



Staff Report
City of Richmond, Virginia



Commission of Architectural Review

11.COA-161193-2025	Conceptual Review	Meeting Date: 2/25/2025
Applicant/Petitioner	B. Tyler Sylvestro	
Project Description	Construct a rear two story addition.	
Project Location		
Address: 711 North 26 th Street		
Historic District: Church Hill North		
High-Level Details:		
<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 an asymmetrical 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 Contact	Alex Dandridge, alex.dandridge@rva.gov, (804) 646-6569	
Previous Reviews	None.	
Staff Recommendations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Windows with a more vertical orientation than a horizontal one be used in the design of the new addition. 	

Staff Analysis

CONCEPTUAL REVIEW
<p>Surrounding Context</p> <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 26th Street. 711 North 26th Street is located mid-block on the east side North 26th Street and is the only Greek Revival Style dwelling. The east side of North 26th 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 26th Street. The streetscape includes medium sized trees, brick, and concrete sidewalks with granite curbs.</p>

Guideline Reference	Reference Text	Analysis
<p>Standards for New Construction, Siting, pg. 46</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 26th 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>Standards for New Construction, Form, pg. 46</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 design and provide much of the street-level architectural character of Richmond’s historic districts.</i></p>	<p>The rear addition will be rectangular in form with an asymmetrical gable roof. The rectangular form of the addition is like that of other buildings in the district.</p> <p>The asymmetrical roof form is atypical of the district and is more of a contemporary feature; however, this roof form will only be visible from the rear alley and appears to have a similar pitch to historic roofs in the district.</p> <p>The existing rear addition proposed for demolition has a typical gable roof over one- and one-half stories.</p> <p>The new addition will have entrances with overhead canopies on the north and south elevations.</p>
<p>Standards for New Construction, Height, Width, Proportion & Massing, pg. 47</p>	<p><i>1. New residential construction should respect the typical height of surrounding residential buildings.</i></p> <p><i>2. New residential construction should respect the vertical orientation typical of other residential properties in surrounding historic districts. New designs that call for wide massing</i></p>	<p>The proposed addition will be two stories in height, in-keeping with other historic buildings in the district.</p> <p>The proposed addition will feature windows that are generally vertically aligned, some being wider assemblies than others.</p>

	<p><i>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></p> <p><i>3. The cornice height should be compatible with that of adjacent historic buildings.</i></p>	
<p>Standards for New Construction, Materials & Colors, pg. 47</p>	<p><i>1. Additions should not obscure or destroy original architectural elements.</i></p> <p><i>2. Materials used in new residential construction should be visually compatible with original materials used throughout the district.</i></p> <p><i>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 (see Painting Section starting on page 60).</i></p> <p><i>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.</i></p>	<p>The 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 existing rear portion 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 26th Street and features a small parapet wall with a cornice feature.</p> <p>The proposed addition will maintain the same color scheme as the primary portion of the building.</p> <p>Proposed materials will consist of a standing seam metal roof, stucco, and metal gutter and downspouts. These materials are common materials used throughout the district.</p>
<p>Standards for New Construction, Doors and Windows, pg. 49</p>	<p><i>1. 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><i>2. 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>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>The guidelines mention that wide windows, or picture windows, that are more horizontal in shape are strongly discouraged.</p> <p>Some of the windows on the addition appear to have a horizontal orientation rather than a vertical one. To be in-keeping with more typical window dimensions in the district, <u>Staff recommends that that windows with a more vertical orientation than a horizontal one be used in the design of the new addition.</u></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>Standards for New Construction, Porches and Porch Details, pg. 49</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>

Figures

Figure 1. 711 North 26th Street Façade, February 2025.



Figure 2. View of existing rear addition from North 26th 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.

