



**Staff Report**  
**City of Richmond, Virginia**



**Commission of Architectural Review**

7. COA-107855-2022	Final Review	Meeting Date: 3/22/2022
<b>Applicant/Petitioner</b>	John Vetrovec	
<b>Project Description</b>	Construct a new 2-story duplex with a roof-top deck on a vacant lot.	
<b>Project Location</b>		
<b>Address: 313-315 N. 32<sup>nd</sup> St.</b>		
<b>Historic District: Chimborazo Park</b>		
<b>High-Level Details:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The applicant is proposing to construct a two-story duplex dwelling on a vacant lot.</li> <li>The units of the duplex will be divided vertically. The applicant notes that the proposed dwelling could be converted into a single-family dwelling in the future.</li> <li>The proposed dwelling features a two-story rear porch and a roof top terrace.</li> </ul>		
<b>Staff Recommendation</b>	Approval, with Conditions	
<b>Staff Contact</b>	Alyson Oliver, <a href="mailto:alyson.oliver@RVA.gov">alyson.oliver@RVA.gov</a> , 804-646-3709	
<b>Previous Reviews</b>	Conceptually reviewed at February 2022 meeting. The Commission made recommendations on the overall height of the dwelling, expressing that an increase in height may be appropriate to relate to the existing dwellings on the block. The Commission also made comments in regards to the rear stair tower projection, suggesting a redesign that is less prominent.	
<b>Staff Recommendations</b>	Staff recommends the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The proposed lap siding be smooth and without a bead. Final material and color specifications to be submitted to staff for review and approval; and</li> <li>The detached garage use a material and color palette that matches the principal dwelling. The garage should also use a simple garage door design that does not incorporate any faux hardware. Final design to be submitted to staff for review and approval.</li> <li>Final design and material specifications for the proposed fence be submitted to staff for administrative review and approval.</li> </ul>	

## Staff Analysis

Guideline Reference	Reference Text	Analysis
Siting, #2, p. 46	<i>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>	An exhibit provided by the applicant indicates that the proposed dwelling will be setback approximately 14 feet from the property line, with the porch extending into the setback by approximately 6 feet. This is consistent with the setback of other dwellings found on the same block.
Siting, #3, p. 46	<i>New buildings should face the most prominent street bordering the site.</i>	The proposed dwelling is located along North 32 <sup>nd</sup> Street and will face the street accordingly.
Form, #1, p. 46	<i>New construction should use a building form compatible with that found elsewhere in the historic district.</i>	<p>The applicant has updated the plans since the February 2022 meeting to better complement the other dwellings found on the surrounding block. The front façade now features a faux mansard roof with a cross gable, which is compatible with neighboring buildings (see the “Street Elevation” exhibit provided in the application package).</p> <p>Staff also notes that the proposed design incorporates a rear stairwell projection, which provides access to a rooftop deck. This is a form that is not typically found in the district. However, since the February 2022 meeting, the applicant has modified the plans to significantly reduce the prominence of the stairwell projection. Due to the placement of the projection and the length of the building, it is unlikely to be visible from 32<sup>nd</sup> Street, and will likely only be minimally visible from the rear alley and Marshall Street.</p> <p>Staff also notes that the folding door proposed on the north façade is not a typical element found in the district. However, finds that this feature is not prominent enough to detract from the overall design of the building.</p> <p>The applicant is proposing a detached garage at the rear of the dwelling. The proposed design is subordinate in size to the main dwelling and uses comparable materials. The simple shed roof design is compatible with other rear garages found in the district. <u>Staff recommends that the detached garage use a material and color palette that matches the principal dwelling. The garage should also use a simple garage door design that does not incorporate faux hardware. Final design to be submitted to staff for review and approval.</u></p>
Form, #2 and #3, p. 46	<p>2. <i>New residential construction should maintain the existing human scale of nearby historic residential construction in the district.</i></p> <p>3. <i>New residential construction and additions should incorporate human-scale elements such as</i></p>	The proposed dwelling incorporates an elevated, covered porch and a simple, historically-inspired cornice. These pedestrian-scale elements are consistent with other human-scale details found in the district.

	<i>cornices, porches and front steps into their design.</i>	
Height, Width, Proportion, & Massing, #1 - 3, p. 47	<i>New residential construction should respect the typical height of surrounding residential buildings.</i>	An exhibit provided by the applicant indicates that the top of the roof on the proposed dwelling will be approximately seven inches than the dwelling immediately adjacent to the south and fourteen inches taller than the dwellings to the north. Staff finds that the overall height of the proposed dwelling is generally compatible with the massing of the surrounding dwelling.  The proposed two-story dwelling features vertically aligned elements that reflect the vertical alignment and form of the other nearby dwellings in the district.
	<i>New residential construction should respect the vertical orientation of other residential properties in surrounding historic districts.</i>	
	<i>The cornice height should be compatible with that of adjacent historic buildings.</i>	
Materials and Colors, #2-4, p. 47	<i>Materials used in new residential construction should be visually compatible with original materials used throughout the district.</i>	The applicant is proposing to use smooth cementitious lap siding as the primary material on the proposed dwelling with a brick masonry foundation. These materials are generally acceptable. <u>Staff recommends that the proposed lap siding be smooth and without a bead. Final material and color specifications to be submitted to staff for review and approval.</u>  The applicant is also proposing one-over-one, aluminum clad windows, which are generally acceptable.
	<i>Paint colors used should be similar to the historically appropriate colors already found in the district.</i>	
	<i>Vinyl, asphalt, and aluminum siding are not permitted for use in City Old and Historic Districts. Other synthetic siding materials with a smooth, untextured finish may be allowed in limited cases, but approval by the Commission is always required.</i>	
Mechanical Equipment, p. 68	<i>The visual impact of new mechanical equipment should be minimized to protect the historic character of the district.</i>	Staff notes that HVAC units and any other mechanical equipment will be screened from visibility from the street and alley by the proposed privacy fence and rear garage.
Administrative Approval for Fences	<i>Fences may approved administratively by staff.</i>	Proposed fences must meet the standards outlines in the City of Richmond Code of Ordinances. <u>Staff recommends that the final design and material specifications for the proposed fence be submitted to staff for administrative review and approval.</u>



# Figures



Figure 1. Vacant Lot. The proposed dwelling will be located on the southern (to the right) portion of the property.

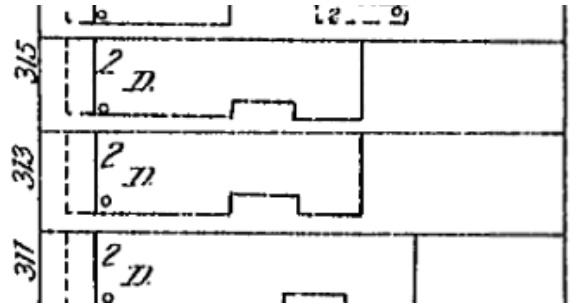


Figure 2. 1924-1925 Sanborn map



Figure 3. View of existing structure across the street from the subject parcel, including a recent infill development (second from left).



Figure 4. Historic photo of the subject parcel (c.a. 1970).