




Staff Report
City of Richmond, Virginia



Commission of Architectural Review

5. COA-155363-2024	Final Review	Meeting Date: 11/26/2024
Applicant/Petitioner:	John Wilson	
Project Description:	Construct a new rear Accessory Dwelling Unit.	
Project Location:		
Address: 2003 West Grace Street		
Historic District: West Grace Street		
High-Level Details:		
<p>The applicant requests conceptual review for constructing a two-story rear accessory dwelling unit (ADU) in the rear yard of a 2 ½-story brick Eclectic Revival dwelling, built circa 1915.</p> <p>The primary building features an applied gable combined with a mansard roof. The proposed 19-foot-tall structure consists of a single-car garage at grade, with a single ADU above, topped with a standing seam hipped roof. The garage's massing aligns with the size of the neighboring single-story garages to the west and is sited at the property line, in alignment with these structures. The ADU above the garage steps back from the rear property line and alley to minimize visual impact and create a deferential stance towards the historic neighboring structures.</p> <p>This project will require a Special Use Permit to allow for the proposed setbacks.</p>		
Staff Recommendation:	Approval, with Conditions	
Staff Contact:	Alex Dandridge, alex.dandridge@rva.gov, (804) 646-6569	
Previous Reviews:	<p>Previously reviewed conceptual application and plans in the October CAR Meeting. 10/22/24 Meeting Summary - The commissioners generally found the design of the ADU contemporary and compatible with the surrounding historic context. While there was consensus that the second-story setback is a successful feature, several commissioners expressed that a flush two-story design fronting the alley would also be acceptable. There were suggestions to adjust the building footprint or narrow its design to meet setback requirements. Concerns about the cantilevered overhang on the house-facing elevation were addressed, as the revised plans remove this feature. Overall, the design was deemed reasonable, with flexibility for either a setback or flush two-story form.</p>	

Conditions for Approval	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any additional items required by zoning that do not radically alter the proposed design be submitted for administrative review and approval. Staff recommends that any associated exhaust vents or fans for the new equipment be installed in a way that minimizes visual impact from the public right-of-way.
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Staff Analysis

Guideline Reference	Reference Text	Analysis
Standards for New Construction: Residential Outbuildings, pg. 51 #1-4.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <i>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> <i>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> <i>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> <i>Prefabricated yard structures are discouraged. Screening will be considered as a mitigating factor for the installation of these structures. However, prefabricated structures will still be reviewed for compatibility using the criteria developed in this section.</i> 	<p>The primary dwelling features an applied gable and mansard-style roof, while the proposed ADU (Accessory Dwelling Unit) will incorporate a shallowly pitched hipped roof with a 3 ½" / 1'-0" slope. While this roof form differs from the primary residence and the majority of neighboring secondary buildings, a similarly designed hipped garage with an ADU is present at 2000 Monument Avenue. Therefore, staff finds that the proposed roof form, though distinct, will remain generally compatible with the roof styles typical of the surrounding historic neighborhood.</p> <p>The ADU will be situated in the rear yard, directly facing the alley, an appropriate location for the proposed auxiliary building. The proposed use of brick clad siding is also appropriate as it is in keeping with materials commonly found within the surrounding area.</p> <p>Staff finds that the massing, material, and location of the ADU is generally appropriate.</p> <p>The ADU will feature four (4) aluminum clad, dark bronze, casement windows with a larger window on the West side of the second story. The proposed windows appear consistent with the overall character and design of the historic neighborhood.</p> <p>The ADU will be smaller than the primary dwelling unit and located towards the rear of the property, clearly identifying it as a secondary structure.</p>
Standards for New Construction: Fences & Walls, pg. 51 #1-3	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Fence, wall, and gate designs should reflect the scale of the historic structures they surround, as well as the character of nearby fences, walls, and gates.</i> <i>Fence, wall, or gate materials should relate to building materials commonly found in the neighborhood.</i> <i>Privacy fences along the side and rear of a property should be constructed of wood of an appropriate design. Privacy</i> 	<p>The plans proposes a new 6' tall wooden privacy fence to be constructed on the West side of the proposed garage.</p> <p>Staff finds that the materials and location for the proposed privacy fence is appropriate and would be consistent with the design and character of the surrounding neighborhood.</p>

	<i>fences are not appropriate in front of a historic building.</i>	
Standards for Site Improvements: Fences & Walls, pg. 78 #1, #6, #9	6. <i>A new fence or wall should be constructed using materials and designs appropriate to the District. Height restrictions are governed by the Zoning Ordinance.</i>	The applicant's plans propose a rear wooden privacy fence which Staff finds appropriate given the general designs and materials found within the surrounding neighborhood. <u>Staff recommends conditional approval provided applicant is compliant regarding any existing zoning requirements.</u>
Standards for Rehabilitation: HVAC Equipment, pg. 68 #1-4	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>New units should be placed in the side or rear yards so as to minimize their visual impact. Side yard units should be located as far away from the front of the building as possible.</i> 3. <i>HVAC equipment on the ground should be appropriately screened with fencing or vegetation.</i> 4. <i>Exhaust vents or fans should be installed where their visibility is minimized and with the least impact on historic materials.</i> 	The applicant proposes installing a wooden privacy fence on the western side of the new auxiliary building to store trash and recycling bins, as well as to screen HVAC or other mechanical equipment. Placing the equipment in the rear yard, behind the fence, effectively minimizes its visual impact and aligns with the Commission's Guidelines. <u>Staff recommends that any associated exhaust vents or fans for the new equipment be installed in a way that minimizes visual impact from the public right-of-way.</u>

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. 2003 West Grace Street - Grace Street façade looking North



Figure 2. 2003 West Grace Street - Rear façade of property looking South



Figure 3. 2001 West Grace Street, Neighboring property to East of site.



Figure 4. South side of alley opposite of project site, looking West.

