



**Staff Report**  
**City of Richmond, Virginia**



**Commission of Architectural Review**

3. COA-163025-2025	Final Review <span style="float: right;">Meeting Date: 4/22/2025</span>
Applicant/Petitioner	B. Tyler Sylvestro
Project Description	Construct a rear two story addition.
Project Location	
Address: 711 North 26 <sup>th</sup> Street	
Historic District: Church Hill North	
<p><b>High-Level Details:</b></p> <p>The applicant proposes to construct a new two-story rear addition in place of an existing one-and one-half story addition off the rear of a detached, frame, Greek Revival building circa 1855.</p> <p>The addition will have a gable roof and will be attached to the primary portion of the building by a one-story “hyphen”.</p> <p>The construction of the addition is contingent on the Commission’s approval to demolish the extant rear addition.</p>	
Staff Recommendation	Approval with Conditions
Staff Contact	Alex Dandridge, alex.dandridge@rva.gov, (804) 646-6569
Previous Reviews	<p>The Commission reviewed and deferred this application at their March 2025 meeting. Specifically, then Commission deferred the application to allow the applicant time to address the conditions listed in the staff report. Overall, the Commission was supportive of the proposed new addition, but agreed that it should feature more symmetry and a more traditional massing. The Commission noted that including corner boards and more accurate foundation/footing details would be helpful.</p>
Staff Recommendations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Applicant consider cladding the addition in horizontal siding with a differing reveal from the primary mass of the building.</li> </ul>

## Staff Analysis

Surrounding Context		
<p>The subject block retains much of its historic fabric on the east side, whereas the west side is an open parking lot except for a two-story masonry building on the southwest corner of M Street and North 26<sup>th</sup> Street. 711 North 26<sup>th</sup> Street is located mid-block on the east side North 26<sup>th</sup> Street and is the only Greek Revival Style dwelling. The east side of North 26<sup>th</sup> Street consists of two-story dwellings, mostly frame and Italianate, Queen Anne, and Second Empire in style. There is a grouping of three attached masonry dwellings at the southeast corner of M Street and North 26<sup>th</sup> Street. The streetscape includes medium sized trees, brick, and concrete sidewalks with granite curbs.</p>		
Guideline Reference	Reference Text	Analysis
<p><b>Standards for New Construction, Siting, pg. 46</b></p>	<p><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></p> <p><i>2. New residential infill construction should respect the prevailing front and side yard setback patterns of the surrounding block. The minimum setbacks evident in most districts reinforce the traditional street wall. In cases where the adjoining buildings have different setbacks, the setback for the new building should be based on the historical pattern for the block.</i></p> <p><i>4. If setback waivers or any other waivers are needed, the applicant may petition the Commission to support a Board of Zoning Appeals (BZA) waiver</i></p>	<p>The addition will be subordinate in size to the primary portion of the building. It will be in the rear and its roof pitch will be below that of the main roof. While a small portion of the addition will be visible from North 26<sup>th</sup> Street, the addition will be located on the least visible side of the building.</p> <p>To further differentiate the new addition from the primary building, there will be a one-story “hyphen” and screened-in porch connecting the addition to the primary portion of the building.</p> <p>The application states that the new addition will be located roughly in the same footprint as the extant rear portion of the building proposed for demolition, meeting all applicable zoning regulations.</p>
<p><b>Standards for New Construction, Form, pg. 46</b></p>	<p><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></p> <p><i>2. New residential construction should maintain the existing human scale of nearby historic residential construction in the district.</i></p> <p><i>3. New residential construction and additions should incorporate human-scale elements such as cornices, porches and front steps into their design. In Richmond, porches were historically an integral part of residential</i></p>	<p>During the conceptual review of this application, the rear addition was designed to be rectangular in form with an asymmetrical gable roof.</p> <p>The applicant has revised the application so that the addition has a typical gable roof. During the last review, Staff recommended that the cantilevered design of the north elevation of the addition be revised to a form more in-keeping with the district. The applicant has responded by revising to remove the cantilever. Staff finds that this revision is appropriate.</p> <p>According to city assessor records, the extant rear addition is 30 feet long by 15 feet wide and the primary mass of the building is 34 feet long by 24 feet wide. The plans submitted by the applicant indicate that the proposed new addition will be construction in roughly the same footprint but will be 34 feet long by 17 feet wide. It will also be separated from the primary mass of the building by 4 feet 9 inches.</p>

	<p><i>design and provide much of the street-level architectural character of Richmond's historic districts.</i></p>	<p>The extant rear addition is four feet shorter than the primary portion of the building, whereas the new addition will be roughly the same length, but with an added 4 feet 9 inches due to the proposed hyphen.</p> <p>During the last review, Staff recommended that the size of the addition be reduced; however, the Commission did not comment on this recommendation. It should be noted that while the addition is large, its total square footage is still subordinate to that of the primary building.</p>
<p><b>Standards for New Construction, Height, Width, Proportion &amp; Massing, pg. 47</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>New residential construction should respect the typical height of surrounding residential buildings.</i></li> <li>2. <i>New residential construction should respect the vertical orientation typical of other residential properties in surrounding historic districts. New designs that call for wide massing should look to the project's local district for precedent. For example, full-block-long row house compositions are rare in Richmond. New residential buildings that occupy more than one third of a block face should still employ bays as an organizational device, but the new building should read as a single piece of architecture.</i></li> <li>3. <i>The cornice height should be compatible with that of adjacent historic buildings.</i></li> </ol>	<p>The proposed addition will be two stories in height, in-keeping with other historic buildings in the district.</p> <p>During the last review, the proposed addition featured windows that were generally vertically aligned but off set from one another on some elevations. The applicant has revised the plans so that the windows are all vertically aligned and arranged symmetrically. Staff finds that this revision is more closely align fenestration patterns found in the district.</p>
<p><b>Standards for New Construction, Materials &amp; Colors, pg. 47</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>Additions should not obscure or destroy original architectural elements.</i></li> <li>2. <i>Materials used in new residential construction should be visually compatible with original materials used throughout the district.</i></li> <li>3. <i>Paint colors for new additions should complement the historically appropriate colors used on the primary structure. Paint colors used should be similar to the historically appropriate colors already found in the district (see Painting Section starting on page 60).</i></li> <li>4. <i>Vinyl, asphalt, and aluminum siding are not permitted for use in City Old and Historic Districts. Other synthetic siding materials with a smooth, untextured finish may be allowed in limited cases, but approval by the Commission is always required.</i></li> </ol>	<p>The new construction is contingent on the approval of the demolition of the existing rear one- and one-half story portion of the building.</p> <p>The extant rear addition of the building proposed for demolition is a frame, 1 ½ story mass with a gable roof, attached to the main portion of the building. Its south elevation is slightly off set from the south elevation of the main portion of building. A small portion of the rear projection is visible from 26<sup>th</sup> Street and features a small parapet wall with a cornice feature.</p> <p>Proposed materials will consist of a standing-seam metal roof, stucco or horizontal siding, and metal gutter and downspouts. While stucco is not uncommon in the district, because the addition would be replacing a demolished portion of the building that featured lap siding, Staff recommends that the applicant consider <u>cladding the addition in horizontal siding with a differing reveal from the primary mass of the building.</u> The applicant has provided specifications on either stucco or horizontal siding for the Commission's consideration.</p> <p>Staff finds that the proposed hyphen will serve as an adequate means of differentiation.</p>

<p><b>Standards for New Construction, Doors and Windows, pg. 49</b></p>	<p>1. <i>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></p> <p>2. <i>The architectural appearance of original windows should be used as models for new windows. Changes in the sash, depth or reveal, muntin configuration, frame or glazing is strongly discouraged. New glass should be clear without reflective coatings, to be compatible with original glass.</i></p> <p>3. <i>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></p>	<p>The windows on the proposed addition will generally be vertically aligned. The existing rear portion, as well as other historic fenestration patterns in the district are vertically aligned.</p> <p>During the conceptual review, the fenestration included windows that has a more horizontal orientation. The applicant has revised the plans to include windows that are more in keeping with the dimensions of historic designs.</p> <p>During the last review, the windows on the rear of the proposed addition were offset from one another. Staff recommended that the windows be vertically aligned to better reflect historic fenestration patterns commonly found in the district. The applicant has revised the plans to feature vertically aligned windows on each elevation. Staff finds this revision to be appropriate.</p>
<p><b>Standards for New Construction, Porches and Porch Details, pg. 49</b></p>	<p>5. <i>Porch roofs are encouraged to utilize standing- or flat-lock metal seam roofs that are hand-seamed, or closely approximate hand seaming. Seams that, in section, are large, rectangular seams, reminiscent of pre-formed seams utilized on prefabricated industrial or commercial structures, are not acceptable. Membrane roofs are acceptable substitutes for flat-lock seamed metal roofs.</i></p>	<p>There are no prominent porches proposed on the addition other than a screened-in porch off the rear. The entrances on the north and south elevation of the addition will have canopies above them with standing seam metal roofs.</p>

*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. 711 North 26<sup>th</sup> Street Façade, February 2025.



Figure 2. View of existing rear addition from North 26<sup>th</sup> Street.



Figure 3. View of existing rear addition from the rear alley.



Figure 4. View of existing rear addition from the rear alley.

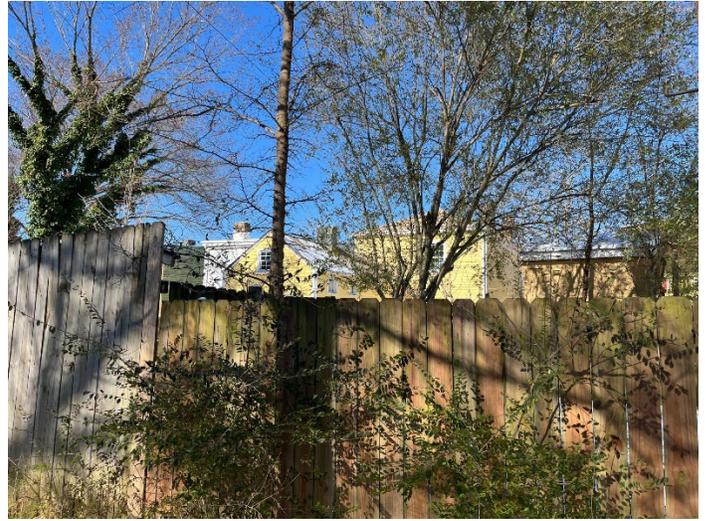


Figure 5. View of existing rear addition from the rear alley.



Figure 6. View of existing rear addition from the rear alley.

