



## Commission of Architectural Review

6. COA-167477-2025	Final Review	Meeting Date: 6/24/2025
Applicant/Petitioner	Lisa Clark	
Project Description	Construct a new three-story, 22-unit multifamily building with ground floor commercial space	
Project Location		
Address: 715 Mosby Street		
Historic District: Union Hill		
High-Level Details:  The applicant proposes the construction of a three-story, 22-unit multifamily mixed-use building on a site previously occupied by a one-story structure, which was previously approved for demolition. The site is located within the Union Hill Old and Historic District and has previously been subject to other approved applications, including smaller-scale residential and mixed-use developments. The proposed residential building includes approximately 1,100 square feet of ground floor commercial space. The design features fiber cement cladding and recessed balconies.		
Staff Recommendation	Approval, with Conditions	
Staff Contact	Yara Iwaz, Yara.Iwaz@RVA.gov, (804)646-6031	
Previous Reviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Commission previously approved the demolition of a one-story structure on this site, followed by the conceptual approval of a mixed-use development. Additional applications for the site have included residential-only proposals featuring a smaller number of dwelling units than the current submission.</li> <li>In the April 2025 meeting, the commission reviewed this application in a conceptual capacity. The comments addressed the building's uninterrupted massing, and lack of discernable base, middle and top. The commission also found the commercial component to lack integration with the street, and window groupings to not correspond to façade articulation.</li> </ul>	

Staff Recommendations	<p>Staff recommends approval of the proposed new construction, with the following conditions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Submit a cornice wrap detail where the second-floor band terminates at the projecting bays to ensure a continuous architectural expression and visual connection across the façade.</li> <li>• Submit final material and color selections (lap siding, storefront assembly, balcony railings) for administrative review.</li> </ul>
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## Staff Analysis

Surrounding Context		
<p>The subject property is located on the west side of Mosby Street between Carrington and Venable Streets, within the Union Hill Historic District. The block is characterized primarily by one- to two-story residential structures, with three-story dwellings found further north along Mosby Street, where the streetscape includes a mix of two- to two-and-one-half-story frame and brick dwellings in Greek Revival, Italianate, and Late Victorian styles, most with front porches and elevated foundations. The surrounding context reflects the district's topographic variation, and the site itself features a notable level change typical of Union Hill. To the east and south of the property lies a rear alley, with the site constrained on the east side by a retaining wall. Immediately south of the parcel is a one-story masonry commercial building. The block retains a residential character overall, with intermittent commercial and institutional uses at key intersections.</p>		
Guideline Reference	Reference Text	Analysis
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>In the previous design, the massing appeared monolithic and continuous, lacking variation or articulation. The Commission noted that the building read as a singular block and did not reflect the character or rhythm of nearby residential forms.</p> <p>In the current design, the massing has been improved through the use of projecting bays that frame recessed entries. These projections break the façade into smaller vertical components, which reinforce the residential expression of the building and enhances compatibility with the district.</p> <p><u>Staff recommends approving the revised massing, as the projecting bays and recessed entries effectively reduce scale and align with the district's architectural rhythm.</u></p>
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 height of the building remains three stories, which was an area of concern in the previous design as it appeared too tall in comparison to the one-story structure directly across the alley. While the overall height has not changed, the articulation introduced through projecting bays, recessed entries, and layered massing helps to reduce the perceived scale.</p> <p>The rear elevation, which remains visible from the public right-of-way due to the site's slope, includes balconies and symmetrical entry doors that better relate to human scale and functionality.</p> <p>In response to prior concerns regarding the commercial frontage, particularly where it faces the one-story commercial building across the alley, the applicant has revised the design to include a clearly defined projecting volume at the ground level corresponding to the commercial component, with the residential levels above it stepping back slightly. This shift helps align the lower mass of the proposed building more closely with the height and street presence of the adjacent one-story commercial structure.</p>

		<u>Staff Recommends maintaining the height of the commercial volume, with the upper residential floors slightly stepped back as currently proposed</u>
Standards for New Construction: Form, page 46	<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>The prior design lacked distinct detailing and did not define the building's architectural hierarchy. The Commission commented that the building lacked a discernible base, middle, and top.</p> <p>In the revised submission, a more deliberate composition has been introduced. A simplified cornice defines the top, a projecting horizontal band aligns with the commercial base, and residential bays introduce rhythm and articulation.</p> <p>However, the horizontal band currently terminates at the edge of the projecting bays and does not continue across the recessed entry, creating an awkward visual gap.</p> <p><u>Staff recommends submitting a revised detail that shows how the second-story cornice wraps around the recessed entry to unify the elevation and resolve the profile transition.</u></p>
Standards For New Construction: Storefront Facades, p.49	<i>1. Historically, storefronts were defined by simple piers, large storefront windows, a cornice, a signboard and/or attached signage, and awnings. The new storefront should be compatible with other historic storefronts within the district.</i>	<p>The earlier commercial design appeared disconnected from the street and lacked identifiable storefront elements. The Commission noted that it failed to resemble traditional commercial architecture found in the district.</p> <p>In response, the applicant introduced a full-width storefront with clear elements such as transom windows, panels, and a defined sign band, modeled on several Union Hill precedents. These adjustments strengthen the building's base and create a more appropriate street-level presence.</p> <p><u>Staff recommends approving the revised storefront design, which meaningfully addresses previous feedback and reflects local commercial typologies.</u></p>
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>	<p>Previously, window groupings read as unrelated to façade articulation.</p> <p>The revised proposal addresses the commission's comments this by restricting the double-window groupings to the projecting bays, allowing them to read as intentional elements rather than arbitrary insertions. The windows are now evenly spaced and appropriately scaled, contributing to a more legible rhythm.</p> <p><u>Staff recommends approving the revised fenestration pattern, which now aligns with historic precedents and reinforces the building's articulated massing.</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>	<p>The proposed materials, including fiber cement lap siding, wood paneling at the commercial base, and metal balcony railings, remain largely unchanged but are now paired with improved articulation and detail. The increased specificity around cornices, panels, and storefront trim enhances their compatibility with the historic district.</p> <p><u>Staff recommends submitting final paint and finish selections for final approval.</u></p>

*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



VIEW FROM MOSBY ST.



VIEW FROM MOSBY ST.



VIEW FROM ALLEY



VIEW FROM ALLEY

Figure 1: Site Photos



707 & 701 MOSBY ST



809, 807, 805 MOSBY ST



JEFFERSON TOWNHOUSES - MOSBY ST



808 & 810 N. 21 ST - VIEW FROM ALLEY

Figure 2: Neighboring Buildings



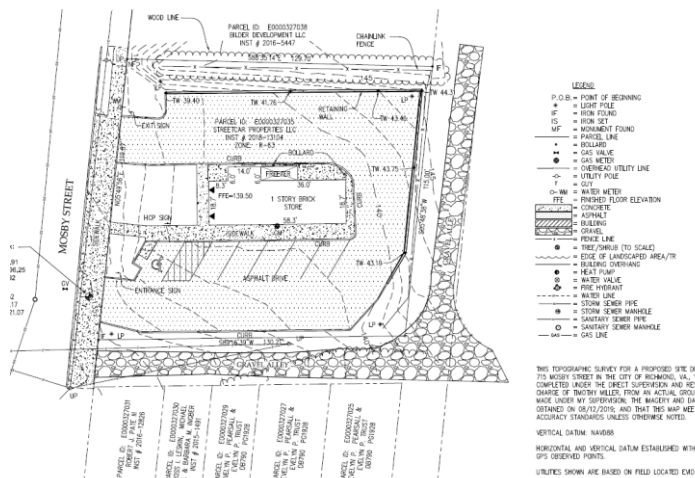


Figure 3

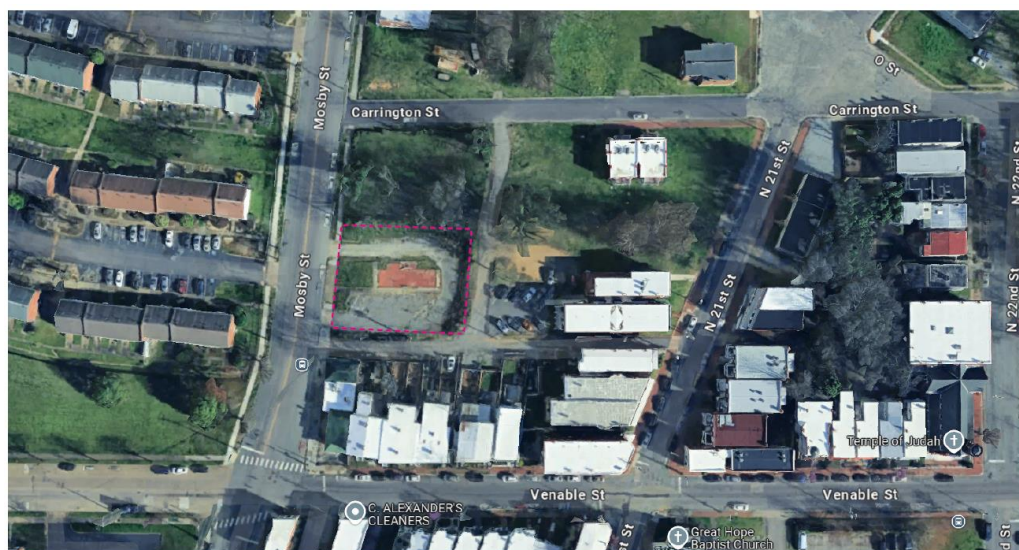
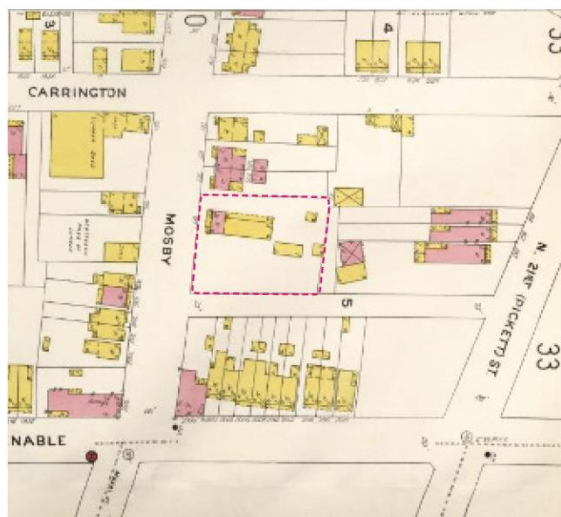
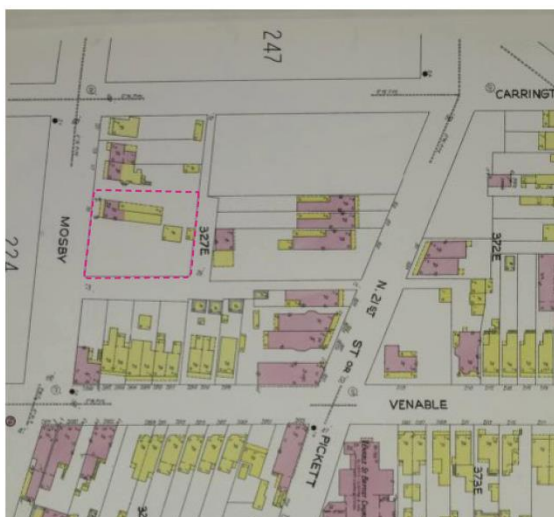


Figure 4



Sanborn Map  
1905



Sanborn Map  
1925

Figure 5





Figure 6: Union Hill Historic Storefront Precedents



Figure 7: Union Hill Residential Precedents



# Staff Report City of Richmond, Virginia

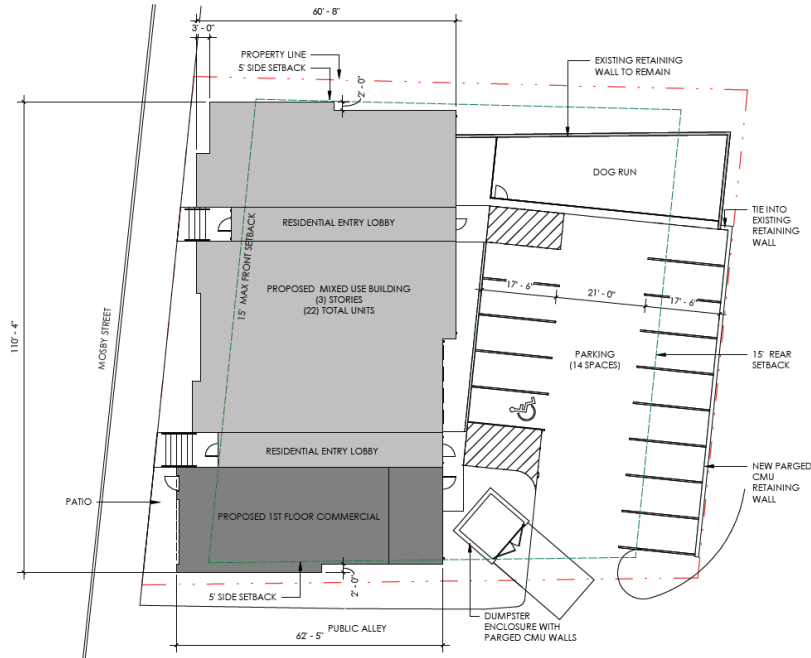
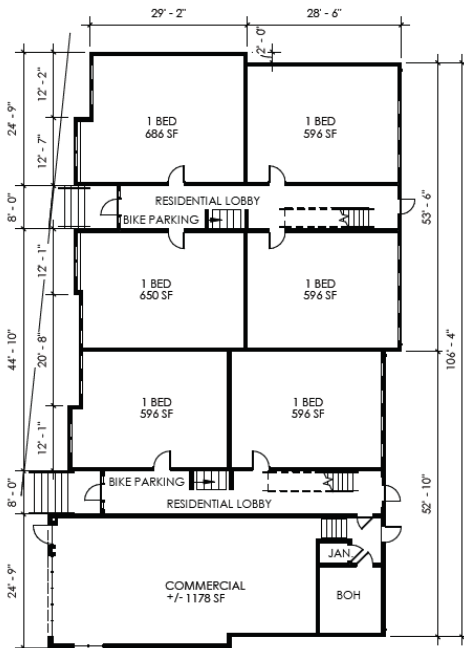
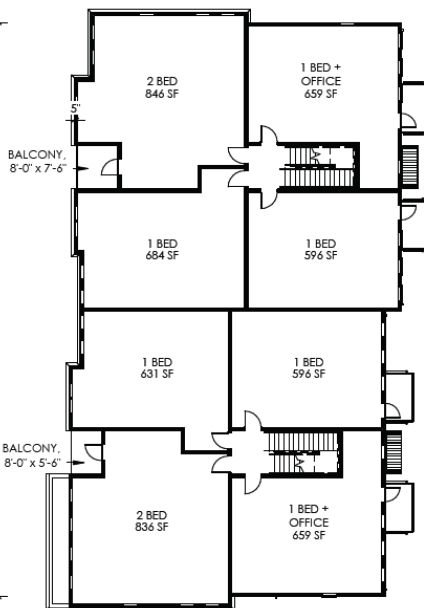


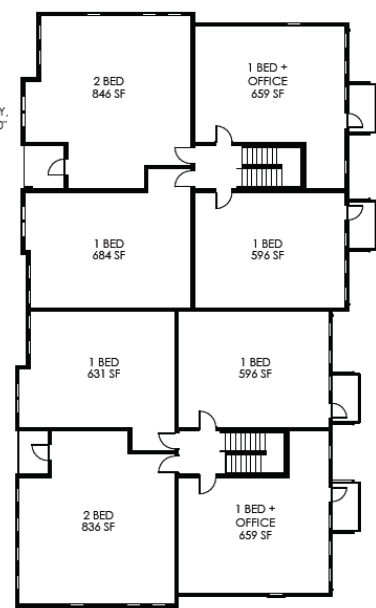
Figure 8



01 - FIRST / GROUND FLOOR PLAN



02 - SECOND FLOOR PLAN



03 - THIRD FLOOR PLAN



- 1 FIBER CEMENT LAP SIDING - WHITE PAINT COLOR TBD
- 2 CORNICE A - SEE DETAIL
- 3 SIGNAGE BY FUTURE TENANT TBD <16 SF
- 4 PARGE FOUNDATION WALL
- 5A SINGLE HUNG WINDOW (2'-8" X 6'-0")
- 5B SINGLE HUNG WINDOW (2'-8" X 5'-6")
- 6 STOREFRONT ASSEMBLY
- 7 BOLT-ON BALCONY ASSEMBLY
- 8 CONDUCTOR BOX & DOWNSPOUT
- 9 PATIO DOOR
- 10 HOLLOW METAL DOOR, PAINTED
- 11 EXTERIOR WALL SCONCE
- 12 DUMPSTER ENCLOSURE SHOWN DASHED FOR CLARITY. PARGE CMU WALLS
- 13 WOOD PANEL WITH APPLIED TRIM MOLDING, PAINT COLOR TBD
- 14 ELECTRICAL METER BANK - FINAL LAYOUT TO BE COORDINATED WITH DOMINION
- 15 WOOD FRAMED BALCONY W/ METAL RAILING
- 16 CAST IN PLACE CONCRETE STEPS W/ STEP LIGHT
- 17 METAL CANOPY ASSEMBLY
- 18 LANDSCAPING
- 20 ROOF PLANE BEYOND SHOWN DASHED
- 21 CORNICE B - SEE DETAIL
- 22 WINDOW TRIM
- 23 TRANSOM WINDOW
- 24 PAINTED CEMENTITIOUS SIDING



Figure 9

- 1 FIBER CEMENT LAP SIDING - WHITE PAINT COLOR TBD
- 2 CORNICE A - SEE DETAIL
- 3 SIGNAGE BY FUTURE TENANT TBD <16 SF
- 4 PARGE FOUNDATION WALL
- 5A SINGLE HUNG WINDOW (2'-8" X 6'-0")
- 5B SINGLE HUNG WINDOW (2'-8" X 5'-6")
- 6 STOREFRONT ASSEMBLY
- 7 BOLT-ON BALCONY ASSEMBLY
- 8 CONDUCTOR BOX & DOWNSPOUT
- 9 PATIO DOOR
- 10 HOLLOW METAL DOOR, PAINTED
- 11 EXTERIOR WALL SCONCE
- 12 DUMPSTER ENCLOSURE SHOWN DASHED FOR CLARITY. PARGE CMU WALLS
- 13 WOOD PANEL WITH APPLIED TRIM MOLDING, PAINT COLOR TBD
- 14 ELECTRICAL METER BANK - FINAL LAYOUT TO BE COORDINATED WITH DOMINION
- 15 WOOD FRAMED BALCONY W/ METAL RAILING
- 16 CAST IN PLACE CONCRETE STEPS W/ STEP LIGHT
- 17 METAL CANOPY ASSEMBLY
- 18 LANDSCAPING
- 20 ROOF PLANE BEYOND SHOWN DASHED
- 21 CORNICE B - SEE DETAIL
- 22 WINDOW TRIM
- 23 TRANSOM WINDOW
- 24 PAINTED CEMENTITIOUS SIDING



Figure 10



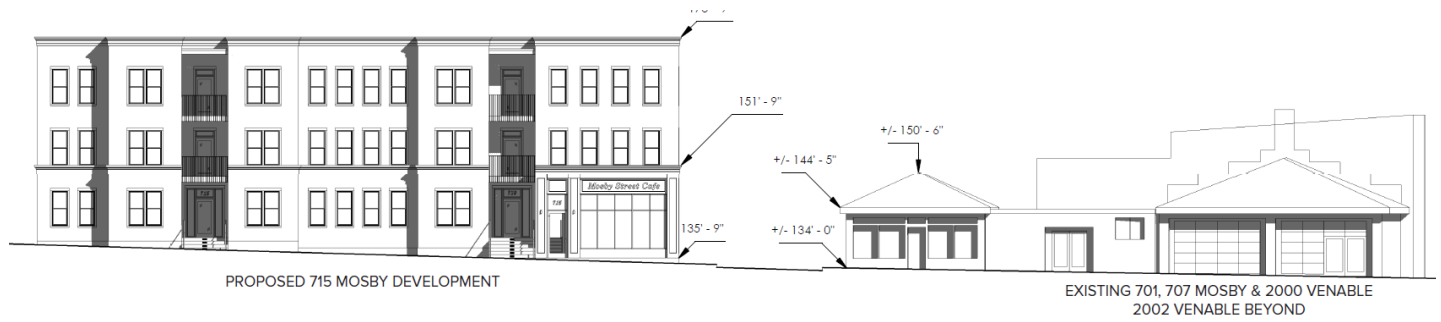


Figure 11

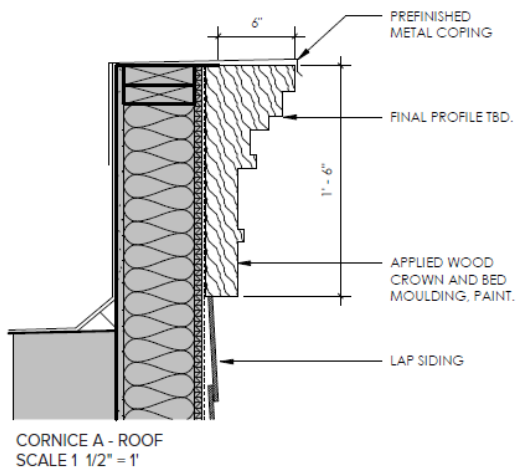


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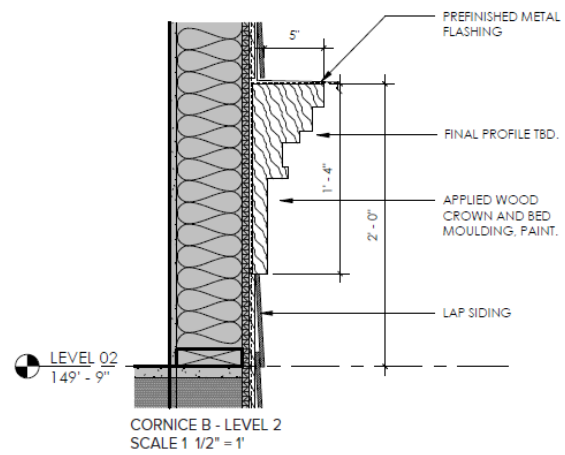


Figure 13



Figure 14



Figure 15



Figure 16





Figure 17



Figure 18