

**COMMISSION OF ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW  
STAFF REPORT  
July 26, 2016 Meeting**

7. **CAR No. 16-015** (S. Krumbein)

**2308 Jefferson Avenue  
Union Hill Old and Historic District**

**Project Description:**

**Construct new mixed use building**

**Staff Contact:**

**M. Pitts**

The application was reviewed conceptually at the December 15, 2015 meeting. The Commission was generally favorable in its comments, but there was some discussion related to the verticality of the ground floor and the horizontal nature of the upper floors, the departure from the traditional three-bay pattern of the upper stories, and an understanding of the details especially at the corners.

The application returned to the Commission for final review on January 26, 2016 with minimal changes to the proposed design. The Commission deferred the application to allow the applicant the opportunity to receive input from the neighborhood and to address the concerns raised in the staff report and by the Commission to include the relationship between the building and neighboring structures, the east elevation, and the fenestration on the front elevation. Specifically, the Commission wanted the applicant to address the following:

- Location of mechanical equipment and utilities including fire suppression
- Connection with the adjacent building to be less disjointed
- The ground floor be symmetrically organized and unified by the use of vertical and horizontal framing elements to resemble a traditional storefront.
- The second story windows be symmetrically placed on the façade and configured differently to be more vertically oriented and similar to the adjacent property.
- The disposition of the east elevation

In the revised plans, the applicant has included an elevation labeled Option B which was the elevation provided in the previous submittal. The applicant has included these plans for comparison purposes only.

The following modifications have been made to the project as a result of Commission's comments:

- The backflow preventer will be located in a vault underground. The Siamese connection will be located on the front façade immediately to the left of the residential door.

- On the front façade, the storefront cornice has been raised. The top of the cornice is located at the height of the bottom the storefront cornice of the adjacent structure and at a similar height as the storefront cornice of 2308 Leigh Street.
- The first story elevation has been symmetrically organized and includes vertical and horizontal framing elements constructed out of Hardiplank trim. The proposed storefront has been modified to include transoms above the windows in addition to a sign band and cornice which span the front façade.
- The paired second and third story windows have been separated into four ranked single windows. The windows have been symmetrically placed on the façade.
- The east elevation includes the installation of wooden lattice on the single story portions of the elevation.

The applicant has stated that meetings have occurred between the applicant and the neighborhood association and other neighbors.

The applicant is seeking final approval for the design. Commission staff reviewed the project through the lens of the “Standards for New Construction: Commercial” on pages 50 and 51 of the *Richmond Old and Historic District Handbook and Design Review Guidelines* and the resulting comments follow.

Staff believes the revised plans are generally responsive to the concerns raised by the Commission during the previous reviews, and the revisions result in a building form compatible with that found elsewhere in the immediate area. The revised location of the storefront cornice ties the structure in better with the commercial structures on the block without increasing the overall height of the structure. The proposed new building incorporates many of the characteristics of commercial structures in the neighborhood. In traditional storefront design, the first story fenestration pattern is usually organized by vertical pilasters that engage the storefront cornice and sign band creating a symmetrical composition, and there is a large, undivided expanse of glass over a low solid base with vertical door elements. Though the proposed design incorporates five operable doors rather than the traditional single door and adjacent glass expanse, the revised design uses the traditional storefront form through the inclusion of the vertical and horizontal framing elements. Although the proposed façade does not utilize a three bay configuration as is characteristic of the neighborhood, the revision to separate the paired windows results in upper stories that are more vertically oriented as is consistent with the upper stories of commercial structures in the neighborhood. The applicant proposes to break up the wide massing of the east elevation with wooden lattice which will incorporate plantings up the side of the structure.

**Staff recommends approval of the project with a condition.** The proposed infill project appears generally to be in keeping with the Standards for New

Construction outlined in the *Guidelines*. Staff recommends that approval be conditioned with:

- Final colors be submitted for administrative review and approval.

It is the assessment of staff that with the acceptance of the stated condition the application is consistent with the Standards for New Construction outlined in Section 30.930.7(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 code.