

**COMMISSION OF ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW
STAFF REPORT
September 27, 2016 Meeting**

18. **CAR No. 16-141** (D. Kleyman)

**808 North 21st Street
Union Hill Old and Historic District**

Project Description:

**Construct an eight unit multifamily
structure on a vacant lot.**

Staff Contact:

M. Pitts

The applicant requests conceptual review and comment on the construction of a multifamily building in the Union Hill Old and Historic District. The proposed structure will be located on a currently vacant lot on the west side of North 21st Street. Due to the grade of the property and the height of the proposal, portions of the proposed project will be visible from North 21st Street, Carrington Street, Mosby Street, Venable Street, and adjacent side and rear alleys.

The residential character of the Union Hill neighborhood consists of 2 to 2 ½ story, 3-bay structures with the subject block being developed with brick structures of the typical height and massing of the district in a mix of architectural styles. The project is adjacent to a 2 story brick structure which is currently being restored by the applicant. Adjacent to the historic structure are vacant lots as the historic brick structures were demolished prior to the establishment of the Old and Historic District. The remainder of the west side of the block is developed with 2 ½ story, Colonial Revival, brick residential structures with a 3 bay window rhythm and a 2 ½ story, Late Victorian, brick commercial structure at the corner of North 21st and Venable Streets. The east side of North 21st Street is developed with multiple 2-story, 3-bay, shed-roofed, Art Deco, brick structures, a 2-story, 6-bay, Colonial Revival double house, and a two-story concrete block apartment building.

The applicant is proposing to construct two buildings connected by a central stair. The building which will front 21st Street is a 2-story, 5-bay, Italianate inspired frame structure with a full façade front porch. The structure will be clad in smooth fiber cement lapped siding with a 7" exposure and will have a cornice constructed of composite material in a design to match the adjacent historic building's cornice. The structure will have a flat roof and ranked, 2/2, PVC windows. The structure will be 27'-3" in height from grade.

The structure to the rear is 3 story structure which will extend approximately 7 feet above the front structure. This structure will be a more contemporary design to be clad in fiber cement boards with casement windows with transoms above and several individual transom windows. The proposed roof will have a minimal slope. The applicant is proposing a three story porch at the rear. The proposed railings

will be constructed of composite materials, and the applicant is proposing to paint the structure earth toned colors.

The proposed parking will be located at the rear of the structure. The trash receptacles will be located adjacent to the alley, and the outdoor mechanical equipment will be located to the north of the rear decks.

The applicant is seeking **Conceptual Review** for this project. Conceptual review is covered under Sec. 30-930.6(d) of the City Code: The commission shall review and discuss the proposal with the applicant and make any necessary recommendations. Such Conceptual Review shall be advisory only. Commission staff reviewed the project through the lens of the "Standards for New Construction: Residential" on pages 44 and 45 of the *Richmond Old and Historic District Handbook and Design Review Guidelines* utilizing the checklist below.

S=satisfies

D=does not satisfy

NA=not applicable

S **D** **NA**

 New infill construction should respect the prevailing front and side yard setback patterns in the surrounding district

The project setback matches that of the adjacent structure to the north.

 Where the adjoining buildings have different setbacks, the setback for the new building should be based on the historical pattern for the block

Though a context site plan showing the setback of the structure across the alley was not provided, it appears that the adjacent structures have similar setbacks therefore this guideline does not apply.

 New buildings should face the most prominent street bordering the site

The structure addresses North 21st Street.

 New construction should use a building form compatible with that found elsewhere in the district. Form refers to the combination of massing, size, symmetry, proportions, projections and roof shapes that lend identity to a building.

The construction of an unrelated rear wing as proposed that is unrelated both architecturally and in its massing to the attached structure is not a building form found in the district.

 New construction should incorporate human-scale elements such as cornices, porches and front steps.

The proposed project incorporates human-scale elements including a cornice, front and rear porches, and front steps as part of the project.

- New construction should respect the typical height of surrounding buildings**

The typical height of the surrounding buildings is 2 to 2 ½ stories. The proposed structure is 3 stories. The applicant has attempted to minimize the impact of the height by locating the taller portion of the building at rear of the project.

- New construction should respect the typical width, organization of bays, vertical alignment and symmetry of surrounding buildings.**

The proposed project does maintain the vertical alignment and the symmetry of the surrounding buildings. The proposed 5-bay façade does not maintain the typical three bay pattern found in the surrounding buildings. The typical width of single family homes in the district is 20 feet. The proposed structure which reads as a single family dwelling is wider at 27'.

- The size, proportion, and spacing patterns of doors and window openings should be compatible with patterns established in the district.**

The proposed windows are vertically aligned and symmetrically placed which is consistent with patterns in the district. Staff has concerns regarding the transom windows on the side elevations of the structure as this window form is not found in the district.

- Porch and cornice heights should be compatible with adjacent buildings**

The porch and cornice heights relate to those of the adjacent structure to the north.

- Materials used in new construction should be visually compatible with original materials used throughout the district. Vinyl, asphalt, and aluminum siding are not permitted.**

The proposed construction utilizes cementitious lapped siding, trim, and panels; wooden front porch details; composite porch flooring and rear railings, and PVC windows. Though lapped siding is a material that is found in the district, the subject block is characterized by brick buildings. The Commission may wish to consider if a frame building is appropriate on this block.

The following items will need to be included for final review:

1. A dimensioned context drawing illustrating the vertical relationship of the proposed new construction and the adjacent buildings
2. Details of mechanical unit and trash screening
3. Legible descriptions of proposed materials to include colors.
4. Vertical dimensions indicating the relationship of the sidewalk grade to the height of the foundation and porch as well as the height of the cornice and 3-story wing.
5. Roof Plan

6. Details of any proposed parking lot lighting and landscaping.
7. A detailed statement of how the project conforms to the *Guidelines*.