

**COMMISSION OF ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW  
STAFF REPORT  
May 24, 2016 Meeting**

25. CAR No. 16-082 (M. Jareau)

**2411 M Street  
Union Hill Old and Historic District**

**Project Description:**

**Construct a new 3-story, mixed use  
building with an enclosed rooftop  
amenity room and terraces**

**Staff Contact:**

**K. Chen**

The applicant requests conceptual review and comment to construct a three-story, mixed use building with an enclosed rooftop amenity room and terraces on a vacant lot in the Union Hill Old and Historic District. This project includes the lot created by the demolition of 2416 Jefferson Avenue (application No. 16-083, agenda item no. 17)

The proposed new construction will be three-story masonry building with a rooftop amenity room. The project will encompass nearly the entire triangular block bound by Jefferson Avenue, M and 24<sup>th</sup> streets. The eastern end of Jefferson Avenue, as it approaches 25<sup>th</sup> Street, is commercial in nature. There is a mixture of one-story and two-story commercial buildings. Twenty-Fifth Street also has a mixture of residential and commercial buildings, and some residential buildings that have been converted to commercial uses. The majority of the buildings fronting 25<sup>th</sup> street are 2-stories in height and a few have higher gable roof lines. The buildings on M and 24<sup>th</sup> street are primarily 2 to 2 ½ story frame residential buildings. The ground floor will be composed primarily of storefront glazing for a variety of commercial – retail and office -- activities. Limited parking will be accommodated within the building and will be accessed by a single entry point centered on M Street. The second story is residential in scale with paired 2/2 windows and inset balconies. The bays of the first and second stories are organized by pilasters. The corner at M and 24<sup>th</sup> streets rises to a full three stories for approximately 3 bays in each direction while the rest of the third story is set back approximately 5 feet from the face of the building. The material for the recessed third story will also be different from the lower two stories thus creating a strong edge between the second and third stories and reducing the impact of the height. The rooftop amenity space is envisioned to be largely transparent and set towards the center of the building. Mechanical units will be located on the roof and screened by the parapet.

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* and the resulting comments follow.

### **Staff Findings based on Commission of Architectural Review Guidelines**

#### **STANDARDS FOR NEW CONSTRUCTION**

*All new residential and commercial construction, whether in the form of additions or entire buildings, should be compatible with the historic features that characterize their 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 building or buildings in its setting. However, compatibility does not mean duplicating the existing buildings or environment. In order to avoid creating a false sense of history, new construction should also be discernible from the old. Perhaps the best way to think about a compatible new building (or addition) is that it should be a good neighbor; one that enhances the character of the existing district and respects its historic context, rather than being an exact (and misleading) reproduction of another building.*

Staff found that the proposed new construction is largely compatible with the historic features that characterizes its setting and context. The setting and context is a mixture of one, two and 2 ½ story residential and commercial buildings. The building massing and size is significantly larger than the adjacent historic buildings but the design minimizes the impact by creating a transparent, human scale first story and stepping back the third story and roof top amenity to reduce the impact of the height. The use of pilasters to organize and separate the bays also reduces the scale of the building. The use of brick for the lower two stories is compatible with the brick commercial buildings in vicinity. The simplification of the design and the lack of ornamentation compliments the nearby commercial buildings and does not conflict with the adjacent residential buildings.

Staff has not reviewed the conceptual design with Zoning for compliance.

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

- 1) A site plan with dimensions showing the setbacks of the adjacent property and its relationship to the proposed new construction. Location of trash receptacles.
- 2) Dimensioned floor plans to be able to understand the organization of the spaces and how they translate to the elevations.
- 3) Vertical dimensions indicating the relationship of the finished grade to the height of the storefront, top of second and third stories, as well as the height of the top of the rooftop amenity space.

- 4) Dimensions for the windows, doors, balcony faces and their placement above finished-floor elevation.
- 5) A dimensioned context drawing illustrating the vertical relationship of the proposed new construction and the adjacent buildings.
- 6) Materials, details and dimensions for storefront, windows, balconies, third floor, garage door and flanking panels.