporate round gutters, wood doors and windows, and wood decking. The materials for the addition will be compatible with the district and primary building, while maintaining adequate differentiation. <u>Staff recommends approval of the proposed material strategy; final schedule of materials to be submitted for staff review and approval.</u>
Standards for New Construction, Form, pg. 46	<i>3. New residential construction and additions should incorporate human-scale elements such as cornices, porches, and front steps into their</i>	The proposed new porch protruding from the side of the addition will be screened-in on all three sides, and feature square posts and a screen door.

	<i>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>	<u>Staff finds the porch screening to be appropriate.</u> The porch is proposed to be built upon two brick piers. <u>Staff recommends that the brick piers of the new porch match the style and color of the brick piers on the existent front porch.</u>
Standards for New Construction, Doors & Windows, pg. 49	<i>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.</i> <i>3. The size, proportion, and spacing patterns of doors and window openings on free standing, new construction should be compatible with patterns established within the district.</i>	While the proposed windows on the addition will mimic the design and pane configuration of the windows on the primary house, staff finds this design appropriate as the applicant has differentiated the addition in other way, such as the elimination of ornamental architectural features and differentiated siding profile. Additionally, the windows on the rear and Northwest elevations will be minimally visible from the public right-of-way. <u>Staff recommends that the proposed windows feature true or simulated divided lites; final window and door specifications submitted to staff for review and approval.</u>

It is the assessment of staff that, with the conditions above, the application is consistent with the Standards for Rehabilitation and New Construction outlined in Section 30-930.7 (b) and (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 the code.

Figures



Figure 1: Front porch view of 517 W 21st St



Figure 2: Side Profile View of 521 W 21st St



Figure 3: Northwest Elevation of the rear side of 517 W 21st St



Figure 4: Rear view of 517 W 21st St