

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

11. **CAR No. 16-008** (D. Kleyman)

**511-511 ½ North 26<sup>th</sup> Street  
Church Hill North Old and Historic District**

**Project Description:** **Modify previously approved plans including the relocation of windows and doors and the inclusion of a new door and stairs on a side elevation.**

**Staff Contact:** **M. Pitts**

The applicant requests approval to modify previously approved plans for the construction of a 4-unit multi-family structure on two vacant lots in the Church Hill North Old and Historic District. The Commission approved the project's construction at their meeting on August 25, 2015, with the condition that the applicant submit details of the ramp construction to staff for review and administrative approval. Since the time of approval, the applicant has made several changes to the project which require review by the Commission.

The proposed modification to the plans are the following:

- Addition of a six panel metal door, landing, and stairs with a railing on the south (right side) elevation near the front of the structure. This door is to provide access to the backflow preventer. The stairs, landing, and railing will be unpainted treated wood.
- Removal of one bay of windows on the rear elevation. The remaining three bays have been relocated to place the door in the center of the elevation and to be located behind the porch columns.
- Addition of two second story windows on the north (left side) elevation and the relocation of windows. All first floor windows align with the second floor windows above.
- Removal of two second floor windows on the south (right side) elevation.

The front elevation has not changed from the approved plans. As conditioned in the previous approval, the applicant has provided details of the proposed handicap ramp. The ramp will be of concrete construction with simple black metal handrails. The proposed handrails are consistent with the Commission's Guidelines for Administrative Approval of Railings.

**Staff recommends approval of the project with a condition.** The *Richmond Old and Historic Districts Handbook and Design Review Guidelines* state that size, proportion, and spacing patterns of doors and window openings on free standing, new construction should be compatible with patterns established within the district (pg. 46). Though the applicant has altered the fenestration from the

approved plans, an effort was made to ensure the windows align vertically which is compatible with the window alignment throughout the district. Although the windows and doors at the rear align vertically, locating openings behind porch columns is not typically of homes in the district. As the building code has required a shear wall at one corner of the rear, moving the windows in between the existing column spacing would be difficult. Staff recommends evenly spacing two columns at the rear to ensure no opening is located directly behind a column.

The Guidelines note decks should be painted or stained a neutral color that complements one or more of the colors found on the main structure (pg. 48). For this reason, staff recommends the proposed landing and railing from the backflow overflow preventer which will be visible from the front of the structure should be painted or stained a color to be administratively reviewed and approved by staff.

It is the assessment of staff that the application, with the conditions noted above, is consistent with the Standards for New Construction outlined in Section 30-930.7(c) of the City Code, as well as with the *Richmond Old and Historic Districts Handbook and Design Review Guidelines*, specifically the page cited above, adopted by the Commission for review of Certificates of Appropriateness under the same section of the code.