



**Staff Report**  
**City of Richmond, Virginia**



**Commission of Architectural Review**

5.COA-153790-2024	Final Review <span style="float: right;">Meeting Date: 9/24/2024</span>
Applicant/Petitioner	Will Gillette, Baker Development Resources
Project Description	Construct a new three-story dwelling.
Project Location	
Address 2201 Venable Street	
Historic District: Union Hill	
<p>The applicant proposes to construct a detached dwelling on the corner of Venable and 22nd streets.</p> <p>The dwelling will be three stories in height. There will be a three-sided, two-story bay on the corner with a roof top balcony accessed from the third floor. The dwelling will be clad with lap siding and ranked 2-over-2 windows on the</p> <p>The façade and west elevation and have a decorative cornice at the roof line.</p>	
Staff Recommendation	Deferral
Staff Contact	Alex Dandridge, alex.dandridge@rva.gov, (804) 646-6569
Previous Reviews	<p>The Commission conceptually reviewed this application at the July 2024 meeting. Commissioners noted that the new construction's height was taller than most historic residential development; but could be acceptable with a "tweaked design" and because it is a corner property. Discussion around the overall design of the building included pushing the design farther to be more eclectic and to be more reflective of a corner commercial storefront at the ground floor, as that was the form the building was taking despite being residential. Brick was mentioned as being a more compatible material for a three-story corner building. The front balcony was discussed as being an element not common in the district.</p>
Staff Recommendations	<p><b>Staff recommends deferral of the application to allow the applicant additional time to revise the plans to reflect the recommendations of Staff and the Commission.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff recommends that the design of the chamfered corner be further studied and revised to incorporate more transparent and human scale elements that relate to the context of the surrounding district.</li> <li>• If greater transparency is not provided at the ground floor, Staff recommends that the setback for the new dwelling be like that of the existing residential properties along Venable Street.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff recommends that the facade roof terrace be removed from the design of the building.</li> <li>• Staff recommends that the downspouts be round. Staff recommends that gutter and downspout specifications be submitted for administrative review and approval.</li> <li>• Staff recommends that details on any proposed fencing be submitted for Administrative Review.</li> </ul>
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## Staff Analysis

Guideline Reference	Reference Text	Analysis
Standards For New Construction, page 46	<p><i>All new residential and commercial construction, whether in the form of additions or entire buildings should be compatible with the historic features that characterize the setting and context. To protect the context of the surrounding historic district, new construction should reference the materials, features, size, scale, proportions, and massing of the existing historic buildings in its setting.</i></p>	<p>The new construction will be located on the southwest corner of a largely intact block primarily composed of two-story, Italianate, and Victorian-influenced, detached frame dwellings. The two-story, frame dwelling immediately to the east, and a single, two-story, brick dwelling near the eastern end of the block are set over English basements close to the sidewalk. The small front yards are enclosed by fences. The houses all have full façade front porches except for a pair of attached earlier Greek Revival dwellings on the eastern corner that have porticoes at the entrances. The block directly north across Venable Street, while not as intact, is composed of pairs of brick and frame, two-story Victorian-inspired dwellings with full façade porches.</p> <p>The new construction will be three stories in height and set close to the sidewalk. In lieu of a porch, the new dwelling has a recessed, two-story, three-sided bay, that addresses the corner, with a roof top terrace. This is an architectural form not found in the Union Hill District.</p> <p>The dwelling will be frame, with ranked windows and a decorative cornice - features that reference the neighboring buildings.</p> <p>During the last review, it was recommended that the new construction incorporate more traditional architectural elements commonly found in the district and on this residential block, especially a front yard setback, porch, or a more transparent ground floor to better reference the commercial form the building has.</p>
Standards For New Construction: Siting, page 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.</i></p>	<p>The site plan provided indicates that there will be a 10" front yard setback from the property line. The application also refers to the prior development pattern for the property which was a brick commercial building set close to the street with a transparent storefront wrapping the corner. Corner brick commercial buildings in Union Hill do sit closer to the property lines and proud of their residential neighbors. They also feature large transparent sections at the corner.</p> <p>During the last review, the Commission discussed the treatment of the corner of the building that has chamfered edges. This section took the form of a corner commercial building but lacked the transparency that</p>

		<p>comes with traditional storefronts. The applicant has responded by including paneling on the chamfered corner which gives the appearance of a former storefront that has been enclosed. Staff finds that this does not provide the transparency that the commission discussed and finds this section of the building to be unresolved. <u>Staff recommends that the design of the chamfered corner be further studied and revised to incorporate more transparent and human scale elements that relate to the context of the surrounding district.</u></p> <p><u>If greater transparency is not provided at the ground floor, Staff recommends that the setback for the new dwelling be like that of the existing residential properties along Venable Street.</u></p>
<p>Standards For New Construction: Form, page 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.</i></p>	<p>Massing: The massing of the proposed new dwelling is taller than what is seen on the subject block. The recessed, two-story, three-sided bay on the corner with a roof top terrace is a form not found in the district.</p> <p>Symmetry: The new construction is generally symmetrical but the recessed, two-story, three-sided bay on the corner with a roof top terrace is a form not found in the district.</p> <p>Proportions: The proposed dwelling is taller than existing historic residential buildings on this subject block in Union Hill and the recessed, two-story, three-sided bay on the corner with a roof top terrace is a form not found in the district.</p> <p>Projections: the proposed dwelling will feature a roof-top terrace on the corner while not a projection it is a feature not found in the district.</p> <p>Roof shapes: The roof shape of the proposed new construction is in-keeping with roof shapes and forms found in the Union Hill City Old and Historic District except for the two-story bay with a roof-top terrace. <u>Staff recommends that the facade roof terrace be removed from the design of the building.</u></p>
<p>Standards For New Construction: Form, page 46</p>	<p><i>2. New residential construction should maintain the existing human scale of nearby historic, residential construction in the district.</i></p>	<p>As proposed, the new construction will not feature any human scale elements. Common human scale features in the Union Hill City Old and Historic District include front porches and low front yard picket fences or transparent storefronts.</p> <p>The dwelling is set near the sidewalk and lacks a yard and front porch. It will have a simple entrance in the corner of the bay that is approached by a few steps and an uncovered landing. The corner bay, unlike an open porch, lacks transparency. The corner landing and steps is a feature not found in the district. Staff recommends that the dwelling feature a deeper set back and a full width, covered front porch with a roof form that resembles adjacent dwellings (visible/pitched roof form).</p>
<p>Standards for New Construction: Height, Width, Proportion &amp; Massing, page 47</p>	<p><i>1. New residential construction should respect the typical height of surrounding residential buildings.</i></p>	<p>Most of the historic dwellings in this block of Venable Street, on both the north and south sides, are two stories in height except for two-dwellings that are set on English basements. Staff recommends that the applicant reduce the height of the dwelling by one story to better</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>reference the typical height of residential buildings on the subject block.</p> <p>The historic dwellings on the block are three-bays wide with ranked windows on the façade. There is a notable absence of projecting bays in this area. The proposed recessed, two-story, three-sided bay on the corner with a roof top terrace is a form not found in the district. Staff recommends that the two-story, three-sided bay on the corner be eliminated, and a compatible, transparent porch element be introduced.</p> <p>No context elevations or building heights were provided. <u>Staff recommends that dimensioned context elevations be provided for final review.</u></p>
<p>Standards for New Construction: Materials &amp; Colors, page 47</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 new dwellings will be clad in horizontal siding, which generally resembles other types of horizontal siding found within the district.</p> <p>The foundations will be parged and painted tan/gray, trim and soffits will be composite, exterior doors will be wooden, windows will be aluminum clad wood, the roof will be standing seam metal on the façade and TPO on the remainder, front rails will be Richmond Rail, and the rear deck and railings will be treated wood.</p> <p>Windows will have a six-over-six pane configuration with simulated divided lights. Staff recommends that final window specifications be submitted for administrative review and approval.</p> <p>Gutter and downspout information was not provided in the application. <u>Staff recommends that the downspouts be round. Staff recommends that gutter and downspout specifications be submitted for administrative review and approval.</u></p> <p><u>Staff recommends that material specifications be provided for final review.</u></p>
<p>Standards For New Construction: Doors and Windows, page 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>The dwellings will have single, ranked windows in a three-bay arrangement on the façade. Drawings of the other elevations have not been provided. The north elevation is the only elevation that will be largely visible. Staff finds that the fenestration pattern is generally in keeping with the pattern found in the district.</p> <p>No specification for the door or window materials were provided. <u>Staff recommends that material specifications be provided as part of the final review.</u></p>
<p>Standards for New Construction, Residential, Fences &amp; Walls, pg. 51</p>	<p><i>2. Fence, wall, or gate materials should relate to building materials commonly found in the neighborhood.</i></p>	<p>The context elevation provided appears to indicate that a board fence will be installed along 22<sup>nd</sup> Street between the new dwelling on Venable Street and the proposed new dwellings at 817 N. 22<sup>nd</sup> Street. <u>Staff recommends that details on any proposed fencing be submitted for Administrative Review.</u></p> <p>The proposed fencing will screen the trash receptacles.</p>

# Figures



Figure 1. 2201 Venable Street, ca. 1880s commercial building demolished in 1977. The infill along 22<sup>nd</sup> Street to the factory building is visible.

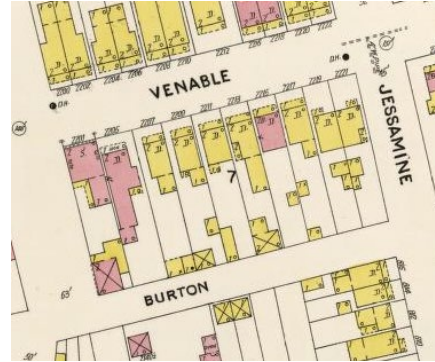


Figure 2. 1905 Sanborn Map



Figure 3. 1952 Sanborn Map



Figure 4. Northeast corner of N. 22<sup>nd</sup> Street and Cedar Street.



Figure 5. Southeast corner of Venable Street and N. 22<sup>nd</sup> Street.



Figure 6. Southeast corner of Venable Street and N. 22<sup>nd</sup> Street.