

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

12. **CAR No. 15-099** (Michaux, LLC)

**601-601½ N. 23rd Street
Union Hill Old and Historic District**

Project Description:

**Revise previously approved plans
for the construction of two attached
single-family houses**

Staff Contact:

K. Chen

The applicant requests approval for modifications to previously approved plans for the construction of two attached single-family houses in the Union Hill Old and Historic District. The project was approved at the March 24, 2015 Commission of Architectural Review meeting and a Certificate of Appropriateness was issued on May 1, 2015. Meeting minutes from that meeting are included for reference. The proposed changes address adjustments made necessary due to the slope of the property that have necessitated changes to the siting and finished floor elevations.

On the approved documents the finished floor elevation was shown to be 2'-8" above grade at the lot line but there is a grade change across the lot of over a foot with the corner of 23rd and Leigh streets being the lowest point resulting in a higher foundation wall at this location. A foundation wall has been constructed at the site but it will be modified. As indicated on the drawings, the existing foundation wall will be reduced by removing courses of block to achieve a finish floor height at its highest location (southwest corner) of 3'-8". The owner proposes to leave 24" of the parged concrete block wall exposed on the Leigh Street (south) elevation and conceal the remaining 1'-8" of foundation wall with siding, the bottom of which would align with the skirt board of the front porch. Based on the approved drawings the finished height of the building would be 26'-4" above the finished floor height or a total of 30'-0" at its highest location. It is unclear from the submitted drawings what the relationship of the finished floor/porch height and overall height will be with the house to north, 603 N. 23rd Street.

Staff finds that proposed modification meets *The Richmond Old and Historic District Handbook and Design Review Guidelines* for new residential construction so long as the proposed floor height and finished height are in similar proportion to those shown on the approved drawings.

Staff recommends approval of the project with the condition that the relationship of the proposed finished floor and total height be confirmed as they relate to the house to the north. It is the assessment of staff that with the applicant's acceptance of the above condition the application is consistent 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 pages cited above, adopted by the Commission for review of Certificates of Appropriateness under the same section of code.