



Commission of Architectural Review

6. COA-187780-2026	Final Review	Meeting Date: 7/28/2026
Applicant/Petitioner	Christopher Raynore	
Project Description	Ammend previously approved proposal to construct a two-story single-family residence on a vacant lot	
Project Location		
Address: 520 Brook Road		
Historic District: Jackson Ward		
High-Level Details: The application proposes a revision of the design of a new three-story single-family dwelling on a small triangular vacant lot at the corner of Brook Road and West Clay Street. The revised proposal replaces the previously proposed basement foundation with a crawl space after determining that excavation for a basement would adversely affect the adjacent property's foundation. To maintain the desired living area, spaces will include an additional third floor, resulting in a three-story building approximately 33 feet in height.		
Staff Recommendation	Approval, with Conditions	
Staff Contact	Yara Iwaz, Yara.Iwaz@RVA.gov, (804)646-6031	
Previous Reviews	12/16/2025: Final Review and approval to Construct a two-story single-family residence on a vacant lot 6/24/2025: Conceptual Review to Construct a two-story single-family residence on a vacant lot	
Staff Recommendations	Staff recommends approval of the project with the following conditions: - Applicant to coordinate with zoning requirements; any revisions required to achieve zoning compliance should be submitted for staff review and approval - Lower the cornice and reintroduce the parapet wall above it, consistent with the previously approved design - The horizontal trim and cornice should wrap onto the north	

elevation sufficiently to establish a clear architectural return; a revised detail illustrating how these profiles terminate and transition around the corner to be submitted for Chair and Vice-Chair review and approval.

Staff Analysis

Guideline Reference	Reference Text	Analysis
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>	The immediate block is predominantly characterized by two-story attached dwellings with raised basements, vertically proportioned façades, brick construction, decorative cornices, and recessed entries. While three-story residential buildings are less common within this portion of Jackson Ward, examples exist throughout the district where three-story dwellings are successfully integrated within predominantly two-story blocks. Examples include properties along West Marshall Street (318, 405, and 408 W. Marshall Street), West Leigh Street (112 and 116 W. Leigh Street, which appear to have previously included English basements), and West Clay Street (111, 121, and 123 W. Clay Street). Historically, many taller residential buildings within Jackson Ward achieve additional height through raised or semi-basement conditions. The applicant initially proposed this approach; however, due to structural concerns related to the adjacent property's foundation, a basement is stated to be no longer feasible. The revised proposal instead accommodates the required living space by introducing a full third story. The project will additionally require an SUP, which may result in changes in heights, setbacks and overall design. <u>Staff recommends approval of the proposed height. Any changes in height, setback or overall design to be submitted for staff review and approval.</u> <u>Staff further recommends that applicant coordinate with zoning requirements; any revisions required to achieve zoning compliance should be submitted for staff review and approval.</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.</i>	The building's narrow footprint naturally produces a tall and slender composition. While vertically proportioned façades are characteristic of Jackson Ward, the combination of the narrow lot and full third story increases the perceived verticality of the building. Staff recognizes that reducing the overall height may not be feasible due to the site's physical constraints. Instead, refinements to the upper portion of the façade could help reduce the apparent height of the building.

		The previously approved design featured a lowered cornice with a parapet wall extending above it, which provided a stronger visual termination while reducing the height of the wall plane above the upper-story windows. In the current proposal, the cornice has been raised to the top of the façade, creating a larger uninterrupted wall area between the third-floor windows and the cornice and reinforcing the building's vertical proportions. This treatment would create a more appropriate termination of the façade, reduce the perceived verticality of the building by eliminating the large expanse of wall above the upper windows, and better reflect the proportions of historic commercial and residential buildings found throughout Jackson Ward. <u>Staff recommends lowering the cornice and reintroducing the parapet wall above it, consistent with the previously approved design.</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.</i>	The proposed façade features a restrained contemporary composition with minimal ornamentation. Given the constrained site and the absence of typical pedestrian-scaled features such as a porch or substantial stoop, the horizontal trim between the first and second floors helps establish a visual base for the building and reinforces the overall base-middle-top composition. Staff finds that this treatment is appropriate within the context of the building's simplified architectural expression. However, the horizontal trim and cornice currently terminate at the edges of the primary façade and do not continue onto the north elevation visible from Brook Road. Because the north elevation will be highly visible from the public right-of-way, the abrupt termination of these horizontal elements creates an unresolved transition and emphasizes the blank side wall. Continuing these two elements a short distance around the corner would strengthen the relationship between the primary and secondary elevations. <u>Staff recommends that the horizontal trim and cornice wrap onto the north elevation sufficiently to establish a clear architectural return. A revised detail illustrating how these profiles terminate and transition around the corner should be submitted for Chair and Vice-Chair review and approval.</u>

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

3-story buildings in Jackson Ward, appearing as adjacent to 2-story and 3-story structures:

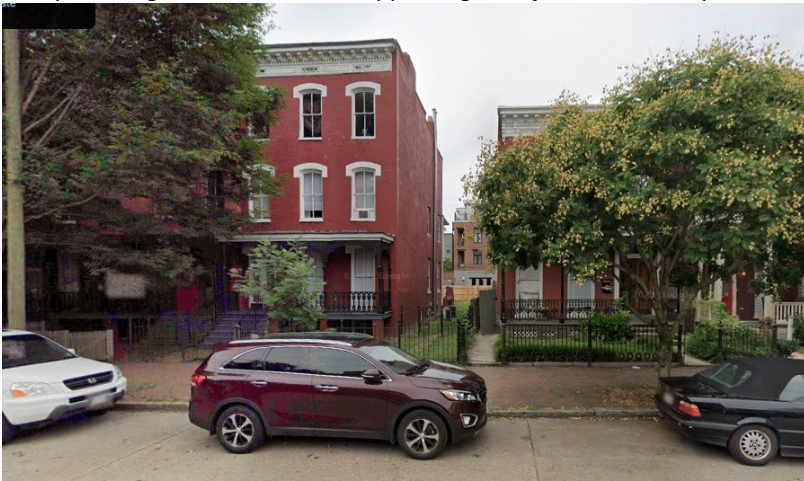


Figure 1: 111 W Clay St

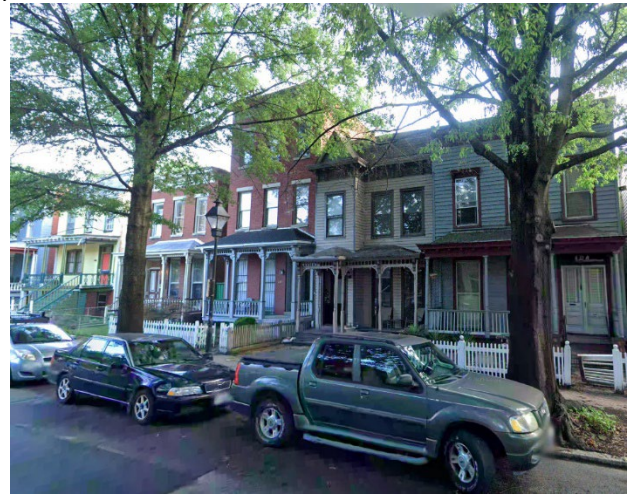


Figure 2: 408 W Marshall



Figure 3: 121 W Clay

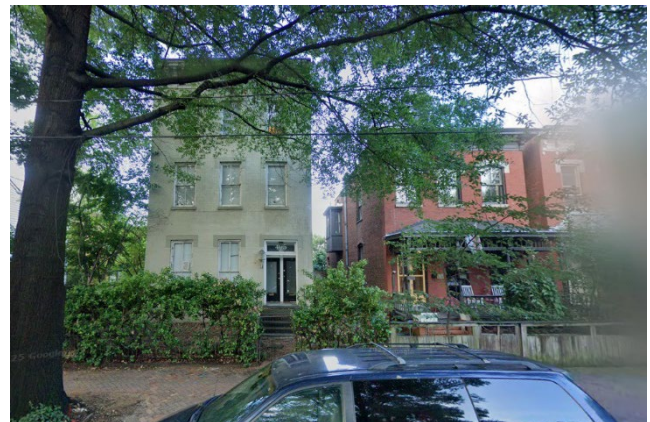


Figure 4: 405 W Marshall



Figure 5: Previously approved design



Figure 6: Revised Design