



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



**Commission of Architectural Reviews.**

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| 4. COA-105892-2022   | Final Review  | Meeting Date: 4/26/2022 |
| Applicant/Petitioner   | Elizabeth Drucker-Basch   |                         |
| Project Description  | Construct a new 3-story, multi-family building on a vacant lot.   |                         |
| Project Location   |   |                         |
| Address: 2 W. Leigh Street   |   |                         |
| Historic District: Jackson Ward  |   |                         |
| <b>High-Level Details:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The applicant proposes to construct a new 3-story, multifamily building on a vacant lot.</li> <li>The new building will feature a front porch, faux mansard roof and a central shed dormer, and a covered, rear, side porch.</li> <li>Building materials will include standing seam metal roofing, metal clad wood windows, hardi plank siding, metal wrapped and hardi trim, and k-style gutters and downspouts.</li> </ul> |   |                         |
| Staff Recommendation   | Approval, with Conditions   |                         |
| Staff Contact  | Alex Dandridge, <a href="mailto:alex.dandridge@rva.gov">alex.dandridge@rva.gov</a> , (804) 646-6569   |                         |
| Previous Reviews   | <p>This application was conceptually reviewed by the Commission at the February 2022 meeting. The Commission discussed the proposal in an advisory capacity, specifically commenting on proposed dwelling’s massing and architectural detailing. The Commission stated that there was a visual imbalance between the second and third floors on the front façade due to differing window and floor heights. The Commission suggested that the central dormer window on the third floor be lowered beneath the ridge line of the roof. The Commission also commented on the depth of the cornice detail between the second and third floor, stating that it appeared flat and should project out from the face of the building having a greater reveal. Windows on the west elevation were not</p> |                         |

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|                                | vertically aligned but rather offset slightly on each floor. The Commission recommended that the windows be vertically aligned to be more in-keeping with patterns found within the district.   |
| <b>Conditions for Approval</b> | <p>Staff recommends the following :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The cornice be simplified.</li> <li>• The rear metal fence be a simple design and abide by all applicable zoning regulation, final design and material submitted to staff for administrative review and approval.</li> <li>• All final material and color specification be submitted to staff for administrative review and approval.</li> <li>• Final design and extent of the rear concrete patio be submitted to staff for administrative review and approval.</li> <li>• Either box or half-round gutters be used in lieu of the proposed k-style gutters, final specifications submitted to staff for administrative review and approval.</li> <li>• Provide additional screening of the HVAC equipment from W. Leigh Street. Specification on screening material submitted to staff for administrative review and approval.</li> <li>• Submit all final material and color specification to staff for administrative review and approval.</li> </ul> |

## Staff Analysis

| <b>Guideline Reference</b> | <b>Reference Text</b>   | <b>Analysis</b>  |
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| Siting, pg. 46, #2-3       | <p><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.</i></p> <p><i>3. New buildings should face the most prominent street bordering the site.</i></p>  | <p>The new construction will respect the prevailing front and side yard setback patterns of the surrounding block. The front and east façade will reinforce the existing street wall, having shallow setbacks.</p> <p>The primary façade will face the main street, W. Leigh street.</p>   |
| Form, pg. 46, #1-3         | <p><i>1. New construction should use a building form compatible with that found elsewhere in the district.</i></p> <p><i>2. New residential construction should maintain the existing human scale of nearby historic residential construction in the district.</i></p> <p><i>3. New residential construction and additions should incorporate human-scale elements such as cornices, porches and front steps into their design.</i></p> | <p>The new construction will be three stories tall, three bays wide, featuring a one story, full width, covered front porch, a third story, faux mansard roof, and a center shed dormer.</p> <p>Staff finds the building form to be in-keeping with other corner residential buildings in the district. While center shed dormers are not common in the district, Staff believes this is a subtle architectural element that will help differentiate the new construction from the existing historic buildings on the block.</p> |

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|  |  | <p>The new construction will feature a one-story, full-width, covered front porch and a smaller one-story, covered side porch; both which maintain the human scale of the block.</p> <p>The conceptual submission of this application included a simple cornice feature. The applicant is now proposing a more decorative cornice with square recessed panels between each of the brackets.</p> <p>Staff notes that there are no other decorative elements being proposed, and while more traditional in form, the overall design and detailing of the dwelling is contemporary and minimal. To be more in-keeping with the detailing and design of the dwelling, <u>Staff recommends that the cornice be simplified.</u></p>   |
| Height, Width, Proportion, & Massing, pg. 47, #1-3 | <p><i>1. New residential construction should respect the typical height of surrounding residential buildings.</i></p> <p><i>2. New residential construction should respect the vertical orientation typical of other residential properties in surrounding historic districts.</i></p> <p><i>3. The cornice height should be compatible with that of adjacent historic buildings.</i></p>  | <p>The new construction will be three stories in height which respects the typical height of the district.</p> <p>The new construction will respect the vertical orientation typical of the other residential properties on the site.</p> <p>The new construction is boarded by a vacant lot to the west and St. James Street to the east. There are no historic building immediately adjacent to the property, with the exception of a small, two-story building at the rear, which faces St. James Street.</p>  |
| Materials and Colors, pg. 47, #2-4                 | <p><i>2. Materials used in new residential construction should be visually compatible with original materials used throughout the district</i></p> <p><i>3. Paint colors used should be similar to the historically appropriate colors already found in the district.</i></p> <p><i>4. Vinyl, asphalt, and aluminum siding are not permitted for use in City Old and historic Districts. Other synthetic siding materials with a smooth, untextured finish may be allowed in limited cases, but approval by the Commission is always required.</i></p> | <p>The new construction will utilize horizontal hardi plank siding, standing seam metal on the porch roofs and center shed dormer, wood and hardi trim, k-style gutters, asphalt shingles on the front mansard roof, and metal clad wood windows. Staff notes that k-style gutters are not common within City Old and Historic Districts. <u>Staff recommends that either box or half-round gutters be used in lieu of the proposed k-style gutters, final specifications submitted to staff for administrative review and approval.</u></p> <p>The applicant was originally proposing asphalt shingles on the shed dormer, but is now proposing to use standing seam metal based on the Commission's comments. Staff finds that standing seam metal is an appropriate roofing material for the district.</p> |
| New Construction, Porches and                      | <p><i>5. Porch roofs are encouraged to utilize standing- or flat-lock metal seam roofs that are hand-seamed, or closely approximate hand seaming</i></p>   |   |

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| Porch Details,<br>#5, pg. 49                    |   | <u>Staff recommends that the applicant submit all final material and color specification to staff for administrative review and approval.</u>   |
| New Construction, Doors and Windows, #3, pg. 49 | <i>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> | <p>During the conceptual review of this application, the windows on the east elevation were not proposed to be vertically aligned. The applicant is now proposing that these windows be vertically aligned which is in-keeping with fenestration patterns found in the district.</p> <p>The applicant has removed the transoms from the first floor windows, and is now proposing double hung 1/1 windows without transoms, a design that is more in-keeping with the district.</p>                                       |
| Mechanical Equipment, pg. 68                    | <i>The visual impact of new mechanical equipment should be minimized to protect the historic character of the district.</i>   | <p>On the site plan submitted to staff, the applicant has indicated that the exterior HVAC equipment will be located on the west side of the proposed dwelling adjacent to the neighboring properties fence. Staff finds that the HVAC equipment may not be adequately screened from W. Leigh Street and <u>recommends that the applicant provide additional screening of the HVAC equipment from W. Leigh Street. Specification on screening material submitted to staff for administrative review and approval.</u></p> |
| Administrative Guidelines, Fences and Gates.    | <i>Wooden fences and gates fences may be approved administratively</i>  | <p>The applicant is proposing a fencing element in the rear yard around a proposed patio and parking area. The proposed fence will be metal. Staff notes that there are examples of historic metal fences throughout the district.</p> <p><u>Staff recommends that the rear metal fence element be a simple design and abide by all applicable zoning regulation, final design and material submitted to staff for administrative review and approval.</u></p> <p>Fencing can be administratively approved by staff.</p>  |
| Hardscaping Administrative Approval Guidelines. | The installation of hardscaping or paving materials in rear yards may be approved administratively  | A concrete patio of approximately 9' x 15' is being proposed at the rear of the dwelling. Staff finds that concrete is a common material found throughout Richmond's Old and Historic Districts, used for sidewalks, alleys, retaining, walls, and curbing. <u>Staff</u>  |

recommends that the final design and extent of the rear concrete patio be submitted to staff for administrative review and approval.

## Figures



Figure 1. Vacant lot as seen from St. James Street looking south towards W. Leigh Street



Figure 2. Looking south across W. Leigh Street from 2 W. Leigh Street



Figure 3. General location of new construction on lot and surrounding context.

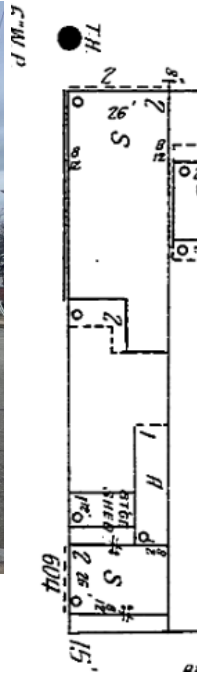


Figure 4. Sanborn Map

