



Commission of Architectural Review

2. COA-178055-2026	Final Review	Meeting Date: 3/24/2026
Applicant/Petitioner	Casey Stone	
Project Description	Construct a new two-story mixed-use building on corner lot	
Project Location		
Address: 700 N 21st Street		
Historic District: Union Hill		
<p>High-Level Details:</p> <p>The applicant proposes a two-story mixed-use building with a first-floor commercial space and a residential unit above. The building fills a narrow, constrained lot and will share a common wall with the adjacent building on N 21st St. The design includes a first-floor storefront wrapping the corner with a projecting tower roof design, painted fiber-cement lap siding on the upper floors, cantilevered metal balconies. The applicant is also pursuing a reduced side setback.</p>		
Staff Recommendation	Approval, with Conditions	
Staff Contact	Yara Iwaz, Yara.Iwaz@RVA.gov, (804)646-6031	
Previous Reviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Commission conceptually reviewed this application on 9/30/2025, with the following comments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ "The Commission discussed the proposal and commented on the overall massing, height and scale of the building in relation to the surrounding two-story block and the dense neighborhood context. Commissioners noted that as the site occupies a corner lot, it warrants a more commercial treatment rather than a residential one. Several members found the proposed height to be inappropriate and not characteristic of the district, and noted that district precedents typically feature flat roofs and cornices. The Commission also raised concerns about the building's massing and its potential to overwhelm the adjacent structure at 702 N 21st Street. ○ Some Commissioners suggested the use of brick to strengthen the building's commercial base and reduce its visual prominence. The Commission advised that the corner 	

	<p>store façade, where the two entrances are located, should receive a unified design treatment reflective of district precedents. Members also supported staff’s recommendation to revise the balcony treatment on the Cedar Street elevation, suggesting to eliminate the gable features above the third floor balconies. Overall, the Commission advised that the building’s scale and detailing should better align with the adjacent house and respect the prevailing height and rhythm of the nearby buildings."</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Commission reviewed and deferred this application on 2/24/2026, with the following comments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ "The Commission acknowledged continued progress in the architectural design but determined that additional refinement is needed to address outstanding questions. Positive feedback was offered regarding the rear corner storefront element, and the recent reduction in building height was appreciated. In discussing mixed-use compatibility, the Commission emphasized the importance of a well-defined transition between commercial and residential components. ○ At the same time, members expressed concern that the number and scope of recent design changes warranted full Commission review rather than administrative approval. Caution was also raised regarding the use of cantilevered balconies and their impact on the building’s overall massing and compatibility."
<p>Staff Recommendations</p>	<p>Staff recommends approval of the proposal, with the following conditions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The applicant to coordinate balcony projections with zoning requirements, and submit final details for staff review and approval. • Submit final color selections for staff review and approval.

Staff Analysis

Surrounding Context		
<p>The site occupies the corner of N. 21st and Cedar Streets within Union Hill, within an area of mixed small-scale commercial corners and predominantly two-story residential blocks. The block is predominantly two-story single-family, with elevated stoops and commercial corners. Historic buildings on the block typically feature a defined base (storefront or raised stoop), a middle with a vertical window rhythm, and a modest cornice/top. Projecting bays, shallow porches or stoops, cornices, and masonry bases are common character elements found around the site. The surrounding streets include Queen Anne buildings that feature projecting towers with turrets, and pedimented projecting flat bays.</p>		
Guideline Reference	Reference Text	Analysis
<p>Standards For New Construction: Corner properties; commercial, p.54</p>	<p><i>5. For commercial corner properties, we strongly encourage the use of architectural elements that are typical of commercial corner properties in Richmond's historic districts: storefronts that turn the corner, secondary entrances (including porticos and shed roofs, where appropriate), sign bands that turn the corner, lighting related to that on the primary elevation, and other similar treatments that treat the secondary corner elevation as an architecturally important elevation.</i></p>	<p>Commercial and Residential treatment</p> <p>In the previous review, the commission emphasized the importance of a well-defined transition between commercial and residential components. In this revised design, there is a clearer distinction between commercial and residential uses, addressing prior Commission concerns.</p> <p>The residential portion references adjacent historic forms with a projecting gable and pediment with a vent. The residential language is still present in the form of a canopy roof and the residential entrance on the first floor, which defines its use while still remaining juxtaposed with the commercial entry.</p> <p>The commercial component has also been revised, and its treatment now appropriately wraps around Cedar street, reflecting historic corner commercial typologies. Additional vertical partitioning has been introduced along Cedar Street, which helps reduce the mass of the long elevation and enhances the pedestrian-scaled appearance on that street.</p> <p><u>Staff recommends approving the residential and commercial elevations as proposed.</u></p>
<p>Standards For New Construction: Doors and Windows, p.56</p>	<p><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>	<p>Windows and Balcony treatments</p> <p>Window proportions have improved, with taller openings that are more consistent with historic precedents. The configuration of windows has also been revised to a simplified 1-over-1 format.</p> <p><u>Staff recommends approving the windows as proposed.</u></p> <p>The inclusion of balconies introduces additional articulation and expanded square footage. Similar balcony forms in Union Hill include the buildings at 718 N 23rd Street & 2416 Jefferson Street.</p> <p>Staff notes the concerns regarding projection into the public realm and visual impact on the façade. The Commission previously noted concerns regarding cantilevered elements and their compatibility with district patterns.</p>

		<u>Staff recommends that the applicant coordinate balcony projections with zoning requirements, and submit final details for staff review and approval.</u>
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><i>Materials and colors</i></p> <p>The proposal includes fiber cement panel siding for the residential second floor, painted fiber cement panel siding along the Cedar Street commercial front, and spandrel panel at the storefront. While the proposed materials are appropriate for a new construction, colors have not been specified.</p> <p><u>Staff recommends submitting final color selections for staff review and 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.



Figure 1: view from 21st Street



Figure 2: View from Cedar Street



Figure 3: Balconies on 2416 Jefferson Avenue