

**COMMISSION OF ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW
STAFF REPORT
October 24, 2017, Meeting**

13. **COA-024730-2017** (J. Harlan)

**2710 East Clay Street
Church Hill North Old and Historic District**

Project Description:

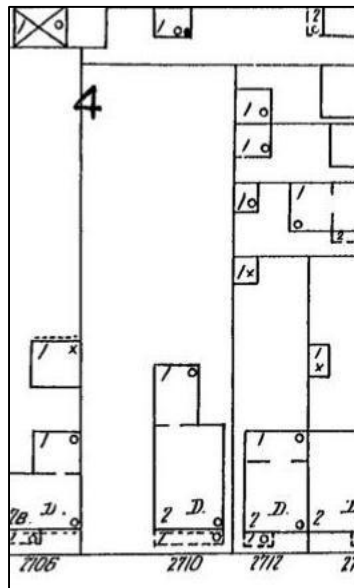
Construct a two-story rear addition.

Staff Contact:

M. Pitts

The applicant requests approval to construct second story addition at the rear of a two-story 1880 brick vernacular Italianate dwelling in the Church Hill North Old and Historic District.

The existing home is a 2-story, 3-bay dwelling with a stepped parapet roof and a single story portion at the rear. Per the earliest available Sanborn map, the single story portion was in place by 1905. It appears the rear has been altered over time to include the construction of a small second story addition to accommodate a bathroom as this portion of the building is not present on the Sanborn maps.



Sanborn Map (1905)

The property does not have an alley that runs along the rear property line though an alley does terminate at the north corner of the property. The rear of the home is minimally visible from this alley. The northwest elevation is highly visible from East Clay Street as the subject lot is wider than the typical lot in the district and has an unimproved side yard.

The applicant is proposing a substantial 2-story addition. The applicant is proposing to demolish the rear and southeast building walls of the existing first

story element and the rear building wall of the second story. The visible northwest building wall will remain intact. The proposed addition will expand the first floor to approximately the existing southeast building wall. The proposed second story will be inset the width of a brick from the existing building wall on the northwest elevation. The applicant is proposing to clad the addition in fiber cement panels and unpainted wood siding. In the addition the applicant is proposing single lite aluminum clad casement windows and full lite doors. The applicant is proposing to create four new window openings on the southeast elevation and install 1/1 windows and to modify an existing window on the northwest elevation to accommodate a door. Additionally the applicant is proposing a rear deck which will wrap to the side of the house. The deck and a second story balcony will have metal railings.

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.

Addition: The *Richmond Old and Historic District Handbook and Design Review Guidelines* state that additions should be subordinate in size and as inconspicuous as possible (pg. 52, Siting #1). Though substantial in scale, the proposed addition is located at the rear of the structure and is designed to minimize the visibility from East Clay Street by pulling in the mass from the existing building walls and being constructed at a lower height than the façade. The *Richmond Old and Historic District Handbook and Design Review Guidelines* state that additions should not obscure or destroy original architectural elements (pg. 47, Materials & Colors #1). On the highly visible northwest elevation, the applicant has designed the project to maintain an understanding of the original first story portion. The Commission may wish to consider whether the brick rear wall of the first story addition should be maintained as it is visible from the rear alley though the view is obscured. The *Guidelines* note that that new construction should use a building form compatible with that found elsewhere in the district (pg. 52, Form #1). Staff finds the simple contemporary style of the proposed addition is compatible with the district while being clearly differentiated from the historic construction. Though the mix of window sizes and lack of alignment on the southeast elevation of the addition is not characteristic, staff believes these windows will be minimally visible from the right of way. Additionally, staff finds the proposed side and rear decks are consistent with the Commission's guidelines for decks (pg. 51)

New and Altered Openings: The *Guidelines* discourage changes to existing windows and the addition of new windows, especially alterations to masonry structures, and note that the Commission will consider these alterations along a secondary elevation on a case-by-case basis (pg. 69, #5, #8). Staff is supportive of the conversion of a window on the side elevation to the door as it is a modification of an existing window opening. Staff recommends the proposed door fit within the jambs of the existing window opening. Staff has concerns with the introduction of the new masonry openings on the southeast elevation as the

side elevation is visible from East Clay Street. Staff recommends the applicant illustrate the visibility of these new window openings from East Clay Street.

The following items are needed for final review of the project:

- Fully dimensioned elevations to include the height of the structure, deck, and the head and sill heights of the openings.
- Fully dimensioned floor plans to include the setbacks from the existing building walls.
- Location of mechanical equipment and trash cans on the site plan.