

**COMMISSION OF ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW  
STAFF REPORT  
December 15, 2015 Meeting**

- 14. CAR No. 15-157** (2217 Monument Ave.) **2217 Monument Avenue**  
**Monument Avenue Old and Historic District**

**Project Description:** **Construct a rear addition and  
rehabilitate an existing garage and front porch**

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

The applicant requests approval to demolish an existing single story addition and rear stairs and construct a new single story addition on the rear of a dwelling located in the Monument Avenue Old and Historic District. Additionally, the applicant proposes to rehabilitate the existing garage and front porch and alter existing window and door openings. The existing dwelling is a Colonial Revival brick row house which was constructed in 1914. From reviewing the Sanborn Maps, staff has determined that the existing single story addition was in place in 1925. The existing addition may have been altered over the years as the windows are not consistent.

**Staff recommends partial approval of this project with conditions.**

**Building Addition:**

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 or on the least visible side of a building is preferred.*

The applicant is proposing to locate the addition at the rear of the structure, and expand the footprint of the existing single story addition. The proposed addition will extend 8 feet past the existing addition. The proposed addition is one story, and the primary structure is three stories.

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.*

This standard does not apply.

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

This standard does not apply.

## **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 proposed addition has a flat roof with a roof deck above and is void of decorative elements similar the existing rear addition. The proposed addition is similar in design and scale to the modern addition located at the neighboring property, 2219 Monument Avenue. The proposed form and proportions are compatible with the existing structure. The historic addition contained three alley facing windows which created a more open feel to the structure. The proposed addition contains only two smaller windows on the alley elevation. Staff recommends that the applicant install an additional window on the alley elevation to reference the more open design of the historic addition.

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

This standard does not apply.

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 applicant is proposing to construct a small brick stoop with a metal shed roof and steps to access the rear yard. This entry creates a human scale in the proposed project.

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

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

The height of the addition at approximately 16 feet is comparable to the existing addition and the neighboring addition.

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 addition incorporates the vertical orientation of the existing addition and that of the neighboring addition.

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

The roof height of the addition will be within 12" of the roof height of the adjacent structure.

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

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

The addition will require the demolition of an existing addition which appears to date to at least 1925. The existing addition appears to have been altered over the years. The applicant is proposing to reuse the windows which appear to be original on other window openings. As the existing addition is not a character defining feature of the property and the applicant has taking measures to reuse the historic material on the property, staff recommends approval of its removal.

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

The proposed addition will be set on a raised brick veneer foundation and clad with smooth, non-beaded cementitious siding with a 7" exposure. The use of the brick veneer is consistent with the brick foundations found throughout the district. Additionally, the use of siding is found throughout the district and, in this project, aids in differentiating the new addition from the historic brick structure.

The applicant is proposing to install two 4/1 aluminum clad windows on the alley facing façade and one 4/1 and two 6/1 aluminum clad windows on the west elevation. The existing home has a mix of glazing configurations including 12/1 windows on the front façade, and 9/1, 2/2, and 1/1 windows on the rear. The proposed muntin configuration is compatible with that of the existing windows on the property by maintaining the single lite for the bottom sash as is present in the majority of the windows, while offering a different configuration for the upper sash that is clearly differentiated from the historic windows. Staff recommends that all windows be true or simulated divided lite.

The applicant is proposing to install an aluminum metal railing that will be painted black and anchored with wood trimmed white posts on the deck. The proposed railing references the railing type found in the district, as the front of the home and the neighboring structures have black metal railings, while clearly being a modern addition due to the mix of materials.

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 existing structure is unpainted masonry with white trim and beige window sashes on the façade and white painted masonry with white trim and beige sashes on the rear. The applicant is proposing to install the siding in either "Sawdust" or "Accessible Beige." Both of the proposed colors are included in the Commission's paint palette and are appropriate for Colonial Revival style homes. The proposed beige colors will match the existing sashes and will complement the primary structure. The applicant has stated that it is the owner's intent to remove the non-historic aluminum facing that covers portions of the rear and expose the masonry. If the masonry is unpainted, the applicant intends to paint the masonry to match the existing painted masonry. Staff recommends that the masonry at the rear should be painted a red brick color not the existing white color.

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 applicant is proposing to install smooth, un-beaded, cementitious siding. As the siding will be installed at the rear of the structure with limited visibility from the public right-of-way staff recommends approval of the proposed installation.

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.*

This standard does not apply.

#### **Garage Rehabilitation:**

As described in the application, the majority of the work to be performed to the garage is repair and in-kind replacement. The applicant is proposing to install a new galvanized standing seam roof which is a material found on other roofs in the district. Additionally, due to the pitch of the roof and the presence of the parapet wall, there is limited visibility of the roof from the public right-of-way. The applicant is proposing to install a paneled garage door to be painted. Staff recommends that the applicant provides details of the proposed garage door for staff to review and administrative approval.

#### **Porch Rehabilitation:**

As described by the applicant, the work to be performed on the porch will be repair and in-kind replacement to restore the porch to its historic appearance. The applicant has stated that the existing porch roof is failing and is constructed of asphalt shingles. The applicant has indicated the desire to use a standing seam metal or a composite material with a form to mimic slate. As the Guidelines state that porch roofs are encouraged to utilize standing- or flat-lock metal seam roofs that are hand-seamed, or closely approximate hand seaming (pg. 46, #5), staff recommends that the applicant install a standing- or flat-lock metal seam porch roof.

#### **Alterations to Existing Openings:**

To accommodate the rehabilitation of the structure, the applicant is proposing to alter three existing openings at the rear of the structure. On the third floor, the applicant proposes to infill a portion of the existing door opening and replace the door with a 1/1 window to match the adjacent window. The applicant will use a window which has been salvaged from the demolition of the addition and will infill the area below with brick. On the second floor, the applicant proposes to enlarge an existing window opening and install a 15-lite door with a three light transom above and brick infill an existing door. For the infill, the applicant proposes to tooth in the new brick to match the existing. The Guidelines note that the number, location, size or glazing pattern of windows should not be changed by cutting new openings, blocking out windows or by installing replacement sash

that do not fit the original window, but changes to existing windows or the addition of new windows along a secondary elevation will be considered by the Commission on a case-by-case basis (pg. 65, #8). Staff recommends approval of the conversion of the door to a window and the window to the door as these changes are on a secondary elevation and maintain the existing fenestration pattern while minimally altering the opening sizes with the condition that the door be simulated or true divided lite. The Guidelines state that infilling of masonry openings is strongly discouraged. For this reason staff recommends the denial of the infilling of the existing door opening.

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**Staff recommends partial approval of the project with conditions.**

Specifically, staff recommends the following:

- Denial of the infilling of the existing door opening
- Approval of the demolition of the existing addition, construction of the proposed addition, garage and porch rehabilitations, and alteration of two existing openings at the rear with the following conditions:
  - the applicant install an additional window on the alley elevation of the new addition to reference the more open design of the historic addition,
  - all windows and doors be true or simulated divided lite,
  - the masonry at the rear should be painted a red brick color not the existing white color,
  - the applicant provides details of the proposed garage door for staff to review and administratively approve, and
  - the applicant install a standing- or flat-lock metal seam porch roof.

It is the assessment of staff that the application, with the conditions noted above, is partially 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 pages cited above, adopted by the Commission for review of Certificates of Appropriateness under the same section of code.