

**COMMISSION OF ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW
STAFF REPORT
July 26, 2016 Meeting**

11. **CAR No. 16-055** (G. Oliver)

**10-14 East Broad Street
Broad Street Old and Historic District**

Project Description:

**Construct rooftop additions on
commercial structures.**

Staff Contact:

M. Pitts

The applicant requests conceptual review and comment on the construction of additions to commercial structures in the Broad Street Old and Historic District. The applicant is seeking review and comment on the height and massing of alternative proposals for additions to existing structures. In addition to the proposed construction within the City Old and Historic District, the applicant has include plans for the development of the lots immediately behind the subject lots on East Marshall Street. The Commission should note that these parcels are not under the purview of the Commission as they are outside of the Old and Historic District.

The applicant is proposing to construct residential additions to three-story commercial structures of varying heights due to the differences in floor heights. The proposed additions will be on the rooftops and set back from the facades. The applicant has proposed two alternatives for the total height of the structures of 6 stories and 8 stories. The applicant proposes to retain the building facades of 10-12 East Broad Street and restore the façade of 14 East Broad Street which has been altered over the years. The buildings in the immediate vicinity are predominantly three to four story mixed use structures though structures on the Broad Street corridor vary in height including the 23 story building at 219 East Broad Street and the five story building at 101 West Broad Street.

The property is zoned B-4, and staff has confirmed that the proposed heights meet the zoning requirements.

The applicant is seeking **Conceptual Review** for this project. Conceptual review is covered under Sec. 30-930.6(d) of the City Code: *The commission shall review and discuss the proposal with the applicant and make any necessary recommendations. Such Conceptual Review shall be advisory only.* Commission staff reviewed the project through the lens of the “Standards for New Construction: Commercial” on pages 50 to 53 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.

The *Guidelines* note that additions should be subordinate in size to their main buildings and as inconspicuous as possible (pg. 50, Siting #1). The applicant is proposing to set back the additions from the façade of the structures. By maintaining the street wall and setting back the structure, the proposed addition, particularly at the six story height, will be minimally visible from Broad Street in the immediate area though the additions can be seen from outside the Old and Historic District on the surrounding streets. The Commission may wish to consider if the proposed additions to create the eight story structures are subordinate to the main building as they will double the height of the existing structures. The *Guidelines* state that additions should not obscure or destroy original architectural elements (pg. 51, Materials & Colors #1). The proposed additions will maintain the facades and character defining features of the existing structures. Staff believes the proposed additions are compatible with the context of the district as they maintain the existing street wall which defines this commercial corridor while providing increased density in an appropriate location in the framework of the continued development of the City.