



City of Richmond

City Hall
900 East Broad Street

Meeting Minutes Commission of Architectural Review

Tuesday, December 15, 2020

3:30 PM

5th Floor Conference Room of City Hall

This meeting will be held through electronic communication means.

This meeting will be held through electronic communication means pursuant to and in compliance with Ordinance No. 2020-093, adopted April 9, 2020. This meeting will be open to participation through electronic communication means by the public and closed to in-person participation by the public. Less than a quorum of Richmond City Commission of Architectural Review members will assemble for this meeting in the 5th Floor Conference Room of City Hall at 900 East Broad Street in Richmond, Virginia 23219, and most Commission members and other staff will participate by teleconference/videoconference via Microsoft Teams.

Special Guidelines for Public Access and Citizen Participation:

To access or participate, or both, in the Commission of Architectural Review meeting on Tuesday, December 15th, 2020 at 3:30 PM, you have several options outlined in the following document:

[PDRPRES 2020.074](#) Public Access and Participation Instructions - Commission of Architectural Review.

Attachments: [Public Access and Participation Instructions](#)

Audio of the meeting will be streamed live online at the following web address:
<https://richmondva.legistar.com/Calendar.aspx>.

To listen to the meeting's live stream at the web address provided, find and click the link that reads, "In Progress" in the farthest right hand column entitled, "Video".

Interested citizens who wish to speak will be given an opportunity to do so by following the outlined in the Public Access and Participation Instructions - Commission of Architectural Review document.

Citizens are encouraged to provide their comments in writing to carey.jones@richmondgov.com in lieu of speaking through audio or video means during the meeting. When submitting your comments by email, be sure to include in your email (i) your full legal name, (ii) any organizations you represent, and (iii) any economic or professional relationships that would be affected by the approval of the application on which you are commenting. The person responsible for receiving written comments is Carey L. Jones, Secretary to the Commission of Architectural Review. All written comments received via email prior to 12:00 p.m. (noon) on Tuesday, December 15th, 2020, will be provided to all members of the Commission of Architectural Review prior to the beginning of the meeting and will be included in the record of the meeting.

Call to Order

Commission Chair Neville Johnson called the December 15, 2020 meeting of the

Commission of Architectural Review to order at 3:32 pm.

Secretary to the Commission, Carey L. Jones, read the announcement for virtual public meetings:

This meeting of the Commission of Architectural Review will be held as an electronic meeting pursuant to and in compliance with Ordinance 2020-093. The public has been notified of this meeting and how to participate by a notice in the Richmond Times Dispatch, and an instruction sheet posted with the agenda on the Legistar website. The public may participate in the meeting by calling *67-804-316-9457 and entering 201-932-327#.

Public comment will be heard for each item on the agenda after the applicant has responded to staff recommendations. Members of the public will be limited to 3 minutes for their comments.

The person responsible for receiving the comments from the public is me, Carey L. Jones, Secretary to the Commission of Architectural Review.

Commission members are electronically present, none are physically present in City Hall.

We will be conducting a roll call vote with the Secretary stating each Commissioners name prior to voting.

Roll Call

Present -- 9 - * Commissioner Sanford Bond, * Commissioner James W. Klaus, * Commissioner Neville C. Johnson Jr., * Commissioner Ashleigh N. Brewer, * Commissioner Kathleen Morgan, * Commissioner Sean Wheeler, * Commissioner Lawrence Pearson, * Commissioner Mitch Danese and * Commissioner Coleen Bulter Rodriguez

Approval of Minutes

October 25, 2020

A motion was made by Commission Vice Chair Wheeler, seconded by Commissioner Klaus, that the October 25, 2020 Meeting minutes be approved.

The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye -- 6 - Commissioner James W. Klaus, Commissioner Neville C. Johnson Jr., Commissioner Ashleigh N. Brewer, Commissioner Kathleen Morgan, Commissioner Sean Wheeler and Commissioner Lawrence Pearson

Excused -- 1 - Commissioner Sanford Bond

Abstain -- 2 - Commissioner Mitch Danese and Commissioner Coleen Bulter Rodriguez

OTHER BUSINESS

Secretary's Report

The Secretary's Report was provided by Commission Secretary Ms. Carey L. Jones.

Ms. Jones stated that the Richmond 300 Master Plan was adopted by the Richmond City Council by unanimous vote on December 14, 2020. Ms. Jones mentioned that the Richmond 300 Master Plan was a multi-year effort by a number of City staff members, involving an enormous amount of outreach. The Master Plan will be the guiding document for development in Richmond for the next 20 years. Highlights of the plan can be found in the Executive Summary which is posted on the City website. The plan has 6 main points, for one of which, updating the Zoning ordinance, City planning staff will have a substantial role. Ms. Jones stated that she hoped the Commission of Architectural Review could do some small updates to the CAR ordinance and then examine it holistically in terms of the Master Plan. Another of the 6 main points of the Master Plan is to promote growth that supports the City's historic fabric and enhances understanding of the City's multifaceted past.

The year 2020 has been tumultuous, and has included the departure of two Planning and Preservation staff shortly before the commencement of lockdown necessitated by Covid-19, which rapidly necessitated shifting to virtual meetings. Ms. Jones expressed her gratitude to staff and to the Commission for handling and adapting to these changes.

Ms. Jones shared some statistics for administrative approvals and permits reviewed and approved by staff, as well as applications for Certificates of Approval reviewed by the Commission.

As of their December 14, 2020 meeting, Richmond City Council has extended the ordinance for virtual meetings for another 6 months.

Administrative Approval Report

Commission Chair Johnson summarized the proposed administrative approval guidelines for operable windows and doors, which has been expedited so as to assist businesses to serve patrons in a safe manner given the current Covid-19 pandemic. The approvals would be on a temporary basis, with the applicant having the option to apply for more permanent installation after the safety issue has subsided.

Ms. Jones stated that the new operable window guidelines were developed in consultation with planning staff as well as preservation staff in other localities who are taking similar steps to expedite adjustments to windows and doors.

Commissioner Klaus asked if applications had been submitted for operable doors or windows. Ms. Jones stated that members of the public had made inquiries about the potential to alter windows and/or doors; by the current Guidelines, if these people were to apply for such alterations, it would require a month's wait for full Commission review. Commission Chair Johnson stated that the idea of expanding the Guidelines to provide for these temporary approvals came out of discussions with other municipalities, and the idea of making the process more expedient.

Ms. Jones stated that existing administrative approval guidelines allow staff to administratively approve replacement of windows that are beyond repair, or that are not historic, but nothing that allows a change of window design.

Commissioner Morgan asked for clarification regarding the temporary nature of these measures, and of the approvability of such door and window alterations, and suggested that the temporary nature be explicitly stated in the new guidelines conditions. Ms. Jones stated that the staff had in mind that they would work with applicants to insure that the window alterations would be reversible, and that, if applicants decided they wanted to

keep the new design on a more permanent basis, they would submit an application to the Commission for that.

Commissioner Morgan stated that the listed conditions in the new guidelines, as they are worded and arranged, seem to require that all of the conditions need to be met, though this is not the actual intent. Ms. Jones stated that staff would reword this. Commissioner Morgan asked if the guidelines would only be for existing window openings; Ms. Jones stated that the intent is to not allow any new openings, only changes to windows and doors in existing openings.

Commissioner Klaus suggested that the language regarding new windows be struck, as actual new windows are not allowed in this guideline.

Commissioner Wheeler suggested that the inclusion of doors as well as windows in the guidelines be made clearer.

Commissioner Morgan suggested that Commission members could email comments to Ms. Jones in order to facilitate editing the guidelines for operable windows and doors.

A motion was made by Commissioner Klaus, seconded by Commissioner Morgan, that the Commission pre-approve a set of guidelines to be crafted by staff to allow staff administrative review and approval of applications for operable windows and doors, on the condition that any historic elements which are removed be retained so that they can be put back in place at a later date; the final wording of these new guidelines to be reviewed and approved via email by the Commission Chair and Vice-Chair.

Commission Chair Johnson asked if it would be possible for the Commission to electronically vote on something such as these proposed guidelines. Ms. Jones stated that she was not certain, but that she did not believe it had been done before, and that the next opportunity for a vote during a meeting would be at the next Quarterly meeting, scheduled for January 14, 2021. Commissioner Klaus suggested that, after incorporating edits into the guidelines, Ms. Jones could have Commission Chair Johnson look them over to check that they conform to changes requested by the Commission. Commission Chair Johnson agreed to this, adding that Vice-Chair Wheeler would also review.

Ms. Jones asked for a deadline for Commissioners to provide their feedback. Commission Chair Johnson suggested that a week should suffice.

Commissioner Rodriguez asked if applicants would be required to remove the operable components of the windows, which Ms. Jones confirmed. Ms. Rodriguez suggested the temporary nature be made more explicit.

The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye – 8 - Commissioner Sean Wheeler, Commissioner Lane Pearson, Commission Chair Neville Johnson, Commissioner Kathleen Morgan, Commissioner James Klaus, Commissioner Ashleigh Brewer, Commissioner Mitch Danese, Commissioner Coleen Rodriguez

Excused – 1 - Commissioner Sanford Bond

Enforcement Report

There were no updates on enforcements.

Other Committee Reports

Ms. Jones stated that the Urban Design Committee had reviewed landscaping and site improvements at four libraries at its most recent meeting.

The business portion of the meeting concluded at 3:59 PM. The regular portion of the meeting was called to order at 4:00 PM.

Ms. Jones re-read the announcement info for virtual meetings.

CONSENT AGENDA

There are no items on the Consent Agenda

REGULAR AGENDA

There are no items on the Regular Agenda

CONCEPTUAL REVIEW

1. [COA-082846-2020](#) 515-517 N. 28th Street - Demolish existing rear section and construct a new two-story rear addition.

Attachments: [Application and Plans](#)
[Base Map](#)
[Staff Report](#)

The application was presented by Ms. Jeffries.

Mr. Matt Jarreau, applicant representative, stated that the applicants were looking for some direction on this project, and that he understood some of staff's recommendations. Mr. Jarreau stated that a letter from an engineer was in the works, to attest to the existing structure's instability. Regarding the addition in the rear, Mr. Jarreau stated that the applicants had examined all properties in the area for comparison, and found that the houses to either side are 68 feet and 63 feet in length as compared to the 65-foot length the applicants are proposing for the addition.

Commissioner Klaus pointed out that the house measurement used by the applicants for one of the neighboring houses included the porch, whereas the staff measurement did not, given that the structure proposed by the applicants will not have a porch. Commissioner Klaus stated that comparison must therefore be made excluding the porch. Commissioner Klaus suggested that adding a porch to the proposed design could be a way to add living space while not exceeding typical sizes for the area, and that the house at 519 N. 28th Street could be a useful example of this sort of configuration.

Mr. Jarreau asked for clarification as to what a contemporary window would be.

Commissioner Bond joined the meeting at this juncture.

Ms. Jones stated that typically a 1/1 design or a casement window could be considered contemporary, and that staff would be glad to meet with Mr. Jarreau to make suggestions. Mr. Jarreau stated that the applicants would probably change the design of the garages in the rear, and asked, regarding the roof, whether the problem had only been

with the shingle material proposed; Commission Chair Johnson affirmed this.

Regarding the rear addition hipped roof line, Mr. Jarreau stated that it seemed as if Commission staff were suggesting that a shed roof should be used, maybe comparable to what the applicants had done with a property on Venable Street about two months previously, where the roof is less impressive in the rear and the design is focused more on the original roof line of the house.

Commission Chair Johnson stated that items of concern were size, roof design, windows on the addition, and that he expected Commission concerns and suggestions would chiefly be about the addition.

Commission Chair Johnson asked if there was any public comment. There was none.

Commissioner Morgan commended Ms. Jeffries for the quality of her report.

Commissioner Morgan stated that the Guidelines require additions be subordinate to the original proportions of the main house, so this should be taken into account as well as simply comparing to other neighboring houses.

Commission Chair Johnson stated that he understood the economic reasons for maximizing the size of the addition, but that it is important that it be subordinate. Commissioner Chair Johnson suggested that there are ways to maximize size and usefulness while reducing the apparent size of the addition, such as altering the roof shape, changing the window design, and adding a screened porch on the back.

Commission Chair Johnson stated that nonetheless the size will have to be reduced in order to be consistent with the neighborhood. Commission Chair Johnson stated that he appreciated the applicants' efforts to retain the original structure.

Commissioner Klaus stated that the rear façade as proposed is unusual for the neighborhood, and that a screened porch would help to make the house fit in better with the vernacular of the neighborhood.

Commissioner Klaus stated that given the tiny 16-foot-wide size of the front structure, it will not be possible for the addition to be truly subordinate, but that there should be an attempt to make it appear so.

Commissioner Klaus stated that the garages will somewhat screen the rear area from view, but that steps should still be taken to make it blend in better.

Commissioner Pearson stated that new developments had prompted controversy in the past, citing as an example some infill construction across the street of about ten years ago, and suggested reaching out to neighbors to ensure that this sort of controversy does not happen again.

Commission Danese stated that he had nothing to add, but emphasized the need to make the addition appear subordinate.

Commissioner Rodriguez asked the other Commissioners if in fact a gable roof as proposed would be okay, as it seemed that this is a question that the applicant was asking. Ms. Jeffries stated that the suggestion had been in regard to the roof for the addition, and the suggestion was that it, to fit in better with its surroundings, the addition should have some roof form other than a hipped roof.

Commission Chair Johnson stated that either a shed or a gable style roof might work, depending on what the applicant needs to accomplish for the interior of the structure, as long as the addition remains subordinate to the original structure.

Commissioner Wheeler stated that a context site plan would be very helpful for the next submission of this project, to enable Commissioners to discern if the addition appears subordinate or not.

The application was conceptually reviewed. The Commission discussed the proposal with the applicant and made recommendations in an advisory capacity.

2. [COA-079736-2020](#) 304 N. 21st Street - Construct ten, three-story town houses.

Attachments: [Application and Plans \(10/27/2020\)](#)

[Base Map](#)

[Staff Report \(10/27/2020\)](#)

[Application and Plans](#)

[Staff Report](#)

Commissioner Morgan recused herself from review of this application.

The application was presented by Ms. Jones.

Ms. Jones stated that a number of public comment letters were received regarding this project, expressing concern about building form, the amount of density on the site, location of trash receptacles, and ingress and egress routes for vehicles.

Commissioner Wheeler referred to the partial demolition from a previous review which is mentioned in the staff report, and asked if that had been for the one-story piece on the historic building. Ms. Jones stated that it was for a small projecting piece of the building in front. Commission Chair Johnson stated that it had been determined that the part slated for demolition was non-original, and that the intent of the current applicants was to remove that piece and expose the original structure.

Ms. Jones stated that the 2018 application and review had pertained to this non-original piece of the building. Commissioner Wheeler asked if there had been new construction proposed at this time. Ms. Jones stated that the 2018 application had been only to remove the non-historic building section in order to rehabilitate the building, and to make some site improvements such as fences.

Commission Chair Johnson asked if the 2018 demolition application had been from the same applicants as the current project applicants. Ms. Jones stated that she believed that it was, but that she could check this prior to the next review of this project.

Ms. Catherine Easterling introduced herself and the owner, Zachery Frederick, and Ms. Heather Grutzius, a project architect.

Ms. Easterling stated that the current plans were a more detailed iteration of some very schematic plans submitted in October 2020, and that the revisions had taken into account the recommendations and feedback of the Commission and members of the public.

Ms. Easterling stated that the applicants do intend to use historic rehabilitation tax credits for the rehabilitation of the existing ca. 1925 garage building on the site, and this has guided the applicants' plans to develop the property. Ms. Easterling stated that the applicants anticipate that the Virginia Department of Historic Resources will want them to preserve views of the 1925 building and to hold infill construction back from the façade of the historic building on 21st Street, so this has impacted the planned mass and configuration of the proposed infill. The applicants' design of the infill construction was also guided by the precedent for infill along Broad and 21st Streets: as shown in the 1905 Sanborn map, historic infill buildings were somewhat scattered on those streets, included a two-story corner building and other smaller buildings, and were situated without a setback from the street unlike the established frame buildings along 21st Street. Ms. Easterling stated that there are also properties in the area, including along the 300 block of North 22nd Street, which either have recessed entrances or do not have porches, and that most of these buildings are masonry.

Ms. Easterling stated that members of the community and the Commission had indicated a desire for additional infill along Broad Street, so in the current submission additional units have been added at Broad and 21st Street, though not along 21st Street as the applicants anticipate DHR will want them to retain views of the historic garage.

Ms. Easterling stated that members of the community had repeatedly asked that parking be included inside the new units, and this consideration drove some aspects of the design; the rear parking garages are not screened because the applicants did not want to screen the historic building from view.

Ms. Easterling stated that the addition of interior parking had made it very difficult to add any sort of traditional porch that would be in keeping with the Italianate frame houses along 21st Street. Ms. Easterling stated that the DHR would be reviewing any changes to the garage, and these would also be brought to the Commission.

Ms. Easterling stated that the DHR review had not been done yet, due to it being the DHR's busy time of year.

Ms. Easterling stated that the project site is unique and transitional, having as it does a garage repair building from 1925, residential buildings neighboring to the east and more industrial buildings to the west, and being situated at the intersection of three different historic districts.

Commissioner Klaus asked if there was a plan to present this project along with the rehabilitation of the garage and whatever work is planned for the other side of the property, or if these would be submitted for review as three separate projects. Ms. Easterling stated that a church owns the property, including the parking lot and the grassy area, immediately to the west of the project building. Ms. Easterling stated that the DHR would be reviewing the garage rehabilitation as well as any new infill design, and that if any new changes are planned for the exterior of the garage, those would be brought before the Commission for additional review.

Commission Chair Johnson asked if DHR had given the applicants an initial sense of their wishes for the historic structure. Ms. Easterling stated that DHR had assigned a reviewer, but that the applicants had not yet had an opportunity to meet with the reviewer, this being a busy time of year for the DHR. Ms. Easterling stated that the rehabilitation of the building itself will be fairly straightforward, but that DHR input will be important for the infill construction.

Commission Chair Johnson stated that the view from Broad Street, and what the applicants do with the two townhouses sited on Broad Street, will be important. Commission Chair Johnson recommended that the buildings on Broad Street could be better integrated with the other new buildings, and that a slight setback off the corner could help to address the corner guidelines. Commission Chair Johnson stated that having more input from DHR about siting of structures on Broad Street, this might help the applicants determine how they can develop the other side of the property.

Ms. Easterling stated that one reason for the delay in receiving DHR input is that the historic garage building is not currently in a National Register Historic District and is in the process of being added, so as to be eligible for the tax credit.

Commission Chair Johnson asked if there was any public comment. There was none.

Commissioner Wheeler stated that the project has a modern aesthetic which would benefit from being even more modern. Commissioner Wheeler suggested that the applicants not take the bus stop into account in the design, since it may not always be at that location. Commissioner Wheeler suggested that the vestibule entry could be converted to a front porch, as a recessed piece; since there are already massings that are cantilevered over each other, this could be done as a void inside that space. Commissioner Wheeler suggested that in either case this front porch should be raised off the sidewalk, with more stairs from the garage, and this would give more animation to the street façade. Commissioner Wheeler suggested that subtracting one of the townhouses would make it easier to put the porch on top. Commissioner Wheeler stated that it is important that, as the property wraps around the corner of 21st and Broad Streets, something happen.

Commissioner Wheeler suggested that the bricked-in windows could be open instead.

Commission Chair Johnson expressed agreement with Commissioner Wheeler, and stated that it will be important to get feedback from DHR as this might enable the applicants to maximize square footage by bringing the buildings on Broad Street further west, thus also shielding the garages from public view.

Commission Chair Johnson suggested that the applicants follow the example of other properties across the street and down the block, that they alter the design so as to soften the corner, possibly by adding a porch, and that HVAC machinery and amenities for trash be incorporated in a thoughtful manner, as the needs for ten residences will be considerable.

Commissioner Klaus observed that the number of units in the design had increased from 6 to 10 from the previous submission, and stated that the setback difficulty could be addressed by reducing the number of units, thus reducing the need for square footage and allowing more of a setback. Commissioner Klaus stated that this is especially important with the units on 21st Street.

Commissioner Klaus stated that some of the units appear to refer to historic Shockoe Bottom tobacco warehouse buildings, and that this is effective, but that the buildings around the corner need to refer to Church Hill and Union Hill styles.

Commissioner Klaus stated that the visible garage doors on Broad Street are problematic, especially the two which are most visible, and suggested that perhaps the building that resembles a warehouse does not need to have parking.

Commissioner Klaus stated that the third floor being of greater height than the two floors

below it is problematic, and that having the third floors a different color and set back is the first step toward making them disappear, but having them taller counteracts that.

Commissioner Klaus stated that the clerestory windows on the first floor on 21st Street are not appropriate for the neighborhood.

Commissioner Rodriguez stated that there seems to be a lack of space mediating the indoors and outside, that one is either inside a building or outside on the pavement. Commissioner Rodriguez suggested that if there were fewer units, perhaps there could be a greater setback not only in front but also in back of the units, thus allowing space for a trash can and a parking spot. Commissioner Rodriguez stated that having a trash location far from a unit seems inhospitable and inconvenient, and having a nearer space in back would make the buildings more livable.

Commissioner Wheeler stated that the advantage of the garage doors is that they screen the parking and the supercars. Though the disadvantage is that there is less parking.. Commissioner Wheeler suggested that keeping the garage doors in the design might be a slightly better option, even though it is atypical.

The application was conceptually reviewed. The Commission discussed the proposal with the applicant and made recommendations in an advisory capacity.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 5:05 PM.