

CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS

Application Date: January 7, 2015

Applicant: RR Development Holdings, LLC, for William Riley, owner

Property: 544 Harvard Street, lot 23, block 289, Houston Heights Subdivision. The property includes a historic 1,707 square foot, one-story wood frame single-family residence situated on a 6,600 square foot (50' x 132') interior lot.

Significance: Contributing bungalow residence, constructed circa 1930, located in the Houston Heights Historic District South. The residence has been converted into office space which involved removing original windows, enclosing the porch and covering original siding.

Proposal: Alteration – Revision to COA granted by Planning Commission in October 2014.

The applicant received a COA in October 2014 for the following:

- Construct a 2,144 square foot two-story rear addition clad in cementitious siding to a contributing 1,700 square foot one-story contributing residence. The addition will have a ridge height of 28'-8" and an eave height of 22'-8". Original wood siding will be restored and exposed and new windows will be installed in original window openings. No original windows remain. The original brick chimney and porch columns will be retained.

The applicant now proposes to relocate the front porch steps from the north side to the west (front) and add brick wing walls with concrete caps.

See enclosed application materials and detailed project description on p. 5-8 for further details.

Public Comment: One opposed. See Attachment A.

Civic Association: No comment received.

Recommendation: Approval

HAHC Action: Approved

All materials in exterior walls, including windows, siding, framing lumber, and interior shiplap must be retained except where removal or replacement has been explicitly approved by HAHC. Shiplap is an integral structural component of the exterior wall assembly in balloon framed structures and its removal can cause torqueing, twisting and collapse of exterior walls. Shiplap may be carefully shored and removed in small portions to insulate, run wire or plumbing, and should be replaced when the work is complete. Maintenance and minor in-kind repairs of exterior materials may be undertaken without HAHC approval, but if extensive damage of any exterior wall element is encountered during construction, contact staff before removing or replacing the materials. A revised COA may be required.

CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS

Basis for Issuance: HAHC Approval
Effective: January 29, 2015



**PLANNING &
DEVELOPMENT
DEPARTMENT**

COA valid for one year from effective date. COA is in addition to any other permits or approvals required by municipal, state and federal law. Permit plans must be stamped by Planning & Development Department for COA compliance prior to submitting for building or sign permits. Any revisions to the approved project scope may require a new COA.

APPROVAL CRITERIA

ALTERATIONS, REHABILITATIONS, RESTORATIONS AND ADDITIONS

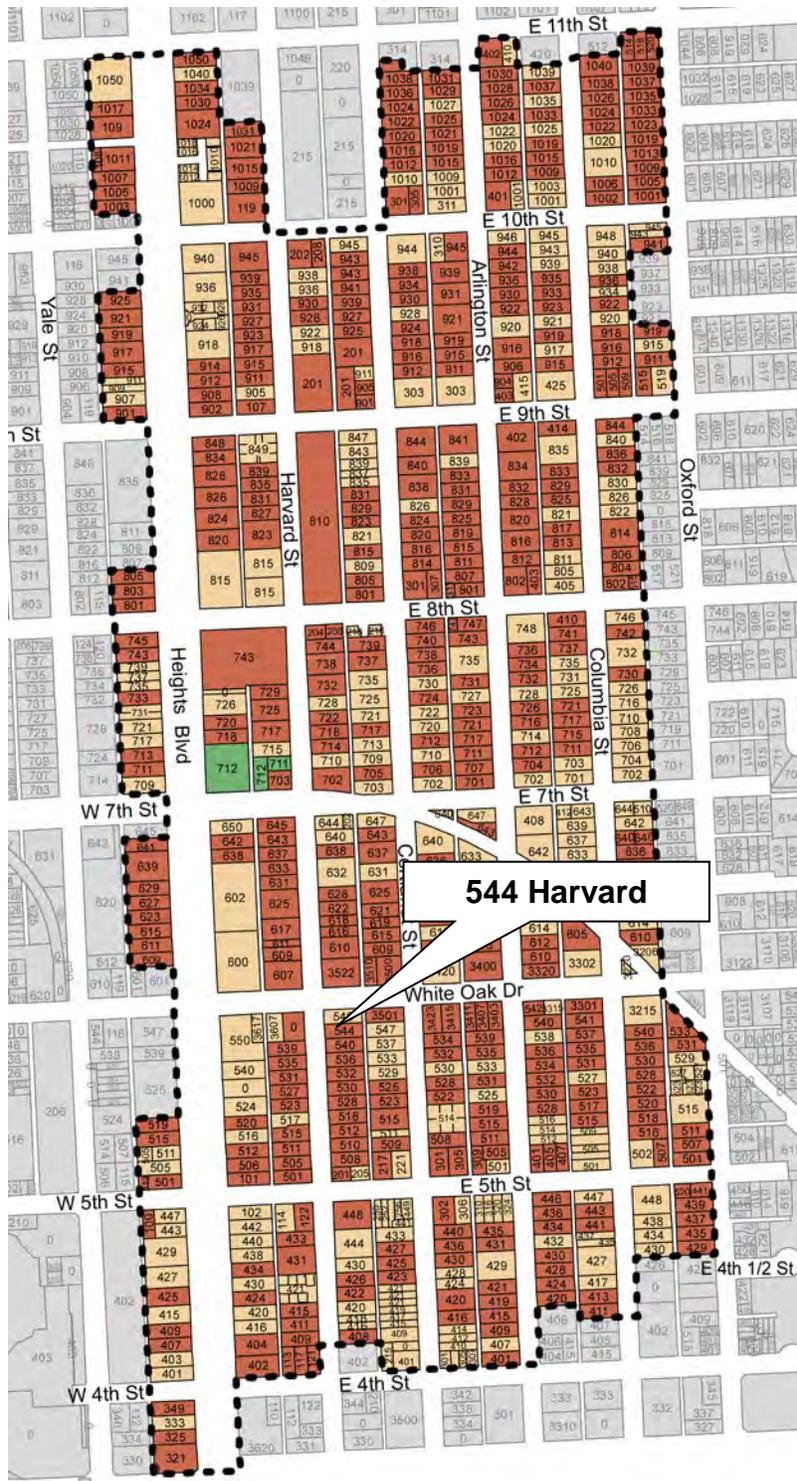
Sec. 33-241(a): HAHC shall issue a certificate of appropriateness for the alteration, rehabilitation, restoration or addition of an exterior feature of (i) any landmark or protected landmark, (ii) any building, structure or object that is contributing to an historic district, or (iii) any building, structure or object that is part of an archaeological site, upon finding that the application satisfies the following criteria, as applicable:

- S D NA S - satisfies D - does not satisfy NA - not applicable
(1) The proposed activity must retain and preserve the historical character of the property;
(2) The proposed activity must contribute to the continued availability of the property for a contemporary use;
(3) The proposed activity must recognize the building, structure, object or site as a product of its own time and avoid alterations that seek to create an earlier or later appearance;
(4) The proposed activity must preserve the distinguishing qualities or character of the building, structure, object or site and its environment;
(5) The proposed activity must maintain or replicate distinctive stylistic exterior features or examples of skilled craftsmanship that characterize the building, structure, object or site;
(6) New materials to be used for any exterior feature excluding what is visible from public alleys must be visually compatible with, but not necessarily the same as, the materials being replaced in form, design, texture, dimension and scale;
(7) The proposed replacement of missing exterior features, if any, should be based on an accurate duplication of features, substantiated by available historical, physical or pictorial evidence, where that evidence is available, rather than on conjectural designs or the availability of different architectural elements from other structures;
(8) Proposed additions or alterations must be done in a manner that, if removed in the future, would leave unimpaired the essential form and integrity of the building, structure, object or site;
(9) The proposed design for any exterior alterations or addition must not destroy significant historical, architectural or cultural material and must be compatible with the size, scale, material and character of the property and the area in which it is located;
(10) The setback of any proposed construction or alteration must be compatible with existing setbacks along the blockface and facing blockface(s);
(11) The proposed activity will comply with any applicable deed restrictions.



PROPERTY LOCATION
HOUSTON HEIGHTS HISTORIC DISTRICT SOUTH

- Building Classification**
- Contributing
 - Non-Contributing
 - Park

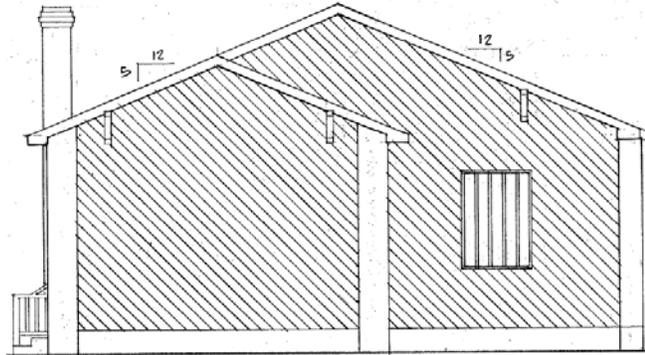


INVENTORY PHOTO



WEST ELEVATION – FRONT FACING HARVARD STREET

EXISTING

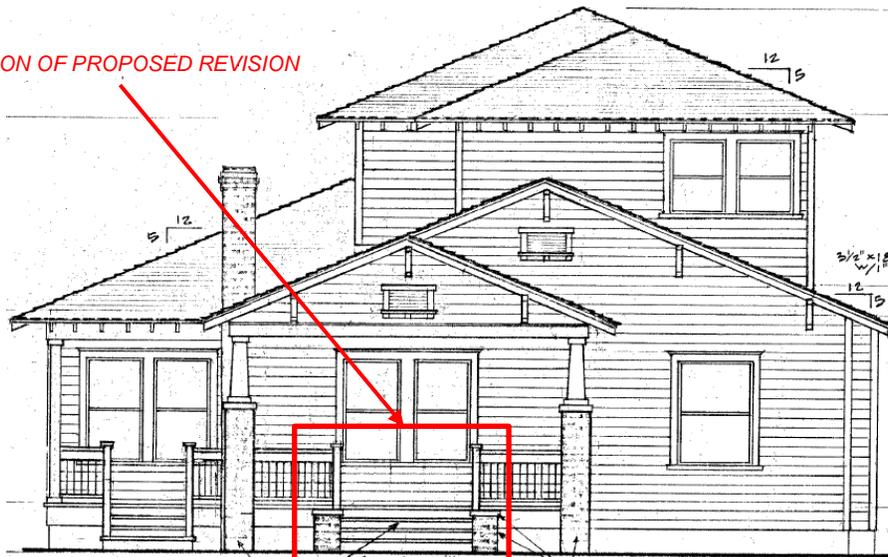


APPROVED – 10/16/14



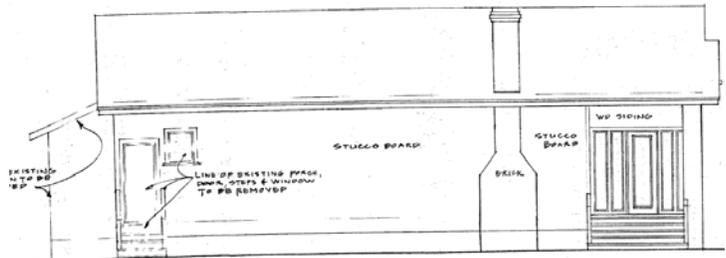
PROPOSED

LOCATION OF PROPOSED REVISION

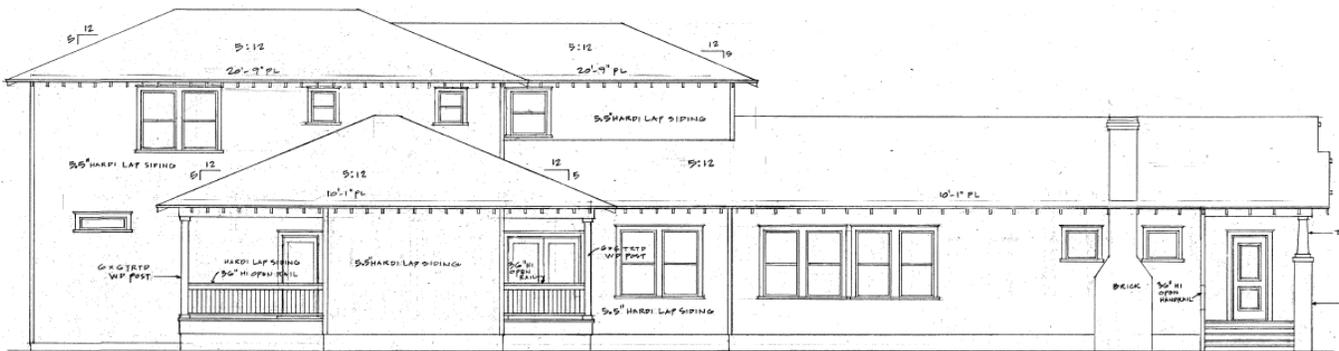


NORTH SIDE ELEVATION

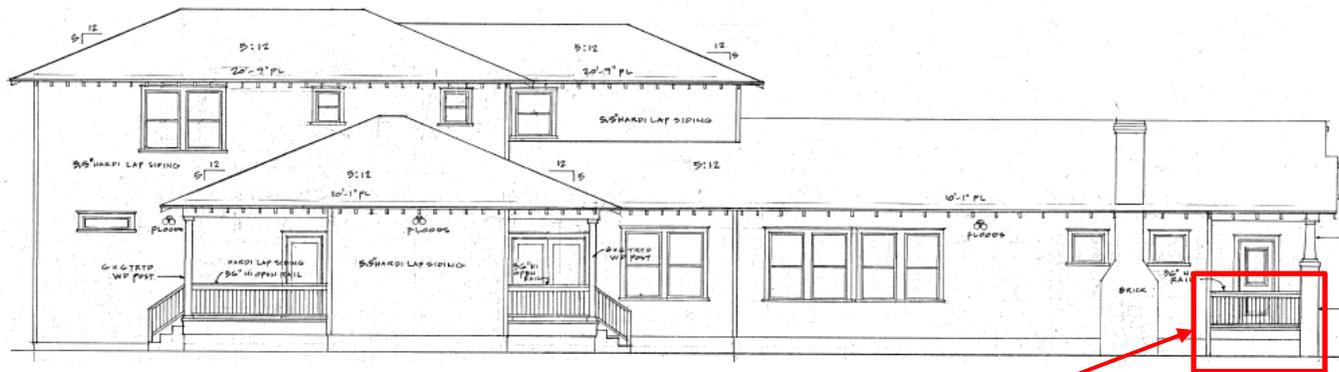
EXISTING



APPROVED – 10/16/14

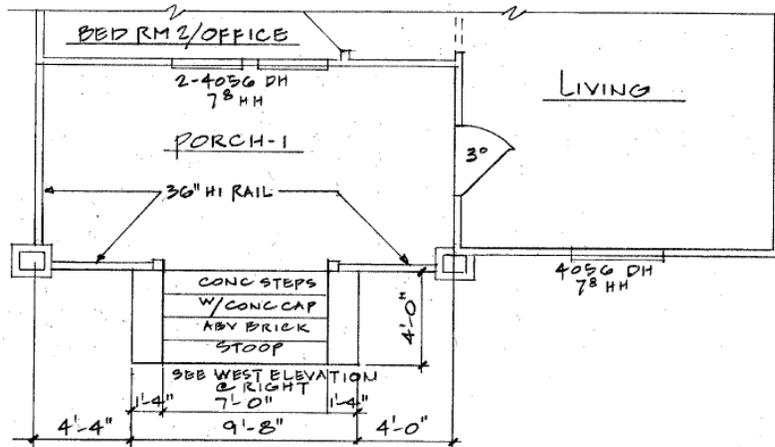


PROPOSED



LOCATION OF PROPOSED REVISION

PORCH DETAIL



PROJECT DETAILS

Exterior Materials: The approved COA includes a wood rail across the front porch and full width concrete steps on the north side of the porch. The steps are now proposed to be constructed on the front (west) flanked by a pair of 4' long by 1'-4" wide brick wing walls with concrete caps no higher than the porch floor. The north side of the porch will feature a wood railing.

Front Elevation: As approved, the front porch features a full-width wood railing. Concrete steps measuring 7' wide
(West) are now proposed to be centered on the porch with a pair of brick wing walls measuring 1'-4" wide with concrete caps no higher than the porch floor.

Side Elevation: As approved, the front porch features full-width concrete steps. No steps are now proposed for
(North) this side of the porch, and a full-width wood railing will be installed.

ATTACHMENT A
PUBLIC COMMENT

Houston Heights South Historic District

Certificate of Appropriateness Applications for the January 2015 HAHC Meeting

Comments/Concerns from J. Kent Marsh

540 Columbia – OBJECT

The proposed relocation of the existing structure to 3 feet from the side property line will diminish the historic context of the district. Typically, houses were offset at an approximately 6 feet on one side and 12 feet on the other or 7 feet on one side and 14 feet on the other with the remaining lot width being the structure. This setback relationship allowed adequate width for a front-loaded driveway with the remaining side lot setback being about one-half the width setback for the driveway. This typical setback establishes a pattern/rhythm for side setbacks along the blockface that are similar and proportional. The proposed revision to a 3 foot side setback will disrupt that established rhythm and thus detract from the established historic context of the district.

The proposed addition over the existing structure will not support the historic nature of the existing structure in that the addition will look like the existing structure rather than being separated visually from the existing historic structure. This proposal will result in a blending of visual elements of old and new, which is objectionable to the resulting historic character of both the existing structure and the district as a whole.

620 Columbia – OBJECT

The placement of an addition on top of the existing historic structure lessens the visual priority that should be given to the existing historic structure. The blending of visual between the existing and the proposed further reduces this relationship so that it is difficult to determine visual where the existing historic structure ends and the non-historic structure begins. There is ample room on the existing lot so that the addition does not have to be on top of the existing historic structure.

The removal of existing historic windows lessens the historic fabric of the district and is not necessary. This is not a replacement of existing windows in the same location, this is a complete removal of the existing windows and should not be allowed.

642 Columbia – OBJECT

One of the hallmarks of this district is the balanced visual appearance of the elevations of the homes. This new construction has ample opportunity to emulate that balance but is instead an unbalanced, lopsided front elevation with a significantly stronger visual left side than right side. This type of character is not in context with the district. While it is not necessary or beneficial to copy the exact visual appearance of contributing structures, the emulation of principle relationships ensures the non-contributing structures will visually fit into the existing historic context and not be an egocentric testimony to just being different.

The addition of the horizontal window to the front façade is not compatible with the typical vertical orientation of windows in the district and while the exact dimensions of windows of contributing structures should not be copied the continuity of utilizing the same ratio relationship will help the new construction visually fit into the district.

825 Columbia – OBJECT

The existing historic structure is visually overwhelmed by the proposed addition to the point that the existing historic structure becomes visually subservient to the addition. This relationship is not in character with the existing historic context of the district. The frontal plane of the proposed existing/addition will result in a proportion much greater than the frontal plane of the existing structure alone and will not result in a relationship that is in context with the district. Historic context should be measured with the existing contributing structures on the blockface only. Using all structures, contributing and non-contributing, will result in a dilution of the historic character of the district and eventual loss to the point that there is no character remaining.

525 Cortlandt – NO OBJECTION

The proposed replacement of some of the existing window sashes may not be necessary. I will rely on the experience of the historic preservation building inspector to make the determination about the needed replacement. The standard process is to attempt to repair the historic sashes first. If the repair is not possible, the sashes should be restored to as close to original as possible. Only after repair or restoration is not possible should replacement be considered. The notion that replacement of windows for energy conservation purposes alone is misplaced and not beneficial.

544 Harvard – OBJECT

While I don't usually object to the placement of stairs on the front elevation that face the street, in this case, without a door in the façade, the stairs really go to nowhere visually and look awkward. There are many examples of side facing doors with steps from the side of the house. This steps and no door relationship is not supportive of the character of the district. The steps should remain from the side as in the original proposal. I have no objection to the brick wingwalls on the steps if the steps are to the side. However, if the steps are allowed in the front toward the street, they should not be more embellished with brick than the side steps. Placing brick on front facing steps just exacerbates the visual steps-to-nowhere look.