



**Staff Report**  
**City of Richmond, Virginia**



**Commission of Architectural Review**

COA-100319-2021	<b>Final Review Meeting Date: 10/26/2021</b>
<b>Applicant/Petitioner</b>	Greg Shron – Center Creek Homes
<b>Project Description</b>	Construct a new, 2-story, single family detached residence.
<b>Project Location</b>	
<b>Address: 404 N. 23<sup>rd</sup> St.</b>	
<b>Historic District: Church Hill North</b>	
<b>High-Level Details:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The applicant proposes to construct a new, two story, single-family detached residence with an English basement and roof top terrace on a vacant lot.</li> <li>The new construction will utilize a faux mansard roof, a two bay, one-story, covered front porch, one-over-one windows, a metal handrail with horizontal slats and hardie plank lap siding and a standing seam metal roof.</li> <li>The new construction will be contemporary in design and located on a small lot, which will dictate its overall massing and foot print.</li> </ul>	
<b>Staff Recommendation</b>	<b>Approval, with Conditions</b>
<b>Staff Contact</b>	Alex Dandridge, <a href="mailto:alex.dandridge@richmondgov.com">alex.dandridge@richmondgov.com</a> , (804) 646-6569
<b>Previous Reviews</b>	<p>The application was conceptually reviewed at the September 2021 meeting. The applicant addressed the Commission's changes as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- North elevation has been redesigned to include a contemporary, rectangular stair tower element that will differ in color and materials from the main building.</li> <li>- Inclusion of several windows to the north side elevation.</li> <li>- The mansard roof has been wrapped around both side elevations</li> <li>- Parapet wall section redesigned to decrease the pitch of the roof, decrease the depth of the eave, and recess the mansard portion into the roof terrace.</li> </ul> <p>A small commercial building was located at this site until it was demolished in 1996. The Church Hill North National Register Nomination estimates that the original frame building was constructed circa 1843. It was configured so that the gable end of the building faced the street. A stair and second-floor porch along the side of the property provided access to the residential space in the upper level of the building</p>

	In 2013 and 2014, the Commission reviewed the conceptual, and then final plans for a new mixed-use building on this site with zero setback from the sidewalk. The new construction would have had large store front windows facing N. 23 <sup>rd</sup> Street and living spaces on the second floor. The commission approved the new construction, but it was never constructed.
<b>Staff Recommendations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff recommends that the applicant consider other locations for the stair tower projection that are less visible from N. 23<sup>rd</sup> Street</li> <li>• Staff recommends that a window size and style that is more in-keeping with the district be utilized on the building's north elevation.</li> <li>• Staff recommends that stair tower not be differentiated from the main house using a different material.</li> <li>• Staff recommends that a final window schedule be submitted to staff for administrative review and approval.</li> </ul>

## Staff Analysis

Guideline Reference	Reference Text	Analysis
Siting, pg. 46, #s 2-3	<p>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.</p> <p>3. New buildings should face the most prominent street bordering the site.</p>	The new construction will generally respect the prevailing setback patterns on the block, being 6'2" from the front sidewalk, and will face the most prominent street, N. 23 <sup>rd</sup> Street.
Form, pg. 46, #s1-3	<p>1. New construction should use a building form compatible with that found elsewhere in the historic district.</p> <p>2. New residential construction should maintain the existing human scale of nearby historic residential construction in the district.</p> <p>3. New residential construction and additions should incorporate human-scale elements such as cornices, porches and front steps into their design.</p>	<p>The new construction will be two stories in height with an english basement, three bays wide, and will have a two bay, one story, covered front porch with side stairs. There will be a rooftop terrace that is not visible, sitting behind a faux mansard roof.</p> <p>While there are not examples of english basements in the immediate area, staff notes that this is a common form found within the Church Hill North City Old and Historic District. The closest example to the subject property being 2300 E. Marshall Street.</p> <p>The proposed construction will have a one story, two bay, covered front porch that faces the main street, in-keeping with that of the existing buildings on this block. Staff notes that due to the English basement, the floor of the front porch will be higher than the front porches on existing buildings in the immediate area, however, there are examples of other elevated front porches on the east side of N. 23<sup>rd</sup> street.</p>

		<p>The new construction will have minimal architectural detailing, utilizing a simplified cornice and contemporary horizontal railings.</p> <p>Staff notes that the proposed construction is narrower than the existing buildings on the block, however this seems to be in response to a smaller and shallower lot.</p> <p>The new construction will have a rooftop stairwell projection that will project approximately 4.5' above the parapet wall at the rear of the building. <u>Staff recommends that the applicant consider other locations for the stair tower projection that are less visible from N. 23<sup>rd</sup> Street</u></p>
Height, Width, Proportion, & Massing, pg. 47, #s1-3	<p>1. New residential construction should respect the typical height of surrounding residential buildings.</p> <p>2. New residential construction should respect the vertical orientation typical of other residential properties in surrounding historic districts.</p> <p>3. The cornice height should be compatible with that of adjacent historic buildings.</p>	<p>The new construction appears to be taller than the existing buildings on the block.</p> <p>Due to the elevated front porch and over taller height of the new construction, staff believes that the cornice height of the main building and the cornice height of the front porch will not align with the neighboring, existing building.</p>
New Construction, Doors and Windows, pg. 49 #3	<p>3. The size, proportion, and spacing patterns of doors and window openings on free standing, new construction should be compatible with patterns established within the district.</p>	<p>The size, proportion, and spacing patterns of doors and window openings are generally compatible with patterns established within the district, having vertically aligned windows and a front entry door and rear door.</p> <p>There are windows being proposed on the north elevation of the proposed building that are smaller than the typical window sizes found within the district. <u>Staff recommends that a window size and style that is more in-keeping with the district be utilized on the buildings north elevation.</u></p> <p><u>Staff recommends that a final window schedule be submitted to staff for administrative review and approval.</u></p>
New Construction, Materials & Colors, 2, 5, 6 pg. 53	<p>2. Materials used in new construction should be visually compatible with original materials used throughout the surrounding neighborhood.</p> <p>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</p>	<p>Proposed exterior materials include will include hardiplank siding, soffits, and trim, standing seam metal roofing, brick, parged foundation, aluminum gutters and downspouts, and horizontal steel front porch railings.</p> <p>The applicant proposes to differentiate the stair tower on the north side of the building using a contemporary cladding. Staff finds that separating the stair tower in material from the main portion of the building on the</p>

	<p>railings should be as unobtrusive as possible, in order to minimize their appearance and visual impact on the surrounding district.</p>	<p>north elevation visually emphasizes the narrow form of the new construction, making the overall massing appear less in-keeping with the District. Staff recommends that <u>stair tower not be differentiated from the main house using a different material.</u></p> <p>The applicant has clarified that the HVAC unit will be located in the rear and not visible.</p> <p>The rooftop terrace will sit below the roofline. The faux mansard roof and parapet walls will serve as the railings for the rooftop terrace.</p>
--	--	--

## Figures

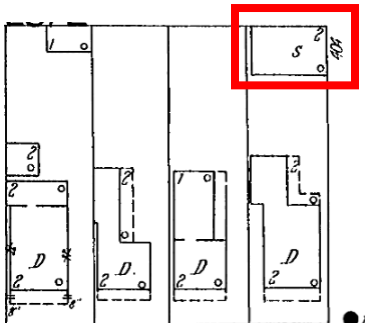


Figure 1. 1924-1925 Sanborn Map



Figure 2. Current vacant lot.





Figure 4. Historic photo from Assessor's office (demolished 1996).



Figure 5. Current view of vacant lot looking south towards E. Marshall St.



Figure 6. Current view of vacant lot facing N. 23<sup>rd</sup> St.



Figure 7. Examples of elevated front porches on N. 23<sup>rd</sup> Street



Figure 8. Examples of un-aligned front porch cornices on N. 23<sup>rd</sup> Street