

9. COA-066753-2020

PUBLIC HEARING DATE

April 28, 2020

PROPERTY ADDRESS

2412-2416 Venable Street

DISTRICT

Union Hill

APPLICANT

Eastern Edge Development

STAFF CONTACT

C. Jones

Commission of Architectural Review

STAFF REPORT

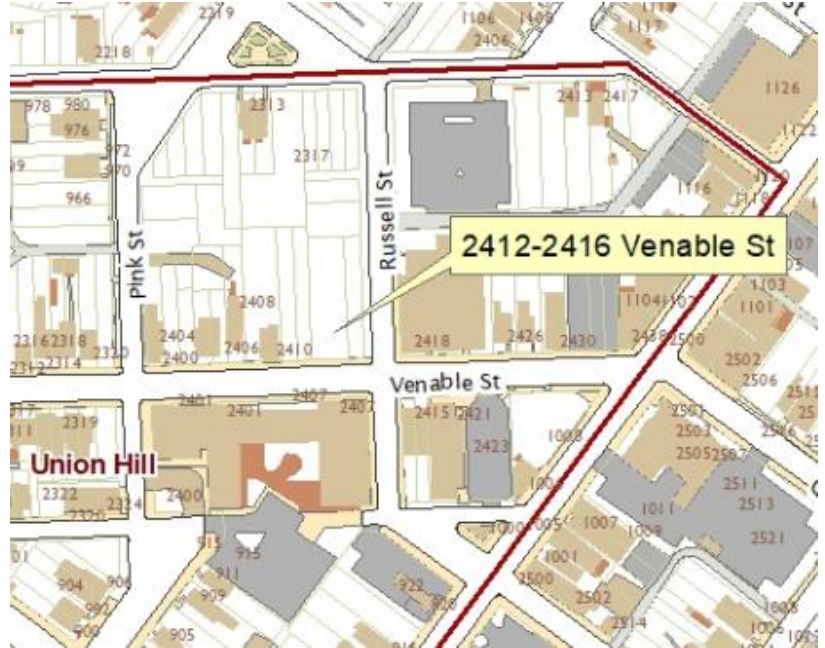


PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Construct nine new, single-family townhouses.

PROJECT DETAILS

- The applicant proposes to construct nine new, single-family townhouses on a vacant lot at the corner of Venable Street and Russell Street.
- The nine townhouses will be divided into two rectangular-shaped masses and will be connected by a ground floor vehicle opening and a section of the corner unit forming an L-shaped building. Five units within one mass will front onto Venable Street and wrap around to have four units that front onto Russell Street.
- The townhouses will be slab on grade, wood frame construction. The five units on Venable will be three stories (32 feet) in height. The four units along Russell Street will be three stories with a rooftop mezzanine for a total height of 41 feet. They will be three bays wide with a full-width front porch separated with planters.
- Proposed materials include a TPO roof, masonry and fiber cement siding, and fiberglass windows and doors.



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STAFF RECOMMENDATION

APPROVE WITH CONDITIONS

PREVIOUS REVIEWS

The Commission previously reviewed this application at the June 25th, 2019 meeting. During conceptual review staff commented that the two masses are not sited in a manner that is consistent with the historic development patterns in the district and recommended the siting be redesigned to reinforce the typical street walls on side streets and to address the corner property guidelines. Staff recommended that the design include human scale elements such as front steps and porches and that the perforated metal panels are not a material used to mimic openings in the surrounding district. In response to a question from the Commission, staff confirmed that there had never been a house facing onto Russell, the side street.

In terms of the design, the Commission suggested that if the applicant wants to build three stories, the English basement design option could be explored, as could stepping down the last unit of the building slightly to help the side of the building reference its neighbors. The Commission confirmed staffs' suggestion that the back set of units could be rotated to face Russell Street and suggested that this could also conceal the parking. The

Commission expressed support for adding front porches and stairs to the design, and suggested that various styles for these, and for the railings, could be considered. The Commission also recommended against the Juliet balconies and the perforated metal panels.

The Commission heard the application again at the January 28, 2020 meeting. During this meeting the Commission primarily focused on the siting, and reiterated that the rear/north mass should be oriented towards Russell Street, the Russell Street-facing elevation creates a “dead wall” without an exit or entry, and it should read as a façade. The Commission also reiterated the idea of stepping one end unit down. The Commission also discussed the mezzanine section on the rear/north mass, without making a determination on its appropriateness given the variety of building heights in the surrounding area. The Commission voted to defer the application to allow the applicant to meet with staff and discuss the Commission feedback.

The applicant has met with staff and has revised the plans based on Commission and staff feedback. The applicant has reduced the number of units by one, allowing the rear/north mass to face Russell Street. The two sections are now connected by the vehicle opening, a section of the corner unit above it, and a third story terrace.

STAFF RECOMMENDED CONDITIONS

- the recessed sections between the units be removed to create a flat wall surface for the façade, and vertical trim be used to separate the units
- the brick be a modern finish with a consistent color and texture, the siding be smooth and without a bead and a body color found on the Commission palette, and all materials and colors, including trim details, columns, any exterior lighting, and porch canopies, be submitted to staff for review and approval
- the applicant remove the projecting brick sills
- the applicant submit a detailed window and door schedule to staff for review and approval
- the applicant use wood or aluminum clad wood windows and that specifications be submitted to staff for review and approval
- the applicant work with staff to redesign the railing to be more in keeping with the materials and designs appropriate to the District, such as brick piers with railings between them
- the applicant submit the proposed fence design and materials to staff for review and approval
- the proposed fence for the western edge of the site be continued along the northern edge of the property to screen the storage and dumpster area
- a modern light grey metal railing or mesh screen be used for the terrace and rooftop railings
- the applicant submit a line of sight drawing, and update the massing studies to indicate the visibility of the rooftop HVAC equipment

STAFF ANALYSIS

Siting, pg. 46, #s2-3	<p><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>	<p>The applicant has responded to staff and Commission feedback regarding the siting of the new construction. The applicant has reduced the number of units by one and rotated the north/rear mass to face Russell Street. Staff finds that this reinforces the typical street wall and siting found in the district.</p>
	<p><i>3. New buildings should face the most prominent street bordering the site.</i></p>	<p>The building façades face the streets. Staff finds that this is in keeping with the <i>Guidelines</i>.</p>
Form, pg. 46 #s1-3	<p><i>1. New construction should use a building form compatible with that found elsewhere in the historic district.</i></p>	<p>The surrounding area is a mix of free-standing residential buildings and attached and semi-attached row houses. Staff finds the proposed attached buildings are in keeping with the surrounding district. However, staff finds the recessed sections are not in keeping with the attached rowhouses found in the surrounding</p>

		area. Staff recommends <u>the recessed sections between the units be removed to create a flat wall surface for the façade and vertical trim be used to separate the units.</u>
	<i>2. New residential construction should maintain the existing human scale of nearby historic residential construction in the district.</i>	The proposed Venable Street units are three stories in height and will be taller than the other buildings on this side of Venable Street. The Russell Street section will have a fourth story mezzanine and wood privacy screens, features not commonly found in the district.
	<i>3. New residential construction and additions should incorporate human-scale elements such as cornices, porches and front steps into their design.</i>	The new construction will be at-grade with shallow front stairs. All of the units will have a one-story, full-width porch separated by planters. Staff notes there are a number of properties in the area that are built at grade with front porches. The proposed design includes brick corbelling or a metal cornice line.
Height, Width, Proportion, & Massing, pg. 47, #s1-3	<i>1. New residential construction should respect the typical height of surrounding residential buildings.</i>	Based on the elevations provided, the buildings will be taller than the other single-family buildings in the area.
	<i>2. New residential construction should respect the vertical orientation typical of other residential properties in surrounding historic districts.</i>	In general, the proposed buildings will have vertically aligned façades.
	<i>3. The cornice height should be compatible with that of adjacent historic buildings.</i>	Based on the elevations provided, the cornice height will not align with the neighboring building.
Materials and Colors, pg. 47, #s2-4	<i>2. Materials used in new residential construction should be visually compatible with original materials used throughout the district.</i>	The applicant proposes a mix of brick and fiber cement siding. Staff finds that this is compatible with the original materials in the district. Staff recommends approval of these materials with the following conditions: <u>the brick be a modern finish with a consistent color and texture, the siding be smooth and without a bead and a body color found on the Commission palette, and all materials and colors, including trim details, columns, porch canopies, and any exterior lighting be submitted to staff for review and approval.</u> Staff also notes that the brick sills intersect with the horizontal band and recommends the applicant <u>remove the projecting brick sills to create a flat band</u> in a manner similar to the second story of 2108 Venable Street.
New Construction, Doors and Windows, pg.	<i>3. The size, proportion, and spacing patterns of doors and window openings on free standing, new construction should be</i>	The façades utilize a vertically aligned fenestration pattern, consistent with the other buildings in the historic district. Staff notes that some of the openings appear to be a mixture of casement and fixed windows. Staff

49 #3	<i>compatible with patterns established within the district.</i>	recommends approval of the fenestration pattern with the condition that <u>the applicant submit a detailed window and door schedule to staff for review and approval.</u> Staff also notes that the application indicates both fiberglass and aluminum clad windows. Staff requests <u>the applicant use wood or aluminum clad wood windows and that specifications be submitted to staff for review and approval.</u>
New Construction, Porches and Porch Details, pg. 49 #3	<i>3. New porch railing designs, compatible with the overall design of the building, will also be considered.</i>	The applicant proposes a three-foot-tall brick wall for a porch railing. Staff believes this will create the appearance of solid wall along Venable and Russell Streets.
Standards for Site Improvements, Fences and Walls, pg. 78, #3, 4, 6	<p><i>3. If not original to a site, new street-front fences, walls, and gates should be compatible with the historic structure in design, materials, and location, and should be based on physical or documentary evidence from the site. In instances where physical or documentary evidence does not exist, the proposed fence, wall, or gate should be compatible in design, materials, and location, and should look to precedent on the block face or the block face opposite, or within the district, but not outside the district. By following this guidance, in some circumstances, permission for new fences, walls, or gates may be granted.</i></p> <p><i>4. In cases of new infill construction, the guidance above for precedent within the district must be followed. Suitable design, materials, and location will vary by district.</i></p> <p><i>6. A new fence or wall should be constructed using materials and designs appropriate to the District.</i></p>	<p>Staff notes that there are not brick walls in the surrounding area, or in the Union Hill City and Old Historic District in general.</p> <p>Staff recommends <u>the applicant work with staff to redesign the railing to be more in keeping with the materials and designs appropriate to the District.</u> Staff recommends the applicant <u>consider brick piers with railings between them to be in keeping with the brick piers located at 2410 Venable Street and 2306-2314 Burton Street.</u></p>
New Construction, Standards for New Construction: Corner Properties – Residential, pg. 48	<p><i>1. Secondary elevations of corner properties should reference massing similar to other corner locations in the historic district.</i></p> <p><i>2. The material used in the primary elevation should be continued along the second, corner elevation.</i></p> <p><i>4. Windows and doors on the secondary, corner elevation should be organized following the principals of the primary elevation: windows should be proportioned appropriately, aligned vertically, and arranged as though designing a primary elevation.</i></p>	<p>The proposed design plans include a metal canopy on the Venable Street elevation that wraps the corner and extends along Russell Street. Additionally, the brick materials and header and sill courses also wrap the building and are replicated on the Russell Street elevations.</p> <p>The fenestration pattern on the Venable Street facades and Russell Street are designed in a consistent manner. Staff finds the design plans address the corner property <i>Guidelines</i>.</p>
New Construction, Fences and	<i>3. Privacy fences along the side and rear of a property should be constructed of wood of</i>	The site plan indicates a fence along the western edge of the property. Staff recommends the fence be approved with the

Walls, pg. 51 #3	<i>an appropriate design. Privacy fences are not appropriate in front of a historic building.</i>	condition that <u>the applicant submit the proposed fence design and materials to staff for review and approval.</u>
Standards for New Construction, Materials and Colors, pg. 53 #s5-6	<p>5. <i>Rooftop mechanical equipment should be located as discretely as possible to limit visibility. In addition, appropriate screening should be provided to conceal equipment from view. When rooftop railings are required for seating areas or for safe access to mechanical equipment, the railings should be as unobtrusive as possible, in order to minimize their appearance and visual impact on the surrounding district.</i></p> <p>6. <i>For larger-scale projects that involve communal garbage collection (such as dumpsters or other large collection device), these garbage receptacles should be located away from the primary elevation or elevations of the building (preferably to the rear) and screened from view.</i></p>	<p>The applicant proposes to locate the HVAC equipment on the roof of the new units. Staff requests <u>the applicant submit a line of sight drawing, and update the massing studies to indicate the visibility of the rooftop HVAC equipment.</u></p> <p>The applicant proposes a wood privacy screen along the Russell Street elevation. Staff suggests the applicant utilize a less visually intrusive material for the rooftop screening and the connector area between the Venable Street and Russel Street masses. <u>Staff recommends the use of either a modern light grey metal railing or mesh screen, in light grey, for the railings.</u></p> <p>The applicant proposes to locate a storage container and the dumpsters in the northwest corner of the property. Staff recommends <u>the proposed fence for the western edge of the site be continued along the northern edge of the property to screen the storage and dumpster units.</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

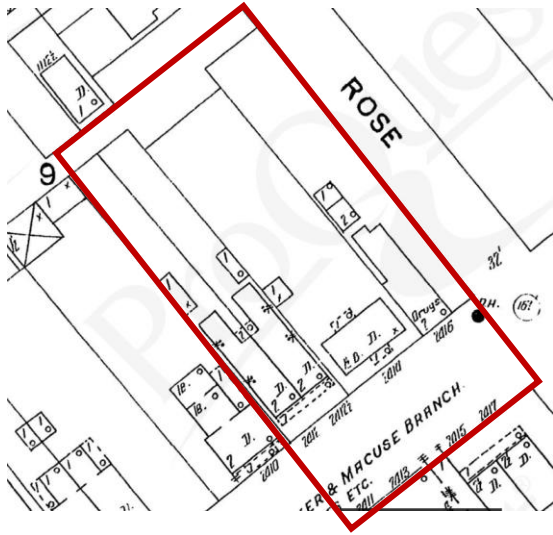


Figure 1. 1905 Sanborn Map.

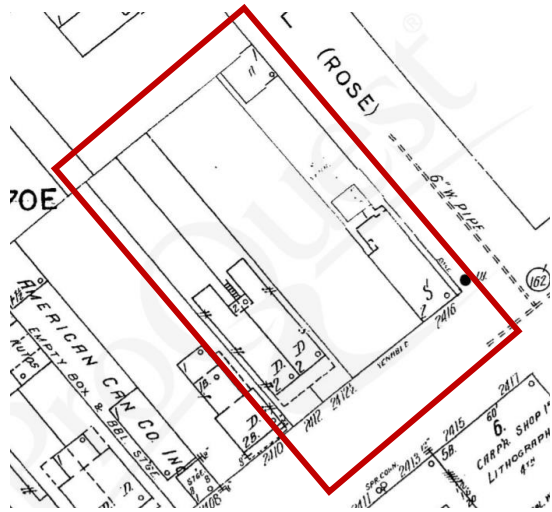


Figure 2. 1919-1952 Sanborn Map.



Figure 3. 2412-2416 Venable Street



Figure 4. 2412-2416 Venable Street, view from Russell Street.



Figure 5. Former warehouse, now residential building.



Figure 6. 2410 Venable Street.