

**COMMISSION OF ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW
STAFF REPORT
May 24, 2016 Meeting**

21. **CAR No. 16-089** (T. & N. Strei)

**2515 E. Clay Street
Church Hill North Old and Historic District**

Project Description: **Construct an addition to an existing
single family dwelling**

Staff Contact: **K. Chen**

The applicant requests approval to construct a one-story addition on the side of a dwelling located in the Church Hill North Old and Historic District. There are currently two enclosed rooms in this location that appear to have been a porch at one time. The heavily altered space is poorly constructed, does not meet code, and will be removed and replaced with the proposed addition.

The proposed addition will be slightly wider and longer than the current enclosed porch and will maintain the vertical height established by the existing structure. The new enclosure will be recessed behind the main block of the house along the east elevation of a narrower rear wing. The addition will be set on a low parged block foundation and be clad with lap siding of the same material and color as the dwelling with a 6" exposure to distinguish it from the existing 8" exposure. The shallow hipped-roof will be clad with gray TPO. There will be a single 1/1 sash window and a glass block window. The glass block window will be minimally visible from the street.

The applicant is seeking final approval for the design. 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.

The addition will be located on a minimally visible face of the building and recessed behind the two-story portion of the dwelling. It will be located within the required 3' side yard setback. The form will be similar in scale and proportion to the existing, sub-standard, enclosure on the side of the house and will respect the scale and proportion of side porches and additions found in the area. The addition will not destroy or obscure original architectural elements or materials and will be constructed utilizing materials found in the area.

Staff recommends approval of the project with a condition. The proposed addition appears generally to be in keeping with the Standards for New Construction outlined in the *Guidelines. The Guidelines, New Construction, Doors and Windows, pg. 53* recommends the size, proportion, and spacing patterns of door and window openings on new additions should follow the patterns established by the original structure. Staff recommends that approval be conditioned:

- A window compatible with the size and proportions found on the original structure should be used instead of the glass block which is not a traditional material.

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