



## Commission of Architectural Review

10. COA-181519-2026	Conceptual Review <span style="float: right;">Meeting Date: 3/24/2026</span>
Applicant/Petitioner	Jean Carlos
Project Description	Construct a new two story building on vacant parcel
Project Location	
Address: 863 N 22nd Street	
Historic District: Union Hill	
<p><b>High-Level Details:</b></p> <p>This application proposes the construction of a new two-story building on a vacant lot, in the Union Hill historic district. The lot sits on the corner of 22<sup>nd</sup> street and an alley. The proposed design includes a three-bay façade, a raised entrance at the base with a full width porch and Richmond rail, and a cornice treatment at the top.</p>	
Staff Recommendation	
Staff Contact	Yara Iwaz, Yara.Iwaz@RVA.gov, (804)646-6031
Previous Reviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>N/A</li> </ul>
Staff Recommendations	<p>Staff finds that the proposal is generally compatible with the Guidelines, and recommends the following for final review:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Approve the height and siting strategy; applicant to submit a context site plan confirming setback alignment with neighboring buildings for final review. Applicant to coordinate setback and lot coverage requirement with Zoning.</li> <li>Revise the façade composition and the relationship between the second-story windows and the porch, and considering a larger 1-over-1 window format to increase transparency to the façade.</li> <li>Revise the window spacing and alignment on the main façade.</li> <li>Revise side and rear elevations to include vertically aligned windows, and increase fenestration on the rear elevation.</li> <li>Revise the corbels to align with window bays.</li> <li>Simplify the eave treatment at the porch and cornice levels, and include a more simplified front door design.</li> </ul>

# Staff Analysis

Surrounding Context		
<p>The surrounding block in Union Hill features a pattern of 2-story, 3-bay frame houses with consistent setbacks and strong street wall definition. Many buildings feature box cornices with ventilation panels, while others include mansard roofs. Full-width porches are a defining feature, typically with hipped roofs supported by a range of column types, including Tuscan, Ionic, bracketed, or more simplified square posts. Porch roof treatments vary, with some incorporating dentils or decorative brackets and others expressing a simpler, more robust form. The rhythm of porches, window spacing, and façade proportions creates a unified streetscape.</p>		
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>	<p><b>Siting and Height</b></p> <p>The proposed siting appears generally appropriate; however, no contextual plan confirms alignment with adjacent setbacks.</p> <p>The proposed height is compatible with surrounding 2-story structures.</p> <p><u>Staff recommends approving the height and siting strategy; applicant to submit a context site plan confirming setback alignment with neighboring buildings for final review. Staff further recommends that the applicant coordinate with zoning for setback and lot coverage requirements.</u></p>
Standards for New Construction: Height, Width, Proportion & Massing, page 47	<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.</i>	<p><b>Proportions</b></p> <p>The building massing appears as generally appropriate, and closely resembles the proportions of neighboring buildings, particularly with the façade composition of elevated base that sits on a foundation, middle that features a full width porch, and top that is defined by a cornice treatment. However, the windows on the top floor appear to be set very high up from the porch, leaving large blank wall between the window base and the top of the porch. This could also be a result of windows sizes appearing as under scaled.</p> <p>In addition, as this is a new construction, a simpler 1-over-1 window configuration could be more appropriate than the proposed 2-over-2.</p> <p><u>Staff recommends revising the façade composition and the relationship between the second-story windows and the porch, and considering a larger 1-over-1 window format to increase transparency to the façade.</u></p>
Standards For New Construction: Doors and Windows, p.56	<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><b>Fenestration patterns</b></p> <p>The proposed window spacing on the front elevation appears to not be equally distributed, with a non-symmetrical gap on either side of the façade, possibly due to a drawing error</p>

		<p><u>Staff recommends revising the window spacing and alignment on the main façade.</u></p> <p>As a corner lot, the side and rear elevations of the proposed building would be highly visible. Current window patterns lack vertical alignment on the side and rear of the building. Additionally, the rear elevation features limited fenestration and appears as overly opaque.</p> <p><u>Staff recommends revising side and rear elevations to include vertically aligned windows, and increasing fenestration on the rear elevation.</u></p>
		<p><i>Cornice treatment</i></p> <p>The proposed cornice includes corbels that are not aligned with window openings and appear disconnected from the window organization and grouping.</p> <p><u>Staff recommends revising the corbels to align with window bays.</u></p>
Standards for New Construction: Materials & Colors, page 47	2. <i>Materials used in new residential construction should be visually compatible with original materials used throughout the district.</i>	<p><i>Ornamentation</i></p> <p>The porch and cornice include a stylistic treatment with small dentil detailing. The boxed eave of the porch is slim, and sits on a simple Tuscan-style column that is representative of newer construction. As this is a new construction that should read as differentiated from its surrounding, a simplified cornice and porch language could help better represent the selected architectural treatment, while still identifying it as new. A more robust porch design with less ornamentation and a more simplified front door could help achieve this distinction.</p> <p><u>Staff recommends simplifying the eave treatment at the porch and cornice levels, and including a more simplified front door design, with more detailed drawings submitted for final review</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.*

# Figures



Figure 1



Figure 2