

9. COA-066753-2020

PUBLIC HEARING DATE

January 28th, 2020

PROPERTY ADDRESS

2412-2416 Venable Street

DISTRICT

Union Hill

APPLICANT

Eastern Edge Development

STAFF CONTACT

C. Jones

Commission of Architectural Review

STAFF REPORT

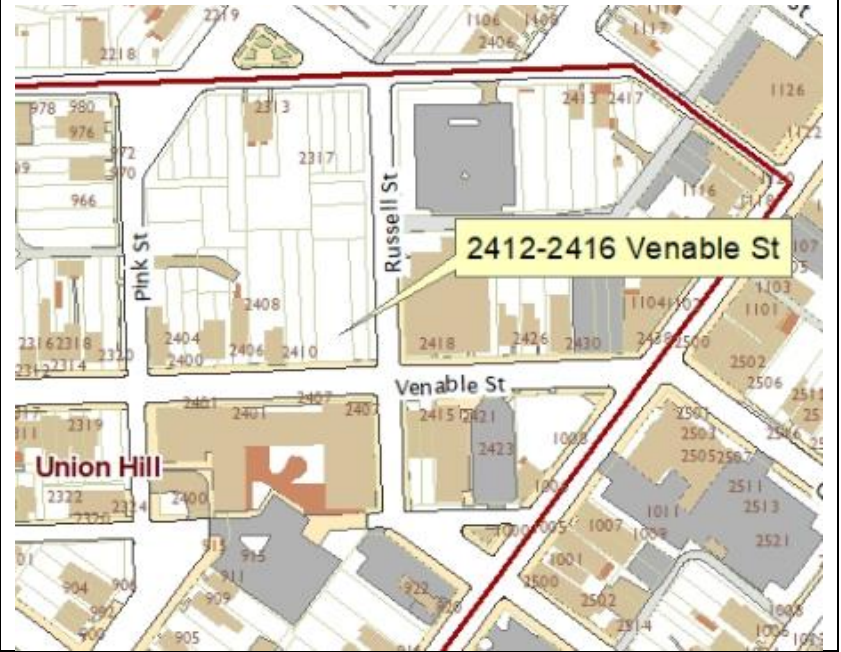


PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Construct ten new, single-family townhouses.

PROJECT DETAILS

- The applicant proposes to construct ten new, single-family townhouses on a vacant lot at the corner of Venable Street and Russell Street in the Union Hill City and Old Historic District.
- The ten townhouses will be divided evenly into two rectangular-shaped masses. One mass will have the long edge of the rectangle fronting onto Venable Street. The second mass will be placed parallel to it, with the short end facing onto Russell Street.
- The townhouses will be slab on grade, wood frame construction. They will be three stories, 30'-6" in height, and three bays wide.
- Proposed materials include a TPO roof, masonry and fiber cement siding, and fiberglass windows and doors.



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STAFF RECOMMENDATION

DEFER

PREVIOUS REVIEWS

The Commission previously reviewed this application at the June 25th, 2019 meeting. During conceptual review staff commented that: the two masses are not sited in a manner that is consistent with the historic development patterns in the district and recommended the siting be redesigned to reinforce the typical street walls on side streets and to address the corner property guidelines. Staff recommended that the design include human scale elements such as front steps and porches and that the perforated metal panels are not a material used to mimic openings in the surrounding district. In response to a question from the Commission, staff confirmed that there had never been a house facing onto Russell, the side street.

In terms of the design, the Commission suggested that if the applicant wants to build three stories, the English basement design option could be explored, as could stepping down the last unit of the building slightly to help the side of the building reference its neighbors. The Commission confirmed staffs' suggestion that the back set of units could be rotated to face Russell Street and suggested that this could also conceal the parking. The Commission expressed support for adding front porches and stairs to the design, and that various styles for these, and for the railings, could be considered. The Commission also recommended against the Juliet balconies and the perforated metal panels.

STAFF COMMENTS

- Staff recommends that the applicant rotate the rear/north building to reinforce the typical streetwall found in the district for side streets.
- The application did not include elevations for the interior walls (north wall of the south building and south wall of the north building) and staff requests these be included in a subsequent application with the materials specified. Staff also requests the proposed materials for the columns that support the canopies be specified in a subsequent application.
- Staff recommends that the applicant address inconsistencies between the window openings shown on the floor plans and elevations, and that the applicant submit revised floor plans detailing all of the openings.

STAFF ANALYSIS

Siting, pg. 46,
#s2-3

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.

The applicant has not responded to staff and Commission feedback regarding the siting of the new construction. The applicant has retained the proposed siting of two rectangular buildings placed parallel to each other, with the short face of the rectangle facing Russell Street.

Staff notes the revised application states that this siting is based on the post-World War II era apartment buildings found in the district. A GIS search conducted by staff indicates there are six multi-unit buildings built between 1945 and 1968 in the Union Hill City and Old Historic District. Of these six, only two of them – 2212 Venable Street and 811 Mosby Street – have the short face towards the street. Staff also notes that these are both shorter than the surrounding buildings, have a front gable roof, and are set back a greater distance from the sidewalk than the neighboring buildings. Staff finds that the significance of the post-WWII housing in the district is for its association with the post-war development of urban and suburban areas, and not for architecture and siting.

Staff recommends that the applicant rotate the rear/north building to reinforce the typical street wall found in the district for side streets.

3. New buildings should face the most prominent street bordering the site.

The Venable Street massing faces the prominent street bordering the property. The rear/north building mass faces the rear of the lot and does not engage the street. Staff finds that this is not in keeping with the *Guidelines*.

Form, pg. 46
#s1-3

1. New construction should use a building form compatible with that found elsewhere in the historic district.

The surrounding area is a mix of free-standing residential buildings and attached and semi-attached row houses. Staff finds the proposed attached buildings are in keeping with the surrounding district. Staff further finds the inset frame sections help to differentiate the masses.

	<i>2. New residential construction should maintain the existing human scale of nearby historic residential construction in the district.</i>	The proposed buildings are three stories in height. Staff notes that the applicant did not respond to the Commission suggestion to step down the outer units.
	<i>3. New residential construction and additions should incorporate human-scale elements such as cornices, porches and front steps into their design.</i>	The applicant has responded to feedback and now proposes one-story metal canopies with wood privacy screens facing Venable Street and facing the rear of the lot. Staff notes that the applicant does not propose any stairs on the façades.
Height, Width, Proportion, & Massing, pg. 47, #s1-3	<i>1. New residential construction should respect the typical height of surrounding residential buildings.</i>	Based on the elevations provided, the buildings will be taller than the other residential buildings in the area.
	<i>2. New residential construction should respect the vertical orientation typical of other residential properties in surrounding historic districts.</i>	In general, the proposed buildings will have vertically aligned openings on the façades.
	<i>3. The cornice height should be compatible with that of adjacent historic buildings.</i>	Based on the elevations provided, the cornice height will not align with the neighboring building.
Materials and Colors, pg. 47, #s2-4	<i>2. Materials used in new residential construction should be visually compatible with original materials used throughout the district.</i>	The applicant has revised the materials and now proposes an alternating (A-BB-CC) pattern of fiber cement and masonry. Staff finds that this is compatible with the original materials in the district. Staff also notes that the Venable-facing façades of the south building utilize siding on the first floor and brick on the upper stories. Staff finds that this is not a material pattern found in the district. <u>Staff further notes that the application did not include elevations for the interior walls (north wall of the south building and south wall of the north buildings). Staff requests these be included in a subsequent application with the materials specified. Staff also requests details of the proposed materials for the columns that support the canopies.</u>
		The applicant has removed the perforated metal panels originally proposed.
New Construction, Doors and Windows, pg. 49 #3	<i>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.</i>	The façades utilize a vertically aligned fenestration pattern, consistent with the other buildings in the historic district. <u>Staff notes that there are inconsistencies between the windows shown on the floor plans and elevations and requests the applicant submit revised floor plans detailing all of the openings.</u>

New Construction, Standards for New Construction: Corner Properties – Residential, pg. 48

1. Secondary elevations of corner properties should reference massing similar to other corner locations in the historic district.

2. The material used in the primary elevation should be continued along the second, corner elevation.

4. Windows and doors on the secondary, corner elevation should be organized following the principals of the primary elevation: windows should be proportioned appropriately, aligned vertically, and arranged as though designing a primary elevation.

5. For residential corner properties, we strongly encourage the use of architectural elements that are typical of residential corner properties in Richmond's historic districts: porches that turn from primary to secondary elevations, corner towers, projecting bay windows, side entrances (including porticos, and shed roofs, where appropriate), side porches, lighting related to that on the primary elevation, and other similar treatments that treat the secondary corner elevation as an architecturally important elevation.

The revised plans include a metal canopy on the Venable and Russell Street corner that wraps around the first bay of the side elevation. Additionally, the brick materials and header and sill courses also wrap the building. Staff finds this addresses the corner property *Guidelines*.

New Construction, Porches and Porch Details, pg. 49#4

Faux balconies (flat, applied constructs with no depth) are discouraged. Small projecting balconies are acceptable.

The applicant has removed the Juliet balconies from the proposed plans.

FIGURES

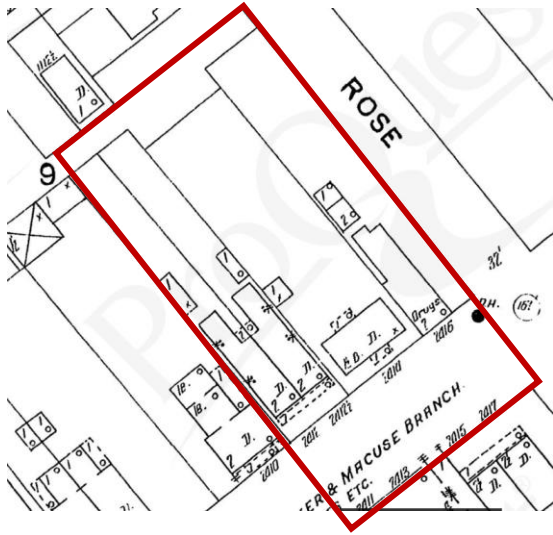


Figure 1. 1905 Sanborn Map.

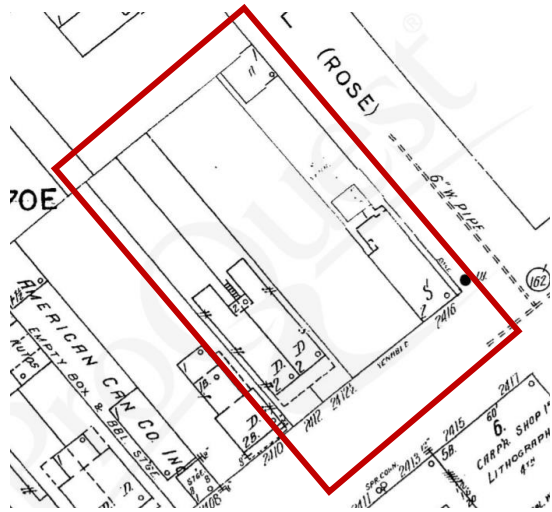


Figure 2. 1919-1952 Sanborn Map.



Figure 3. 2412-2416 Venable Street



Figure 4. 2412-2416 Venable Street, view from Russell Street.



Figure 5. Former warehouse, now residential building.



Figure 6. 2410 Venable Street.