



## Commission of Architectural Review

9. COA-181518-2026	Conceptual Review Meeting Date: 3/24/2026
Applicant/Petitioner	Jean Carlos
Project Description	Construct a new two-and-a-half story building on vacant parcel
Project Location	
Address: 410 N Madison	
Historic District: Jackson Ward	
<p><b>High-Level Details:</b></p> <p>The applicant proposes to construct a new two-story, single-family dwelling on a vacant lot. The building will be five bays in width with a brick veneer primary façade and horizontal siding at the rear. A full-width, single-story covered front porch with a standing-seam sloped roof spans the façade, with a centrally located primary entrance.</p> <p>The design draws from the Italianate architecture commonly represented within the district.</p> <p>While the subject parcel is currently vacant, City Assessor information suggests that there may have been a two car garage located at the lot that was demolished sometime ago.</p>	
Staff Recommendation	
Staff Contact	Alex Dandridge, Alex.Dandridge@RVA.gov, (804)646-6569
Previous Reviews	None.

Staff Recommendations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• substantial reduction in the proposed setback to bring the building closer to the sidewalk.</li> <li>• Applicant further study historic cornice profiles and dimensions to inform a more appropriate design. Cornice should exhibit greater depth and presence to be consistent with district precedent.</li> <li>• If brackets are used on the cornice, they must align with the sides of the building and sides of the second-floor windows as typically seen in the district.</li> <li>• A metal or membrane style roof be used on the main roof, as it may be more suitable for the roof's low slope.</li> <li>• Windows have simulated divided lights.</li> <li>• Width of proposed windows be increased to be more consistent with traditional proportions found in the surrounding context.</li> <li>• Central window assembly on the second story of the façade be simplified by replacing it with a standard window configuration that is consistent with the other openings on the façade.</li> <li>• Additional window openings be introduced on the rear elevation and that their dimensions align more closely with those on the primary façade. Furthermore, the rear fenestration should be organized in a more symmetrical and vertically oriented composition.</li> <li>• Rear deck feature a simple railing that has Richmond Rail, or a railing system with a more finished appearance, final railing design submitted with the final review.</li> <li>• Base of the deck be screened with lattice or some other form of screening.</li> <li>• The applicant work with Zoning to confirm lot coverage and setback requirements are being met and to determine if any variance may be required.</li> </ul>
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## Staff Analysis

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</i></p>	<p>The proposed building includes a 15-foot front yard setback from the porch to the Madison Street sidewalk. Existing front-facing buildings on this block exhibit minimal setbacks, with porches typically abutting the sidewalk. Elsewhere in the district, including West Leigh, West Clay, and West Marshall Streets, front yard setback, where present, are notably shallow.</p> <p>To reinforce the historic street wall along this block of Madison Street and better align with established district patterns, <u>staff recommends a substantial reduction in the proposed setback to bring the building closer to the sidewalk.</u></p> <p>The proposed building will have the most prominent street, Madison Street.</p>

	<p><i>support a Board of Zoning Appeals (BZA) waiver.</i></p>	<p>Staff recommends that the applicant work with zoning prior to submitting for final review to ensure that all underlying zoning requirements are being satisfied.</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 design includes a decorative cornice; however, its proportions do not align with those typically found within the district.</p> <p><u>Staff recommends that the applicant further study historic cornice profiles and dimensions to inform a more appropriate design. In particular, the cornice board should be increased in width, and the brackets should be more substantial in scale. A simplified cornice treatment may also be appropriate; however, regardless of approach, the cornice should exhibit greater depth and presence to be consistent with district precedent. Staff also recommends that if brackets are used, they align with the sides of the building and sides of the second-floor windows as typically seen in the district.</u></p>
<p>Standards for New Construction, Residential, Height, Width, Proportion, &amp; Massing</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. New designs that call for wide massing should look to the project's local district for precedent. For example, full-block-long row house compositions are rare in Richmond. New residential buildings that occupy more than one third of a block face should still employ bays as an organizational device, but the new building should read as a single piece of architecture.</i></p> <p><i>3. The cornice height should be compatible with that of adjacent historic buildings.</i></p>	<p>The proposed building will reach an approximate height of 25 feet at its highest point, aligning with the typical scale of two-story residential structures within the district. Specifically, the applicant states that the approximate height of the neighboring building at 301 West Clay is 26ft. tall.</p> <p>The primary façade is composed with a strong vertical orientation, expressed through the alignment and proportion of vertically oriented window openings. Although the overall massing of the building is broader than that of many single-family dwellings in the district, its organization into distinct bays reflects the rhythm of adjacent historic row houses.</p>
<p>Standards for New Construction, Residential, Materials &amp; Colors</p>	<p><i>2. Materials used in new residential construction should be visually compatible with original materials used throughout the district.</i></p>	<p>The proposed building is designed to reinforce the established material and architectural character of the surrounding context. The primary façade, along with the forward bays of the side elevations, will be clad in</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. In addition, appropriate screening should be provided to conceal equipment from view. When rooftop railings are required for seating areas or for safe access to mechanical equipment, the railings should be as unobtrusive as possible, in order to minimize their appearance and visual impact on the surrounding district.</i></p>	<p>brick veneer, reflecting the traditional masonry presence typical of the area. This treatment will transition toward the rear and the backmost bays of the side elevations to horizontal fiber cement siding.</p> <p>The main roof will be clad in asphalt shingles. Windows will be aluminum-clad wood with divided lights.</p> <p><u>Staff recommends that the applicant use a metal or membrane style roof on the main roof, as it may be more suitable for the roofs low slope.</u></p> <p><u>Staff recommends that the windows have simulated divided lights.</u></p> <p>The front porch will serve as a prominent architectural feature, articulated with wood Tuscan columns, a Richmond rail system, and a flat-seam metal roof. These elements are intended to reference traditional porch detailing.</p> <p>The submitted site plan indicates that exterior HVAC equipment will be located at the rear of the building, positioned where the rear deck abuts the rear wall. This placement minimizes visual impact on the public realm. The rear deck will screen the equipment from view from the alley.</p>
<p>Standards for New Construction, Residential, Doors and Windows, pg. 49</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>The windows on the proposed building's primary façade are generally well aligned, reinforcing a consistent vertical rhythm. However, they appear to be narrower in proportion than is typical of historic windows within the district. As no window dimensions were provided, <u>staff recommends that the applicant consider window widths that are more consistent with traditional proportions found in the surrounding context, in order to better reflect established architectural patterns.</u></p> <p>Additionally, the second story of the primary façade features a central window assembly consisting of a single window flanked by sidelights. This configuration is not characteristic of common historic window compositions within the district. <u>Staff recommends simplifying the central window assembly on the second story of the facade by replacing it with a standard window configuration that is consistent with the other openings on the façade.</u></p> <p>The rear elevation is characterized by smaller windows of varying sizes, resulting in a fenestration pattern that is inconsistent with the more ordered composition of the primary façade. The current arrangement lacks the symmetry and vertical alignment that establish the façade's strong sense of rhythm and proportion.</p>

		<p>Historically, window size and placement on rear elevations tend to maintain a level of consistency with the primary façade, even when executed with less ornamentation. In this case, the disparity in window dimensions and arrangement diminishes the overall cohesion of the building's design.</p> <p><u>Staff recommends that additional window openings be introduced on the rear elevation and that their dimensions align more closely with those on the primary façade. Furthermore, the fenestration should be organized in a more symmetrical and vertically oriented composition, reinforcing traditional patterns and improving compatibility with the architectural character of the district.</u></p>
<p>Standards for New Construction, Residential, Porches and Porch Details, pg. 49</p>	<p><i>1. Porch railings and balustrades are important character-defining features of historic buildings. The proportions of these railings are a significant contributing feature to the appearance of both the individual structure and the character of the entire neighborhood.</i></p> <p><i>3. New porch railing designs, compatible with the overall design of the building, will also be considered.</i></p> <p><i>5. Porch roofs are encouraged to utilize standing- or flat-lock metal seam roofs that are hand-seamed, or closely approximate handseaming.</i></p>	<p><u>Front porch railings are proposed to be Richmond rail.</u> Staff finds this railing to be appropriate for the district.</p> <p>The porch roof will use flat lock metal, which is an appropriate material for front porch roofs as stated in the <i>Guidelines</i>.</p>
<p>Standards for New Construction, Residential, Decks, pg. 51</p>	<p><i>1. Decks should not alter, damage or destroy significant site elements of the property.</i></p> <p><i>2. Decks should complement the architectural features of the main structure without creating a false historical appearance. Decks should be painted or stained a neutral color that complements one or more of the colors found on the main structure.</i></p> <p><i>3. Deck design may include vertical picket balustrades or contemporary railing that is in scale with the house and the deck.</i></p> <p><i>4. Deck sub-decking should be screened with wood lattice work or with brick piers.</i></p>	<p>The proposed building will have a 12'x12' deck of the rear and adjacent to the side alley. The plans indicate that the deck will be simple in design and feature nailed-up pickets.</p> <p><u>Staff recommends that the rear deck feature a simple railing that has Richmond Rail, or a railing system with a more finished appearance, final railing design submitted with the final review.</u></p> <p><u>Per the <i>Guidelines</i>, Staff recommends that the base of the deck be screened with lattice or some other form of screening.</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



Figure 1. Subject lot, 1950s

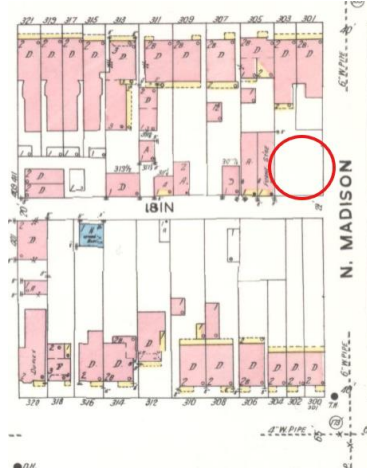


Figure 2. 1905 Sanborn Map.



Figure 3. Subject lot. Looking north up North Madison Street towards West Clay Street.



Figure 4. Subject lot. Looking south down North Madison Street towards West Marshall Street.



*Figure 5. Subject lot looking south towards alley.*



*Figure 6. Adjacent building to subject site across North Madison Street.*