



Staff Report
City of Richmond, Virginia



Commission of Architectural Review

2. COA-147348-2024	Final Review	Meeting Date: 8/27/2024
Applicant/Petitioner	James Catts	
Project Description	Construct a new two-story building.	
Project Location		
Address: 4002 Hermitage Road		
Historic District: Hermitage Road		
<p>High-Level Details:</p> <p>The applicant proposes to construct a new two-story garage in the rear side yard of an 1870s Queen Anne Style building.</p> <p>The combined two floors of the garage will be approximately 2,200 square feet.</p> <p>The garage will be approximately 25'8" tall, 28' wide, and 51' long.</p> <p>This project will require a Special Use Permit to allow for the proposed height.</p>		
Staff Recommendation		
Staff Contact	Alex Dandridge, (804) 646-6569, alex.dandridge@rva.gov	
Previous Reviews	<p>This application was reviewed at the May 2024 meeting of the Commission of Architectural Review. The Commission deferred the application to allow the applicant to revise the plans. Specifically, the Commission had concerns with the height of the proposed building and its overall design. The Commission found the building tall and too similar to the design of the primary building on the site and felt that the building should be further subordinate to the primary building. It was stated that the design should better reflect that of other secondary buildings in the district.</p> <p>This application was conceptually reviewed at the December 2023 meeting of the Commission of Architectural Review. While most Commissioners agreed that the placement of the new building was appropriate, there was some conversation around placing it behind the primary building. Overall, the Commission believed that the new building was quite large and read as a second house on the site rather than being subordinate to the primary building. Copying some of the architectural features of the primary building like the flared base and hipped roof with cross gable was determined to be inappropriate. The applicant was asked to revise the plans with design inspirations derived from the existing carriage house at the rear of the property.</p>	

Staff Recommendations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff recommends approval of the project contingent on the final height of 25 feet being permitted by the Special Use Permit. • Final window, door, roofing, siding, and gutter specifications be submitted for administrative review and approval.
<p>Surrounding Context:</p> <p>4002 Hermitage Road is located within the Hermitage Road City Old and Historic District as well as the Hermitage Road National Register Historic District. The subject parcel is zoned R-1, residential single-family and is just over one acre (1.1364 acres). The site consists of a primary, frame, two-story, Queen Anne Style building that was constructed ca. 1870 and a secondary 1 ½ story rear carriage house. There appears to be additional smaller auxiliary structures towards the rear alley. On the west side of Hermitage (location of 4002 Hermitage), the block features estate-style, single family dwellings with large front yards, landscaping, and driveways. On the east side of Hermitage Road there are more modestly sized single-family dwellings with smaller front yards and shallower side yard setbacks, which give this side a “denser” appearance. The dwellings on east side of the street are staggered with the curve of the road. There is a religious institution on the west side of the block as well as attached town houses. Most dwellings in the immediate area are two and two and a half stories in height.</p>	

Staff Analysis

Guideline Reference	Reference Text	Analysis
Standards for New Construction, Siting, pg. 46	<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>	The Hermitage Road City Old and Historic District is characterized by estate-style buildings with large front yards and gardens. The proposed garage will be set back onto the lot farther than the primary building. Based on the site plan, the proposed garage will be set back quite far from the street and be towards the side rear of the primary building, a location that suggest subordination to the original building.
Standards for New Construction, Materials & Colors, pg. 47	<p><i>2. Materials used in new residential construction should be visually compatible with original materials used throughout the district.</i></p> <p><i>5. Rooftop mechanical equipment should be located as discretely as possible to limit visibility. In addition, appropriate screening should be provided to conceal equipment from view. When rooftop railings are required for seating areas or for safe access to mechanical equipment, the railings should be as unobtrusive as possible, in order to minimize their appearance and visual impact on the surrounding district.</i></p>	<p>The new garage will use materials that are compatible with the primary building and with the context of the district. It will be clad in wood siding and will have a brick foundation. The roof will be slate or faux slate. The columns, doors, and windows will be wooden and painted/stained to match the primary building.</p> <p><u>Staff recommends that exterior HVAC equipment be in an area that is minimally visible from the public right-of-way and screened from view; final location shown on a site plan.</u></p>
New Construction, Windows & Doors, pg. 49	<i>3. The size, proportion, and spacing patterns of doors and window openings on free standing, new construction</i>	<p>The primary building features a variety of window types, including one-over-one, two-over-two, and margin light windows.</p> <p>During the last review, the proposed garage featured a variety of windows of varying sizes and designs. The</p>

	<p><i>should be compatible with patterns established within the district.</i></p>	<p>applicant has revised the fenestration to only include two-over-two windows. The windows are arranged as singles, pairs, and groups of three, and are consistent in size. There are two smaller square windows, one on the Hermitage Road elevation, and one on the north elevation.</p>
<p>New Construction, Residential Outbuildings, pg. 50</p>	<p><i>1. Outbuildings, including garages, sheds, gazebos and other auxiliary structures, should be compatible with the design of the primary building on the site, including roof slope and materials selection.</i></p> <p><i>2. Newly constructed outbuildings such as detached garages or tool sheds should respect the siting, massing, roof profiles, materials and colors of existing outbuildings in the neighborhood.</i></p> <p><i>3. New outbuildings should be smaller than the main residence and be located to the rear and/or side of the property to emphasize that they are secondary structures.</i></p>	<p>The primary building on site is a two-story, three-bay, simple Queen Anne building with a complex plan ca. 1870. It is clad in dutch-cut lap siding and staggered wood shingles. It has a complex, slate roof with five interior chimneys. Stylistic elements include a full-width, single-story entry porch with balustrades and a pedimented shed roof supported by slender, squared columns. It sits on a deep rectangular lot with a deep setback and an asphalt driveway. The first story is clad in horizontal siding, and the second story is clad in wooden shingles and is separated from the first floor visually with a flared base.</p> <p>The proposed garage will be one-and-a-half stories with a gable roof and a large, shed dormer on the north and south elevations. The east elevation facing Hermitage Road will have a projecting bay on the first story, and the west elevation facing the alley will have a projection with a shorter gable roof. The design has been simplified so that it doesn't mimic the primary building. Staff believes that the revised design reads as a separate, more simplified design that is compatible yet subordinate to the primary building.</p> <p>During the last review, the Commission suggested that the new garage should be further differentiated from the primary building on site by better referencing the design of the existing carriage house more so than the primary building.</p> <p>According to the site plan, the proposed garage will be located towards the rear side yard and will be set back further on the lot than the primary building. The building will be oriented so that the "long side" featuring the garage doors will face the northside of the primary building and the asphalt driveway.</p> <p>The garage is still quite large; however, the overall height has decreased from 28 feet to 25 feet which is lower than the max roof height of the primary building.</p> <p>A Special Use Permit will be required to allow for the proposed height, which is greater than the 20 feet allowed by-right. While still taller than other accessory buildings in the district, Staff believes that the decrease in height, simplified design and deep setback of the proposed building will visually subordinate it from the primary building and it will read as a secondary structure.</p> <p><u>Staff recommends approval of the project contingent on the final height of 25 feet being permitted by the Special Use Permit.</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. 4002 Hermitage, 2023. View looking west along driveway and side yard.



Figure 2. 4002 Existing Rear Carriage House, 2021. Hipped roof with through-the-eave dormer and cupola. (pre-rehabilitation).



Figure 3. Footprint of existing building.

