

**COMMISSION OF ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW  
STAFF REPORT  
July 28, 2015 Meeting**

10. **CAR No. 15-095** (G. Pesch)

**726 North 27<sup>th</sup> Street  
Church Hill North Old and Historic District**

**Project Description:** **Enclose existing side porch and construct a new rear screened porch and garage.**

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

The applicant requests approval to enclose an existing two-story side porch and construct a new rear screened porch and single-story garage at the rear of a property located in the Church Hill North Old and Historic District. The primary structure on the property is a two-story, frame, Vernacular Italianate home constructed ca. 1878 located on the southwest corner of 27<sup>th</sup> and Cedar streets.

The applicant is proposing to enclose a two story porch on the north elevation of the house facing Cedar Street. The porch has an engaged post at the house, an intermediate square column, and a square corner post and a Richmond-style rail. The proposed enclosure is solid with a single window on the first and second stories of the north elevation (facing Cedar Street) and door on the first story of the west elevation (facing the rear yard) and the existing roof and floor structure expressed. The existing steps from the porch to the yard will be retained.

The applicant is proposing to construct a one-story, 10'x18' screened porch on the west (rear) elevation of the dwelling. The shed-roof line of the porch will align with the second floor line of the main house and slope down towards the rear yard. The shed roof of the screened porch will have a painted wood structure framing glass panels and the walls will be painted wood structure with *Ultravue* or similar invisible screening panels.

The applicant is also proposing to construct a new garage on the southwest (rear) corner of the property. The proposed garage will be 20' by 16' and 11' high on the east elevation sloping to 9' high at the alley. The garage will be clad with smooth, Hardie lap siding or wood. The garage doors facing the alley will be a pair of 8'x7' custom-built, carriage-style doors with composite material styles and rails with tongue-and-groove panels and (4) 18"x18" windows.

**Staff recommends approval of the garage.** *The Richmond Old and Historic District Handbook and Design Review Guidelines* note that outbuildings such as sheds or garages should be compatible with the main building on the site including roof slope and material selection and be located to the rear and/or side of the property to emphasize their character as secondary structures (p. 49). The main building on the lot is a two story building with a shallow gable roof designed in the Italianate style of the district. The proposed garage will have a shed roof

with a two foot overhang with 2x4 brackets on the north side. This roof form does not reflect the roof form of the primary structure but is compatible with shed-roofed outbuildings found in the neighborhood. The applicant is proposing to use wood siding or smooth Hardie painted to match the color of the primary structure with matching white trim. The doors will be painted a dark red to match the doors on the primary structure. The proposed garage is located at the rear of the property and is subordinate in size to the primary residence. It is screened from Cedar Street by an existing hedge and is visible from the alley.

**Staff recommends the approval of the rear screened porch with conditions.**

*The Richmond Old and Historic District Handbook and Design Review Guidelines* do not specifically address the construction of a one-story, screened in porch. The proposed screened porch generally meets the guidelines because it is located at the rear of the dwelling, is subordinate in size, and does not alter, damage or destroy significant site elements of the property. The proposed construction, however, is not compatible with the materials or design of the primary structure or the district. Staff recommends that the owner consider the construction of a deck that meets the guidelines as presented on page 48 of *The Richmond Old and Historic District Handbook and Design Review Guidelines*.

**Staff recommends denial of the porch enclosure.** *The Richmond Old and Historic District Handbook and Design Review Guidelines* note that porches on primary elevations should not be enclosed. The guidelines further state that solid materials are not recommended for use in enclosure projects since they radically alter the historic appearance of a porch. Glass enclosures which reveal decorative porch elements are strongly preferred (pg. 67). The location of the house on a corner lots makes the elevation facing Cedar Street a primary elevation and the use of solid infill with limited glazing results in the removal of historic material. While the horizontal structure will still be expressed the understanding of an open porch is lost.

It is the assessment of staff that the application to construct the new garage and the applicant's acceptance of the above condition to construct a deck rather than a screened porch, is consistent in part with the Standards for New Construction outlined in Section 114-930.7(c) of the City Code, as well as with the *Richmond Old and Historic Districts Handbook and Design Review Guidelines*, specifically the page cited above, adopted by the Commission for review of Certificates of Appropriateness under the same section of the code.