

**COMMISSION OF ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW  
STAFF REPORT  
December 13, 2016 Meeting**

13. **CAR No. 16-174** (C. Mullaney)

**533 Mosby Street  
Union Hill Old and Historic District**

**Project Description:** Construct a new single family dwelling and a garage.

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

The applicant requests conceptual review and comment on the construction of a single family dwelling on a narrow vacant lot in the Union Hill Old and Historic District.

The residential character of the east side of the subject block consists of 2 to 2 ½ story structures in a mix of Greek Revival, Italianate and Late Victorian architectural styles and structures constructed in the 1990s. The majority of the structures on the odd side of the block including the non-historic structures are frame, 3-bay structures with full façade porches. Mosby Street represents the boundary of the Union Hill Old and Historic District, and the parcels on the west side of Mosby Street are not within the District. These parcels have been developed with multifamily housing that have undulating elevations, are 3 to 4 stories in height, and are clad with fiber cement panels, metal panels, and brick.

The applicant is proposing to construct a small two story home of Corten steel panels and burnt wood. The proposed structure will be 12 feet in width and 36 feet in depth. The applicant proposes a corrugated metal shed roof which slopes to the south from 23' to 20' in height. The proposed roof orientation is to facilitate the installation of rooftop solar panels. The applicant proposed fixed glass windows, sliding full light barn doors, and, on the south elevation, a window garden. For the porch railings, the applicant proposes to utilize wire railings. The structure will sit on a parged concrete block foundation. The applicant proposes a 12' by 16' garage at the rear which will include similar design elements as the primary structure including the roof form, sliding full light barn door, and Corten steel siding.

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: 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**

There are no adjacent buildings to the proposed structure and setbacks for the buildings on the street vary.

    

**Where the adjoining buildings have different setbacks, the setback for the new building should be based on the historical pattern for the block**

Though the setbacks along the block vary, the proposed approximately 10 foot setback is similar to the setback of the historic buildings along the street.

    

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

The structure addresses Mosby 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.**

Though the structures on the subject block vary in roof form, a shed roof form oriented as proposed is not a building form found within the district on primary structures.

    

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

The proposed project incorporates human-scale elements including front and rear porches and front steps as part of the project.

    

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

The typical heights of the surrounding buildings are 2 – 4 stories. The proposed structure is two stories and close in height to the nearest surrounding buildings.

    

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

The proposed project does not maintain the typically width as it is a narrower structure due to the limitations of the lot and does not include the 3 bay organization that is typical of the historic district as evidence in the structures on the east side of the block. The Commission may wish to note that the adjacent construction outside of the City Old and Historic District does not include the 3 bay organization and includes bays of a width similar to the proposed home.

- The size, proportion, and spacing patterns of doors and window openings should be compatible with patterns established in the district.**

The proposed windows on the façade and south elevation are vertically aligned and symmetrically placed which is consistent with patterns in the district. Staff finds the transom window on the north elevation is not a window form found in the district. Additional details on the proposed window garden are needed to review this element.

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

As the context elevation did not include details of the subject property porch height, staff does not know how the porch heights relate though it appears the proposed building porch height will align with the closest structures.

- 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 Corten steel panels, corrugated metal, burnt wood, fixed windows, wire railing, and sliding barn doors. The applicant is utilizing materials that are not typically found on historic structures in the district and are similar to the materials found on the multifamily buildings outside of the district.

Though the use of the proposed materials and the proposed roof form clearly differentiates this structure from the historic buildings in the district, staff has some concerns that there are too few elements of the proposed project which relate to the historic district in which it is in.

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

1. Vertical dimensions on the elevations to include the window head and sill heights
2. Dimensions for all windows and doors
3. Details of the window garden
4. Details of the proposed solar panels to be included on the elevation and a cut sheet of the proposed panels
5. The floor plans to reflect the proposed window and door openings.
6. As multiple sides of the proposed garage will be visible from the alley and adjacent streets; fully dimensioned north, east and south elevations
7. A detailed statement of how the project conforms to the *Guidelines*.