



Commission of Architectural Review

13. COA-178054-2026	Conceptual Review Meeting Date: 2/24/2026
Applicant/Petitioner	Alessandro Ragazzi
Project Description	Construct a new three-story multi-family building on vacant lot
Project Location	
Address: 214 West Marshall Street	
Historic District: Jackson Ward	
<p>High-Level Details:</p> <p>The application proposes the new construction of a new three-story residential building on a vacant parcel. The proposed building features a full-width porch along the Marshall Street elevation, vertically oriented windows, and a combination of brick and siding materials. The project includes a primary entrance located on the side elevation, and an entrance to the first floor porch on Marshall Street.</p>	
Staff Recommendation	Conceptual Review
Staff Contact	Yara Iwaz, Yara.Iwaz@RVA.gov, (804)646-6031
Previous Reviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N/A
Staff Recommendations	<p>Staff recommends the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approve the proposed height as shown, with the condition that the building height does not exceed the submitted elevations • Revise the window layout on Marshall Street elevation to distribute openings more evenly across the façade; adjust porch proportions, potentially through a wider span or more refined column dimensions, to better reflect the architectural rhythms of the district and reduce the perceived height of the building • Staff recommends approving the material selection for the front elevation; final façade design and colors to be provided in final review. • Approve the material selection for the side elevations; final façade design and colors to be provided in final review • Reduce the depth of the proposed porch to align with the established street wall and adjacent porch projections • On the side elevation, limit paired window groupings to projecting brick elements, and reconfiguring the siding portions to have evenly distributed single windows.

Staff Analysis

Surrounding Context		
<p>The site is located within the Jackson Ward City Old and Historic District along West Marshall Street. The north portion of the block where the site is located the block includes a mix of commercial, warehouse, mixed-use, single-family, and multi-family residential buildings. To the south, the site faces a larger apartment building.</p> <p>The surrounding buildings are predominantly masonry, and feature characteristic elements to Jackson Ward such as full-width porches, pilastered bays, iron balconies, and vertically proportioned façades. Building heights in the immediate vicinity range from one- and two-story historic buildings, two-and-a-half-story residential structures, and a larger repurposed four-story apartment building facing the site.</p> <p>Sanborn maps indicate that a small two-story building was previously present on site, with a similar alignment and full-width porch design as the adjacent buildings.</p>		
Guideline Reference	Reference Text	Analysis
Standards for New Construction: Height, Width, Proportion & Massing, page 47	<i>1. New residential construction should respect the typical height of surrounding residential buildings.</i>	<p>The proposed building is taller than some immediately adjacent historic structures; however, it is appropriately buffered within a mixed-scale block that includes one-, two-, and two-and-a-half buildings. The overall height is compatible with the broader context of West Marshall Street and does not appear out of scale when viewed within the streetscape.</p> <p><u>Staff recommends approving the proposed height as shown, with the condition that the building height not exceed the submitted elevations.</u></p>
Standards for New Construction: Height, Width, Proportion & Massing, page 47	<i>2. New residential construction should respect the vertical orientation typical of other residential properties in surrounding historic districts. New designs that call for wide massing should look to the project's local district for precedent.</i>	<p>The building reads as overly vertical due to the concentration of windows toward the center of the façade, which visually appears to compress the horizontal spacing. This effect is further emphasized by the use of thick, square 8x8 porch columns, which also reinforce verticality.</p> <p>In the surrounding historic buildings, windows are evenly distributed across façades, and porch elements tend to have proportions that emphasize width and horizontality.</p> <p><u>Staff recommends revising the window layout on the Marshall Street Elevation to distribute openings more evenly across the façade. Staff further suggests adjusting porch proportions, potentially through a wider span or more refined column dimensions, to better reflect the architectural rhythms of the district and reduce the perceived height of the building.</u></p>
Standards for New Construction: Siting, page 46	<i>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. In cases where the adjoining buildings have different setbacks, the setback for the new building should be based on the historical pattern for the block.</i>	<p>The proposed porch projects farther into the front yard than surrounding porches on the block. Review of the site plan and street wall alignment indicates that the proposed porch extends beyond the established consistent street wall along West Marshall Street.</p> <p><u>Staff recommends reducing the depth of the proposed porch to align with the established street wall and adjacent porch projections. The overall porch footprint may remain comparable in area if achieved through increased width rather than depth.</u></p>

Standards for New Construction: Materials & Colors, page 47	<i>2. Materials used in new residential construction should be visually compatible with original materials used throughout the district.</i>	The Marshall Street façade appropriately faces the street and incorporates several pedestrian-scaled elements, including a large porch, material changes, transom windows and a cornice. These elements are consistent with historic patterns along Marshall Street and reinforce the building’s relationship with its surroundings. <u>Staff recommends approving the material selection for the front elevation; final façade design and colors to be provided in final review.</u>
Standards for New Construction: Materials & Colors, page 47	<i>2. Materials used in new residential construction should be visually compatible with original materials used throughout the district.</i>	The side elevation contains the primary entrance and represents a large wall plane, as the building has a substantial footprint and lot coverage. Material changes from brick to siding help break down massing. While this elevation remains visually dominant and less articulated than the primary façade, it remains less impactful on its surroundings. <u>Staff recommends approving the material selection for the side elevations; final façade design and colors to be provided in final review.</u>
Standards For New Construction: Doors and Windows, p.56	<i>2. The size, proportion and spacing patterns of door and window openings on free-standing new construction should be compatible with patterns established in the district</i>	On the side elevation, the full-size, vertically proportioned and aligned windows are appropriate and consistent with district precedents. However, window groupings are inconsistently applied: projecting brick elements feature paired windows, while siding-clad areas include both grouped and single openings. This weakens the relationship between fenestration and material transitions. <u>Staff recommends limiting paired window groupings to projecting brick elements, and reconfiguring the siding portions of the side elevation to have evenly distributed single windows.</u>

It is the assessment of staff that, with the conditions above, the application is consistent with the Standards for Rehabilitation and New Construction outlined in Section 30-930.7 (b) and (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 the code.

Figures

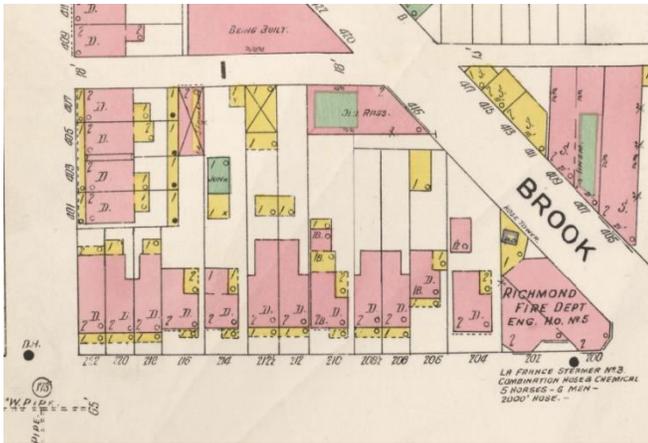


Figure 1: Sanborn map, 1905

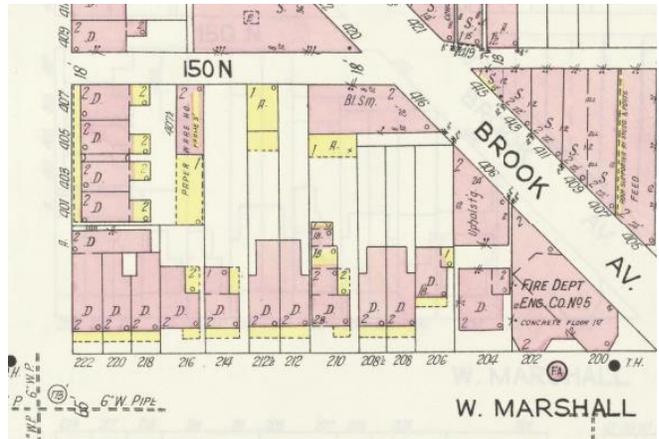


Figure 2: Sanborn map, 1925



Figure 3: street context



Figure 4: front of subject property

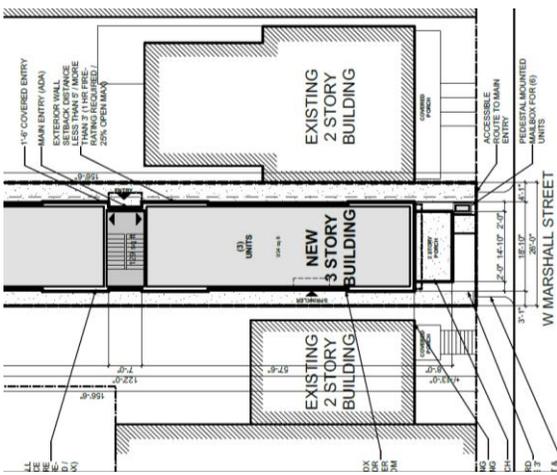


Figure 5: Street wall



Figure 6: rear alley



Figure 7: rear of subject property