



Staff Report  
City of Richmond, Virginia



# Commission of Architectural Review

16.COA-166142-2025	Conceptual Review	Meeting Date: 5/27/2025
Applicant/Petitioner	Chris Pollock	
Project Description	Demolish existing structure on parcel and construct two new single-family attached dwellings.	
Project Location		
Address: 2228 Cedar Street		
Historic District: Union Hill		
<p><b>High-Level Details:</b></p> <p>The applicant requests conceptual review to construct a new duplex in place of an 1840s Greek Revival building that has been declared an unsafe structure by the City's Building Commissioner, requiring its eventual demolition.</p> <p>The extant building is a Greek Revival, single family, historically constructed as a double house ca 1840. The primary residence is a two story, four bay, frame house with a raised brick foundation and a box cornice. The shed roofed porch has square posts on concrete piers and a box cornice with a deep entablature.</p> <p>The proposed new construction's design is heavily based on the existing building but will have a larger footprint.</p>		
Staff Contact	Alex Dandridge, alex.dandridge@rva.gov, (804) 646-6569	
Previous Reviews	<p>The Commission previously reviewed an application for this property in December 2024, which included the rehabilitation of the building along with the construction a second story rear addition.</p> <p>Since that review, the owner has begun work on the property and found that the foundation is in poor conditions, as well as the wooden structural members.</p> <p>Planning Staff and the City's Building Commission met on-site with the applicant to assess the condition of the building in early 2025. The Building Commissioner found that the deterioration of the foundation, as well as that of the building's wooden structural members, was severe enough to declare the building an unsafe structure.</p> <p>Understanding that the building is contributing to the integrity and character of the Union Hill City Old and Historic District, the Building Commissioner agreed to not issue the Unsafe Structure notice of violation, which would waive the COA requirement and require demolition in 30 days, until the CAR reviewed the plans for the new construction that would take its place.</p>	

Staff Recommendations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The shed roof connect to the gable roof below the cornice line, rather than at the ridge line. Alternatively, the east elevation of the rear massing be inset from the front, primary massing to allow the gable roof form to be more prominent and have a greater reveal/profile on the east elevation. A detailed drawing be submitted with the final submission that demonstrates that the detailing on the proposed building's porch matches that of the existing exactly.</li> <li>• Fiber cement siding be unbeaded and smooth.</li> <li>• All porch decking boards be tongue and groove and installed perpendicularly to the face of the building (front and side porches).</li> <li>• A Standing seam metal roof be used on the front, primary mass of the building.</li> <li>• Applicant salvage the engaged post on the right side of the porch, incorporating it into the design of the new building.</li> <li>• Any historic hardscaping material such as brick and granite be reincorporated into the site.</li> <li>• As many historic bricks removed from the site during demolition be reincorporated into the proposed building as a veneer – to be used in elements such as the faux chimney, front foundation, or paved area beneath the front porch.</li> <li>• The applicant work with staff during the salvage process of any materials, informing staff on the amount of material being salvaged and where it will be incorporated.</li> <li>• The third story transom windows on the east elevation be removed or be full-sized.</li> <li>• All exterior doors be wood and glass.</li> <li>• The second story door on the side porch be half-light rather than full light for a more traditional appearance in-keeping with the design of the building.</li> </ul>
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## Staff Analysis

CONCEPTUAL REVIEW		
Guideline Reference	Reference Text	Analysis
Standards for New Construction- Residential, Siting, pg. 46	<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. 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> <p><i>3. New buildings should face the most prominent street bordering the site.</i></p> <p><i>4. If setback waivers or any other waivers are needed, the applicant may petition the Commission to support a Board of Zoning Appeals (BZA) waiver.</i></p>	<p>The new building will face the most prominent street, Cedar Street. It will be highly visible from Jessamine and N. 23<sup>rd</sup> Street as well.</p> <p>The front of the building will be setback approximately 5 ½ feet from the property line.</p> <p>There is not a prominent street wall in this location, given the vacant lots to the east and west.</p>

<p>Standards for New Construction-Residential, Form, pg. 46</p>	<p><i>1. New construction should use a building form compatible with that found elsewhere in the historic district. Building form refers to the specific combination of massing, size, symmetry, proportions, projections and roof shapes that lend identity to a building. Form is greatly influenced by the architectural style of a given structure.</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. In Richmond, porches were historically an integral part of residential design and provide much of the street-level architectural character of Richmond's historic districts.</i></p>	<p>The proposed building will have an irregular form, conforming to the irregular shape of the lot.</p> <p>There will be a primary, rectangular mass which will be four bays wide across the front, and two bays wide on the sides, referencing the extant building's form. The rear mass will be more irregular, having step backs along the property line.</p> <p>It will be three stories tall, the height being reduced by an English basement at the first floor.</p> <p>English Basements are a common form found in the Union Hill City Old and Historic District.</p> <p>Overall, the building will be symmetrical with vertically aligned windows and doors.</p> <p>There will be a gable roof on the primary, front mass of the building, which will transition to a shed roof on the rear. Because the proposed building's design is attempting to reference that of the existing, Staff finds that the primary massing of the building with the gable roof should be more prominent. The gable-end of the east elevation is a prominent feature and will be highly visible. The proposed rear shed roof meets the gable at the ridge. <u>To respect the prominence of the gable roof form and better reference the massing of the extant building, staff recommends that the shed roof connect to the gable roof below the cornice line, rather than at the ridge line. Alternatively, the east elevation of the rear massing be inset from the front, primary massing to allow the gable roof form to be more prominent and have a greater reveal/profile on the east elevation.</u></p> <p>There will be a raised, covered front porch that will reference the design details of the extant building. Raised porches are common in Union Hill, and one of the unique characteristics of the district. There will also be a two-story covered porch on the west elevation.</p> <p>The application states that the new porch will be based on the design and detailing of the extant building's front porch. This porch is Greek Revival in style and one of the building's character defining features. The drawings submitted of the proposed building do not include the same level of trim detail as the extant building. <u>Staff recommends that a more detailed drawing of the front porch be submitted with the final submission that demonstrates that the detailing on the proposed porch matches that of the existing exactly.</u></p>
<p>Standards for New Construction-Height, Width, Proportion &amp; Massing, pg. 47</p>	<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 proposed building will be two-stories above an English basement. This is a common height in the district. Overall, it will be shorter than the new residential construction directly behind it, but a bit larger than historic buildings in the district given the increased ceiling heights of each floor.</p>

<p>Standards for New Construction- Materials &amp; Colors, pg. 47</p>	<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 for new additions should complement the historically appropriate colors used on the primary structure. Paint colors used should be similar to the historically appropriate colors already found in the district (see Painting Section starting on page 60).</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><i>5. Rooftop mechanical equipment should be located as discretely as possible to limit visibility.</i></p>	<p>The proposed building will feature an asphalt shingle roof on the front, primary mass, which will transition to a white membrane roof on the rear. The front porch will be a flat lock metal roof. The exterior will be clad in horizontal fiber cement siding and trim. Railings and banisters will be wooden. Gutters are proposed to be half round with rounded downspouts. The foundation will be clad in brick and the front porch will be supported by brick piers.</p> <p><u>Staff recommends that the fiber cement siding be unbeaded and smooth.</u></p> <p><u>Staff recommends that all porch decking boards be tongue and groove and installed perpendicularly to the face of the building (front and side porches).</u></p> <p>While the extant building does feature asphalt shingles, <u>staff recommends using a standing seam metal roof on the front and rear of the gable roof on the primary mass of the building, to better reference historic roofing materials found in the district.</u></p> <p>The application states that the extant front door assembly will be salvaged and installed on the proposed building. <u>Staff recommends that the applicant document this process and work with staff to ensure that the work is carried out in-keeping with the plans.</u></p> <p>There is one original engaged post on the face of the building, right side of the existing porch. The application states that the porch posts design on the new building will be based on the design of this engaged post. <u>Staff recommends that the applicant salvage the engaged post on the right side of the porch, incorporating it into the design of the new building.</u> Adding wood to the base of this engaged post to make up for the increased ceiling height of the new porch is acceptable.</p> <p><u>Staff recommends that any historic hardscaping material such as brick and granite be reincorporated into the site.</u></p> <p><u>Staff recommends that as many historic bricks removed from the site during demolition be incorporated into the proposed building as a veneer – to be used in elements such as the faux chimney, front foundation, or paved area beneath the front porch. The applicant should work with staff during the salvage process, informing staff on the amount of material being salvaged and where it should be incorporated.</u></p>
<p>Standards for New Construction- Materials &amp; Colors, pg. 49</p>	<p><i>1. The size, proportion and spacing patterns of door and window openings on a new addition should follow patterns established by the original building. Windows on most commercial and residential properties throughout Old and Historic Districts have a vertical orientation. Wide, horizontal so-called “picture windows” on new additions are strongly discouraged.</i></p> <p><i>2. The architectural appearance of original windows should be used as models for new windows. Changes in</i></p>	<p>The proposed windows will be vertically aligned six-over-six windows. This design is common in the district and references that of the extant building. Staff recommends that the windows be wood or aluminum clad wood with simulated divided lights (SDLs).</p> <p>The front door is a wooden, four paneled door salvaged from the extant building, while the first floor door on the side porch will be half lite, and the upper door on the side porch will be a full light glass door.</p> <p>There are two smaller transom windows on the third story of the east elevation. These windows will be highly visible and are not common in the district.</p>



	<p><i>the sash, depth or reveal, muntin configuration, frame or glazing is strongly discouraged. New glass should be clear without reflective coatings, to be compatible with original glass.</i></p> <p><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></p>	<p><u>Staff recommends that the third story transom windows on the east elevation be removed or be full-sized.</u></p> <p><u>Staff recommends that that all exterior doors be wood and glass.</u></p> <p><u>Staff recommends that the second story door on the side porch be half-light rather than full light, for a more traditional appearance that is more in-keeping with the design of the building.</u></p>
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## Figures

Figure 1. 2228 Cedar Street



Figure 2. 2228 Cedar Street

