



Staff Report
City of Richmond, Virginia



Commission of Architectural Review

5.COA-160046-2025	Final Review	Meeting Date: 1/28/2025
Applicant/Petitioner	Jeffrey Sadler	
Project Description	Construct a new three-story multi-family building.	
Project Location		
Address: 401 W Marshall Street		
Historic District: Jackson Ward		
High-Level Details: The applicant proposes to subdivide the lot at 401 W. Marshall Street and construct a new three-story multifamily building. Currently, there is a frame, Greek Revival Style dwelling dating to the mid-19 th century located on the eastern half of the parcel. The new building will have a projecting western bay on the façade, as well as a three-story front porch. It will be clad in horizontal composite siding and brick veneer. This project will require a Special Use Permit.		
Staff Recommendation	Approval, with Conditions	
Staff Contact	Alex Dandridge, alex.dandridge@rva.gov, (804) 646-6569	
Previous Reviews	The Commission conceptually reviewed this application at the September 2024 meeting. Specifically, the Commission asked the applicant to show the location of trash receptacles and its screening. They also asked that the applicant consider rearranging the interior of the building to bring the façade of the building closer into alignment with the historic buildings on the block. It was asked that the applicant consider an uncovered porch on the third-story façade. The historic buildings at 207-209 E. Leigh Street were referenced as being good examples of the proposed building typology in Jackson Ward, and that they could be used to inform the design of the proposed building.	
Staff Recommendations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Height of the cornice be shown on the building plans, not only for the proposed building, but also 405 West Marshall Street.• Brick veneer on the east elevation be extended so that the east elevation appears to only feature one material, or some other solution that reduces the visibility of the transition from brick to siding. Final design solution and material selections to be submitted to staff for administrative approval.• The ceilings of the front porches have a finished appearance, using breadboard or some other material to cover the joists and hardware.• Staff recommends that the final window design have either a	

	<p>one-over-one, two-over-two, or six-over-six pane configuration to be in-keeping with historic window design throughout the district. Final window and door specification to be submitted for administrative approval.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Location of trash and screening mechanism be included on the final building plans.
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Staff Analysis

Guideline Reference	Reference Text	Analysis
Standards For New Construction, page 46	<i>All new residential and commercial construction, whether in the form of additions or entire buildings, should be compatible with the historic features that characterize the 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 buildings in its setting.</i>	Buildings within the Jackson Ward City Old and Historic District are characterized by full-width front porches and large windows. Depending on the style, some buildings have ornate cornices and highly decorative cast iron work. Some buildings are less ornate, but still feature a cornice element and porches that address the street. Most buildings have similar setbacks and are two stories tall, with some three-story buildings.
Standards For New Construction: Siting, page 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>	<p>The front setback will be 15 feet, which is the prevailing front setback on the block, and typical of the district. The side yard setbacks will be five or six feet which is comparable to existing side yard setbacks in the district.</p> <p>The building will face the most prominent street, West Marshall Street.</p>
Standards For New Construction: Form, page 46	<i>1. New construction should use a building form compatible with that found elsewhere in the historic district. Building form refers to the specific combination of massing, size, symmetry, proportions, projections, and roof shapes that lend identity to a building.</i>	<p>The new building will be three stories tall. The subject block has a mix of two- and three-story buildings. Adjacent to the new building there is a two-story frame building to the east (401 West Marshall Street) and a three-story masonry building to the west (405 West Marshall Street).</p> <p>Staff finds that a three-story building is appropriate in this location.</p> <p>The new building will feature a front projecting bay. While projecting bays are common within the City's OHD's, they often do not project far past the face of the building. While the face of the building aligns with those of neighboring buildings, the projection aligns more with the depth of the porches. Porches are more transparent than the proposed projection, and staff had concerns during the last review that the projection will interrupt the street wall and should not sit so proud of the neighboring historic buildings.</p> <p>Since the conceptual review, the applicant has reduced the depth of the projecting bay on the façade from seven feet to 4 feet, six inches. The face of the building will align with that of the neighboring historic building at 405 West Marshall Street.</p> <p>Staff finds that the revision to the depth of the front projection is appropriate.</p>

Standards For New Construction: Form, page 46	<p><i>2. New residential construction should maintain the existing human scale of nearby historic, residential construction in the district.</i></p>	<p>The new building will maintain the existing human-scale of the block, having a multi-story front porch that addresses the street.</p>
Standards for New Construction: Height, Width, Proportion & Massing, page 47	<p><i>1. New residential construction should respect the typical height of surrounding residential buildings.</i></p> <p><i>2. New residential construction should respect the vertical orientation typical of other residential properties in surrounding historic districts. New designs that call for wide massing should look to the project's local district for precedent. For example, full-block- long row house compositions are rare in Richmond. New residential buildings that occupy more than one third of a block's face should still employ bays as an organizational device, but the new building should read as a single piece of architecture.</i></p> <p><i>3. The cornice height should be compatible with that of adjacent historic buildings.</i></p>	<p>The windows and doors will be vertically aligned.</p> <p>Based on the renderings provided by the applicant, it appears that the third-story cornice of the new building will generally align with the third-story cornice of 405 West Marshall Street. To have a better understanding of the height of the new building as compared to the neighboring buildings, Staff recommends that the applicant submit the cornice height of the new building <u>and the cornice height of 405 W. Marshall Street with the final review.</u></p> <p>The applicant has indicated in the plans that the cornice height will be at 35 feet.</p> <p>During the conceptual review, it was recommended that the roof of the front porch be dropped lower than the top of the building, and below a cornice line that follows the top of the building and the projecting bay's roofline, and that the porch roof on the third story be differentiated from the cornice line of building and have a simple roof profile and crown.</p> <p>The applicant has revised the plans so that there is not a roof over the front, third story balcony. Because of this revision, the cornice line follows the third story roof line of the building, and around the projecting bay.</p> <p>Staff finds this revision to the plans to meeting the <i>Guidelines</i>.</p> <p>The cornice height of the proposed building appears to align with that of the neighboring historic building at 405 West Marshall Street. <u>Staff recommends that the height of the cornice be shown on the building plans, not only for the proposed building, but also 405 West Marshall Street.</u></p>
Standards for New Construction: Materials & Colors, page 47	<p><i>2. Materials used in new residential construction should be visually compatible with original materials used throughout the district.</i></p>	<p>During the conceptual review, the exterior materials included a brick foundation and horizontal siding. While these materials were generally in-keeping with context of the district, brick was mentioned during the CAR meeting as being an acceptable material as well.</p> <p>The applicant has revised the plans to retain the brick foundation, but also to include fiber cement, seven-inch exposure lap siding on the rear and side of the building, but also a brick veneer on the façade which will wrap onto the side of the building to the depth of approximately one bay.</p> <p>Staff finds that the brick on the front of the building is in-keeping wit the district; however, does have concerns about the transition from brick to siding on the east elevation.</p> <p>Because the existing building located at 401 West Marshall Street is a bit shorter than the proposed building, the east elevation of the proposed building may be visible. If the transition from brick to siding is visible in</p>

		<p>this location, it could emphasize that the front brick is only a veneer. <u>Staff recommends that the brick on the east elevation be extended so that the east elevation appears to only feature one material, or some other solution that reduces the visibility of the transition from brick to siding. Final design solution and material selections to be submitted to staff for administrative approval.</u></p> <p>The west elevation should not be very visible given the shallow side yard and neighboring three-story building, and the rear will only feature one cladding material.</p> <p>When more ornate, multi-story façade porches are present on buildings nearby, they often feature a finished ceiling, rather than exposed ceiling rafters or the upper floors joists.</p> <p><u>Staff recommends that the ceilings of the front porches have a finished appearance, using breadboard or some other material to cover the joists and hardware.</u></p>
Standards For New Construction: Doors and Windows, page 56	<p><i>2. The size, proportion and spacing patterns of door and window openings on free-standing new construction should be compatible with patterns established in the district.</i></p>	<p>The drawings submitted by the applicant indicate that the windows and doors will be vertically aligned. The windows shown in the plans have a two-over-one pane configuration. Staff recommends that the final window design have either a one-over-one, two-over-two, or six-over-six pane configuration to be in-keeping with historic window design throughout the district. <u>Final window and door specification to be submitted for administrative approval.</u></p>
Mechanical Equipment, HVAC Equipment, pg. 68	<p><i>2. Rooftop units should be located so that they are minimally visible from the public right-of-way, and screening should be considered.</i></p> <p><i>3. HVAC equipment on the ground should be appropriately screened with fencing or vegetation.</i></p>	<p>The applicant has submitted a roof plan that indicates the exterior HVAC equipment will be located at the center of the roof. Given the height of the building, the HVAC equipment should be minimally visible from the public right-of-way, or not visible at all.</p> <p>Location for trash receptacles was not included on the site plans. <u>Staff recommends that the location of trash and screening mechanism be included on the final building plans.</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 (next page)

Figure 1. 401 W. Marshall Street façade.



Figure 2. 401 W. Marshall Street side and rear elevations.



Figure 3. Context. North side of W. Marshall Street.



Figure 4. Context. South side of W. Marshall Street.



Figure 5. Looking south across W. Marshall Street at vacant portion of lot.

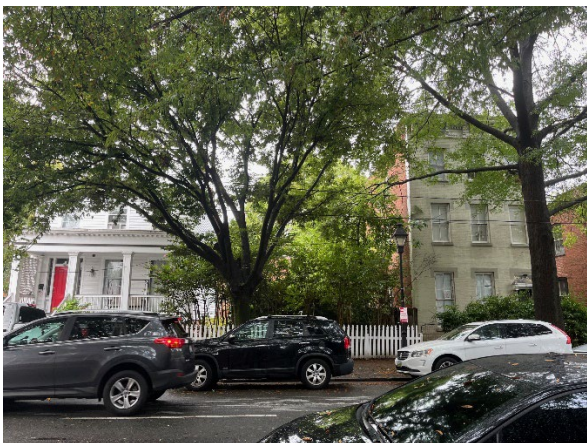


Figure 6. 405 W. Marshall Street façade.



Figure 7. 1905 Sanborn Map.

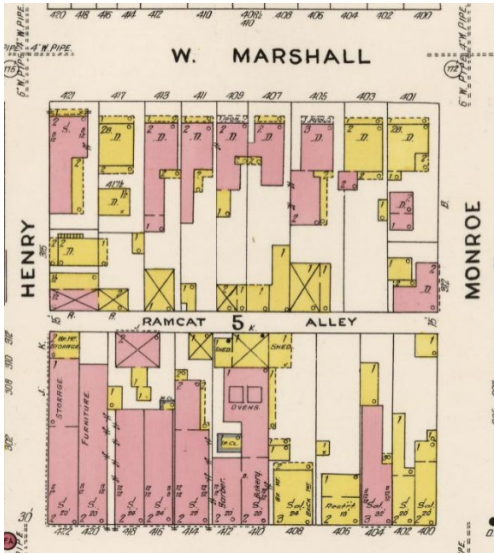


Figure 8. Historic photo showing 401-405 W. Marshall Street. 1950s. *Valentine Museum Digital Archives*, accessed 9/19/2024.



Figure 9. 207-209 E. Leigh Street. Multi-family buildings in Jackson Ward with multi-story front porches. (one block outside of the district).

