

**COMMISSION OF ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW
STAFF REPORT
December 19, 2017 Meeting**

8. **COA-027040-2017** (Cheney Creek, LLC) **3020 East Franklin Street
St. John's Church Old and Historic District**

Project Description: **Construct a new duplex.**

Staff Contact: **M. Pitts**

The applicant requests conceptual review and comment for the construction of two new attached single family homes on a vacant lot in the St. John's Church Old and Historic District. The lot is currently wooded and slopes away from East Franklin Street.

The project site is located near the terminus of East Franklin Street at North 31st Street adjacent to the CSX right of way. East Franklin Street is developed with one historic structure, a free standing, Late-Victorian, frame, two-story, three-bay dwelling on the north side of the street; two 2-story concrete block apartment buildings; and several new single family and attached single family homes. The new construction on the street consists of three-story frame dwellings. Further to the east, facing N. 31st Street are two rows of frame Late-Victorian dwellings. To the west facing N. 29th Street are densely developed blocks of predominately three-bay brick dwellings built in the mid to late nineteenth century that are two to four stories in height.

The applicant is proposing to construct two 3-story attached single family dwellings which will be 34' in height from the street grade. The proposed structure is similar in design to the adjacent, newly constructed attached single family homes though at 37' in width it is 10 feet narrower than the adjacent structure. Each home will be clad in fiber cement panels and have one bay of paired windows and a recessed, two bay connector to be clad in fiber cement siding. The applicant is proposing a small recessed front porch for each home. The windows will be single lite casement windows of varying sizes.

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. Commission staff reviewed the project through the lens of the "Standards for New Construction: Residential" on pages 46-51 of the *Richmond Old and Historic District Handbook and Design Review Guidelines* utilizing the checklist below.

S=satisfies

D=does not satisfy

NA=not applicable

S **D** **NA**
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New infill construction should respect the prevailing front and side yard setback patterns in the surrounding district

The new houses will have a 15 foot front yard setback and approximately 3 foot side yard setbacks. The homes will align with the adjacent new construction.

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Where the adjoining buildings have different setbacks, the setback for the new building should be based on the historical pattern for the block

The structure matches the setback of the existing new construction to the west. Per the Sanborn Maps, the subject lot and the lot to the east were never previously developed.

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New buildings should face the most prominent street bordering the site

The new buildings are oriented towards East Franklin Street, the prominent street bordering the site.

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New construction should use a building form compatible with that found elsewhere in the district. Form refers to the combination of massing, size, symmetry, proportions, projections and roof shapes that lend identity to a building.

The new construction uses a building form similar to the adjacent new construction which minimized the mass of the paired houses by including a recessed connector between the two-bay portions of the structure. Staff has concerns that this design is not appropriate for the narrower subject lot as the one bay portions are not similar to homes found in the district and should read as projecting bays. Staff recommends the homes should read as two bay homes with one projecting bay rather than single bay homes with a two bay connector. Staff recommends this could be achieved by relocating the projecting bay in one of the homes or using a design detail to clearer differentiate the two homes.

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New construction should incorporate human-scale elements such as cornices, porches and front steps.

The proposed new dwellings maintain the existing human scale found in the surrounding area through the incorporation of porches, cornices, and front steps. Staff recommends details of the proposed cornice be provided.

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New construction should respect the typical height of surrounding buildings

The new houses are approximately 34' in height. They are isolated at the end of a sparsely developed street which is now dominated with new construction of a similar height as to that proposed. The height is similar to the historic homes at the top of the hill facing Libby Park which are two to four stories in height.

- ☐ ☒ ☐ **New construction should respect the typical width, organization of bays, vertical alignment and symmetry of surrounding buildings.**

The design which reads as single bay masses with a two bay connector is not consistent with patterns found in the district as the single bay elements are narrower than the homes found in the district. Staff recommends the homes should read as 2-bay homes with one projecting bay rather than single bay homes with a two bay connector.

- ☒ ☐ ☐ **The size, proportion, and spacing patterns of doors and window openings should be compatible with patterns established in the district.**

The windows on structures in the district are typically of a similar size, regularly placed, and ranked. Staff recommends the windows on the façade should be the same size including the windows in the recessed portion of the structure.

- ☒ ☐ ☐ **Porch and cornice heights should be compatible with adjacent buildings**

The porch and cornice heights are compatible with buildings in the district.

- ☒ ☐ ☐ **Materials used in new construction should be visually compatible with original materials used throughout the district. Vinyl, asphalt, and aluminum siding are not permitted.**

The proposed construction utilizes composite windows and cementitious panels and siding. These materials are compatible with original materials in the district.

The following items will need to be included for final review (please refer to the Commission's New Construction Checklist and Required Dimensions document for additional details):

1. Fully dimensioned elevations
2. Roof plan
3. List of windows and doors to include size, material, and design
4. Description of all materials (attach specification sheets if necessary)
5. Site plan to include parking, trash, and mechanical equipment locations
6. Dimensioned context elevation