



3412 & 3412 ½ W. Franklin St.
TWO NEW SINGLE-FAMILY ATTACHED RESIDENCES

WEST OF THE BOULEVARD DESIGN OVERLAY DISTRICT
RICHMOND URBAN DESIGN COMMITTEE REVIEW

PREPARED: JUNE 15, 2023 [Revisions in Red, 7/12/2023]
APPLICANT: CENTER CREEK HOMES c/o Caroline Eddy

BRIEF PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

This application is for consideration of slight design variations from the Design Overlay District guidelines to suit the construction of two new attached dwellings at 3412 & 3412 ½ W. Franklin Street. The applicant seeks approval of slight dimensional differences in the side setbacks and cornice heights to accommodate current code requirements, contemporary construction methods and design proportions of the front façade. The site also has a significant slope from the northeast corner to the southwest corner that impacts the front elevation. We have worked with the architect to amend the design to be as close to the guidelines as possible, and believe our revised design is a fitting complement to the contributing houses in the neighborhood.

NARRATIVE:

The submission depicts a pair of new construction, attached, 3-story, [3,035 square-foot] single-family homes on a 6,973 square-foot lot at 3412 W. Franklin Street. The lot formerly housed a non-contributing Cape Cod style bungalow built in 1948. The project is situated between two Contributing Member single family homes within the overlay district. Center Creek has split the lot, by right, into two 3,475 +/- square foot lots. Each lot is rectangular in shape and is zoned R-6. The site also has a significant slope from the northeast corner to the southwest corner (approximately 4 feet) that impacts the design. The exterior language of the new homes is a contemporary interpretation of the historic Georgian building style of many of the single-family homes found on West Franklin and the overlay district.

Center Creek has worked with the project architect to amend the design to be as compliant to the guidelines as possible, given current code requirements, contemporary construction methods and the design proportions of the front façade. The new houses will have a finished floor elevation of 221.67, representing an average between the two contributing houses to left and right, set at 219.35 and 222 respectively.

Height of Cornice: Since the project is located between two contributing members, the requirement would be to meet the soffit height (top of cornice) of the higher soffit at 3410, which is 19'-6". We are seeking an exception to this requirement to allow the height of the cornice to be 21'-3" at the centerline of the two attached houses. There are a couple of variables that contribute to this height increase, which we believe to be minimum buildable height. This site does have a significant forward slope from the northeast corner to southwest corner of over two feet. Our design is on a crawl space, not a basement like neighboring buildings, which contributes to first floor height. Our standard ceiling height is 9 ft, whereas typical older homes may have 8 ft ceilings. And though our

design will be stick built, we do need to include deeper 2nd floor construction to allow for current HVAC standards. These factors have implications for the soffit height, but as shown in [the Renderings attached] our design still fits contextually between the two neighboring homes because of the slope of the lot.

Fenestrations: All windows on the first and second floors are operable, double-hung windows. To maintain the lowest possible cornice height, while including a generous cornice at the second floor (like surrounding properties) we are seeking an exception to lower the second-floor windows to 7'-4". If the Committee and Staff recommends a smaller or higher cornice, we can adjust the window height to 7'-6". All windows meet or exceed 15 sf, and no decorative windows are included.

Front Door and Portico: The design includes a door on the front façade, as required, and an end-gable portico. We understand that the Committee prefers a full width porch design, however the porch cornice height we need to match is considerably lower, since the adjacent property at 3414 also has a portico with a [cornice top at +/- 10.5 ft.]. Neighboring properties at [3414, 3407, and 3402] also have portico designs, and many houses on this block of Franklin have Colonial or Georgian door surrounds instead of porches. Our design features an end-gable portico, so that we can sit the side beams at the top of the 6'-8" standard front door to create a cornice line lower than the first-floor ceiling. With a step up into the house, our current design sits at 8'-6" to the top of the portico cornice, which is the minimum buildable height.

Width of Building: Since the new lots are less than 30 feet wide, the requirement is that the building be the greatest allowable by the zoning ordinance, which includes 3' side yards. We are seeking approval for non-conforming side yards, currently set at 4'-4". We meet the intent of the guideline with these minimized side yards, however, there are a few reasons why we believe this slight aberration is warranted:

- This particular block of Franklin features more single-family homes with wider side yards, as shown in Exhibit B, below. It appears that the intent of the overlay district in regard to lot widths is for new construction to match the existing streetscape, which this design does. The guideline appears to have been written for streets with greater density in this overlay district like Kensington, Stuart or Hanover.
- We also discussed the plans with both neighbors, who also expressed that they would like to see the widest side yards possible. [Correction: There has been confusion on this point on our part. Our understanding was that our architect discussed the new proposed elevation with the homeowners, however it has come to our attention that he showed them the previous plan for reference. A previous employee of Center Creek's had also discussed the previous design with the neighbors. The revised design was coordinated with the City Planner and then distributed as part of the Urban Design Committee meeting documents.
- The current width is the maximum in service of the design proportions of the fenestration, specifically regarding window height versus width.
- As shown in the landscape plan, would like to include width for a path, and locate the HVAC units at the side of the house, which becomes difficult to access with a 3' side yard. The larger side yards would enable greater utility for the long-term use of the new houses.

Front Setback: We are meeting the requirement to match the front setback of the forward-most adjacent contributing member, which is 3410 W. Franklin, at 29.92 feet.

Roof Form: The design shows a pitched roof above the cornice, very visible from the street. The design also includes two dormers on each house, in keeping with neighboring properties like [3411, 3415, 3402, and 3403 W. Franklin].

Exterior Materials: Primary exterior materials are red brick (foundation), smooth fiber-cement horizontal lap siding, and architectural style shingle roofing [window comment removed, not applicable]. The design will include shutters at all front windows, [like the neighboring property at 3410] W. Franklin.

Budget and Construction: The project budget is \$957,000 for both properties. The source of funding is a combination of equity through a private fund and debt through a national lender. The estimated construction start date is September 1st, 2023. Center Creek Homes is a developer who works within a Design-Build construction project delivery method.

We look forward to working with the Urban Design Committee and the Zoning Administration staff towards approval for this project.