

**COMMISSION OF ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW  
STAFF REPORT  
March 24, 2015 Meeting**

1. **CAR No. 15-031** (J. Carter-Lovejoy)

**606 W. 19<sup>th</sup> Street  
Springhill Old and Historic District**

**Project Description: Revise placement and orientation of approved garage**

**Staff Contact:**

**W. Palmquist**

The applicant requests approval for the revised placement and orientation of a previously approved garage in conjunction with a new single-family house. Due to zoning requirements and the recommendation of the Secretary to the Board of Zoning Appeals, the applicant has reoriented the garage to be rear-loading instead of side-loading, and has proposed a setback from the alley of 18' to 21'. The range of the setback was recommended by the Secretary to the BZA in order to allow for maximum flexibility for approval of the back-up distance by the BZA. The overall design and size of the garage have not changed since it was approved, remaining 20' x 24' x 12', but is simply reoriented in relation to the alley.

A copy of the staff report from the January 2015 Commission meeting is included for reference.

**Staff recommends approval of the project with a condition.** The proposed reorientation of the garage does not substantively impact its overall design and is still in keeping with the Standards for New Construction outlined in the *Richmond Old and Historic Districts Handbook and Design Review Guidelines*. Staff recommends that approval be conditioned on the applicant providing additional information on the proposed garage doors to Commission staff for administrative review and approval.

It is the assessment of staff that the application, with the condition above, is consistent with the Standards for New Construction outlined in Section 114.930.7(c) of the City Code, and with the *Richmond Old and Historic Districts Handbook and Design Review Guidelines*, adopted by the Commission for review of Certificates of Appropriateness under the same section of code.

**COMMISSION OF ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW  
STAFF REPORT  
January 27, 2015 Meeting**

9. **CAR No. 15-008** (J. Carter-Lovejoy)

**606 W. 19<sup>th</sup> Street  
Springhill Old and Historic District**

**Project Description:** Construct new single-family house and garage

**Staff Contact:** W. Palmquist

The applicant requests approval to construct a single-family house and detached garage on the southern half of a parcel to be subdivided in the Springhill Old and Historic District. The proposed building design references the Craftsman Bungalow-styled houses found throughout the district. It will have a full front porch and small rear stoop with a one-story, two-car garage situated in the rear, northwest corner of the lot. The existing retaining wall which runs along the edge of the property parallel to W. 19<sup>th</sup> Street will be partially cut to allow for the installation of concrete steps leading to the proposed house.

The new building will be situated between two existing houses but will mostly reference the existing structure at 606 W. 19<sup>th</sup> Street in terms of siting. The structure will be approximately 28' in total height. It will have side yard setbacks of 5' and a front yard setback of 25'.

The applicant is seeking final approval for the design. 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* and the resulting comments follow.

**Staff Findings based on Commission of Architectural Review Guidelines**

**STANDARDS FOR NEW CONSTRUCTION**

*All new residential and commercial construction, whether in the form of additions or entire buildings, should be compatible with the historic features that characterize their setting and context. To protect the context of the surrounding historic district, new construction should reference the materials, features, size, scale, proportions, and massing of the existing historic building or buildings in its setting. However, compatibility does not mean duplicating the existing buildings or environment. In order to avoid creating a false sense of history, new construction should also be discernible from the old. Perhaps the best way to think about a compatible new building (or addition) is that it should be a good neighbor; one that enhances the character of the existing district and respects its historic context, rather than being an exact (and misleading) reproduction of another building.*

## **SITING**

1. *Additions should be subordinate in size to their main buildings and as inconspicuous as possible. Locating additions at the rear of or on the least visible side of a building is preferred.*

This standard is not applicable.

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.*

The proposed 5' side yard setbacks reflect the typical pattern along the block. The proposed 25' front yard setback will very closely match that of the adjacent house already existing at 606 W. 19<sup>th</sup> Street, which has a front yard setback of approximately 25'-8".

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

The new house will face W. 19<sup>th</sup> Street, the most prominent street bordering the site.

## **FORM**

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.*

The form of the proposed building takes its cues from the Craftsman Bungalow houses found throughout the district, having a full front porch, offset front dormer window, shingled roof, and side bay window.

2. *New residential construction should maintain the existing human scale of nearby historic residential construction in the district.*

The proposed building maintains the existing human scale of the neighborhood.

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 design and provide much of the street-level architectural character of Richmond's historic districts.*

The proposed buildings design calls for a front porch and steps which lend human-scale elements to the building's design.

### ***HEIGHT, WIDTH, PROPORTION & MASSING***

1. *New construction should respect the typical height of surrounding residential buildings.*

The proposed building will be approximately 28' in total height. While building heights along this block, and throughout most of the district vary considerably, the proposed structure will match that of the adjacent building already existing at 606 W. 19<sup>th</sup> Street which is also approximately 28' in height.

2. *New 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.*

The proposed building design respects the typical vertical orientation of two-story residences in the district.

3. *The cornice height should be compatible with that of adjacent historic buildings.*

The cornice height of the proposed structure will be in line with that of the existing structure at 606 W. 19<sup>th</sup> Street.

### ***MATERIALS & COLORS***

1. *Additions should not obscure or destroy original architectural elements.*

This standard is not applicable.

2. *Materials used in new residential construction should be visually compatible with original materials used throughout the district.*

The applicant proposes fiber cement siding, brick foundation, dimensional composite shingles, rolled seam metal front porch and rear stoop roofs, brick porch piers, wood or composite porch posts, Richmond rail, composite porch decking, and 3-over-1 windows with simulated-divided lites.

3. *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.*

The applicant proposes that the siding of the house and garage be painted “Sunbaked,” the doors be painted “Charred Clay,” the shingles be painted “HD Hickory,” the porch balustrade and railings as well as all other trim be painted “Polar Bear,” and the sash trim and muntins be painted white. These paint colors are similar to those found on the CAR Paint Color Palette and are compatible within the district.

4. *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.*

The proposed building design calls for fiber-cement siding. Staff recommends the use of smooth, untextured fiber-cement siding with no faux grain

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.*

While there is no rooftop mechanical equipment associated with this project, there is the siting of an outdoor mechanical unit to be located in the northern side yard which will be screened on two sides by lattice. The other two sides of the unit are effectively screened by the house and garage.

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Commission staff reviewed the proposed garage through the lens of the “Standards for New Construction: Residential Outbuildings” on page 48 of the *Richmond Old and Historic District Handbook and Design Review Guidelines* and the resulting comments follow.

### **RESIDENTIAL OUTBUILDINGS**

- 1) *Outbuildings, including garages, sheds, gazebos and other auxiliary structures, should be compatible with the design of the primary building on the site, including roof slope and materials selection.*

The proposed garage appears very compatible with the design of the proposed house. The proposed garage will have an identical roof slope as well as materials and colors, including shingles, siding, and entry doors.

- 2) *Newly constructed outbuildings such as detached garages or tool sheds should respect the siting, massing, roof profiles, materials and colors of existing outbuildings in the neighborhood.*

The proposed garage appears compatible with similar structures found throughout the district.

- 3) *New outbuildings should be smaller than the main residence and be located to the rear and/or side of the property to emphasize that they are secondary structures.*

The proposed garage is smaller than the main residence and located in the northwest corner of the property.

- 4) *Prefabricated yard structures are discouraged. Screening will be considered as a mitigating factor for the installation of these structures. However, prefabricated structures will still be reviewed for compatibility using the criteria developed in this section.*

This standard is not applicable.

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**Staff recommends approval of the project with conditions.** The proposed infill project appears generally to be in keeping with the Standards for New Construction outlined in the *Guidelines*. Staff recommends that approval be conditioned with the use of untextured fiber cement siding with no faux grain, as well as the installation of wood or aluminum-clad windows with simulated-divided lites. Staff also recommends that the applicant provide additional information on the proposed garage doors, as well as the screening of the outdoor mechanical unit to staff for their review and approval.

It is the assessment of staff that the application, with the conditions above, is consistent with the Standards for New Construction outlined in Section 114.930.7(c) of the City Code, and 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.