



Commission of Architectural Review

7. COA-186158-2026	Conceptual Review	Meeting Date: 6/23/2026
Applicant/Petitioner	Marisa Perez	
Project Description	Construct three-story multifamily building on vacant parcel	
Project Location		
Address: 3008 Monument Ave		
Historic District: Monument Avenue		
<p>High-Level Details:</p> <p>The application proposes a new three-story, six-unit multifamily building on a vacant parcel located on the north side of Monument Avenue. The proposed building would occupy nearly the full width of the lot and contain six one-bedroom residential units organized around a central entrance lobby. The design includes front and rear porches for each unit, exterior rear stairs, and a shared rear courtyard space.</p> <p>The proposed design references nearby Monument Avenue apartment buildings through the use of monumental porch elements, classical columns, decorative stonework, slate roofing, and formal symmetry. The project will require Special Use Permit approval to address zoning requirements related to density and setbacks.</p>		
Staff Recommendation	Conceptual Review	
Staff Contact	Yara Iwaz, Yara.Iwaz@RVA.gov, (804)646-6031	
Previous Reviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> N/A 	
Staff Recommendations	<p>Staff recommends further study of the building's relationship to adjacent properties and the established setback pattern of the district. Revised designs should explore ways to better reinforce the detached-building character of Monument Avenue, and to reflect the established street wall pattern and setbacks.</p> <p>Staff recommends approval of the general height approach. Staff recommends revisiting the overall massing to better reflect the proportions of the site and the architectural patterns found on similar sized parcels within the district.</p>	

	<p>Staff recommends revising the façade composition to better reflect the scale and proportions of the lot and avoid the appearance of a compressed larger building type.</p> <p>Staff recommends simplifying the Monument Avenue façade, and considering developing a more contemporary architectural expression. This can include reducing or simplifying elements such as classical orders, dentils, carved panels, and other decorative features that closely replicate historic architecture. Compatibility with the district can be achieved through scale, massing, proportions, materials, and façade rhythm rather than direct reproduction of historic ornament.</p> <p>Staff recommends that any future revisions associated with the Special Use Permit process be submitted for review and approval.</p> <p>Staff recommends simplifying the rear elevation to better reflect district precedent. This can include a simpler roof form, such as a shed roof, and a reduction in the complexity of the rear fenestration.</p>
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Staff Analysis

Surrounding Context		
<p>The subject property is located on the north side of Monument Avenue between North Belmont Avenue and Wayne Street. The parcel is currently vacant and represents one of the few remaining undeveloped sites along this section of Monument Avenue. The lot is presently utilized as a surface parking area situated between two multi-unit residential developments.</p> <p>Located near Maury Place and the former site of the Maury monument, the surrounding landscape reflects many of the architectural motifs that characterize Monument Avenue. Neighboring properties exhibit a variety of revival styles, including Classical Revival, Greek Revival, Georgian Revival, and Colonial Revival influences. Common architectural features include prominent front porches, multi-story columns, porticos and decorative cornices.</p> <p>Properties adjacent to North Belmont Avenue display a range of revival-style residences as well as more recent three-story dwellings that incorporate traditional elements such as columns, porches, and articulated facades. Further west along Monument Avenue, numerous homes exhibit Georgian Revival characteristics, including dormers, symmetrical elevations, and formal street-facing facades. To the east, several three-story residential buildings reflect Classical Revival influences, with full-height porches extending across multiple stories.</p> <p>The surrounding blocks are characterized primarily by detached residences and apartment buildings on landscaped lots. Buildings generally maintain side setbacks that provide separation between structures, contributing to the spacious boulevard character that distinguishes Monument Avenue.</p>		
Guideline Reference	Reference Text	Analysis
Standards for New Construction: Siting, page 46	<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. In cases where the adjoining buildings have different setbacks, the setback for the new building should be based on the historical pattern for the block.</i></p>	<p><i>Street Walls and Setbacks</i></p> <p>Monument Avenue is characterized by detached buildings and consistent side-yard setbacks that contribute to the district's distinctive boulevard character. Although the proposed building introduces limited setbacks towards the rear of the site, the overall design reads as a fully attached structure extending across nearly the entire width of the lot. The result is a continuous street wall condition that is not typical of the established development pattern along Monument Avenue. Staff finds that the proposal introduces a level of density more commonly</p>

		<p>associated with urban rowhouse districts than with the detached residential character of Monument Avenue.</p> <p><u>Staff recommends further study of the building's relationship to adjacent properties and the established setback pattern of the district. Revised designs should explore ways to better reinforce the detached-building character of Monument Avenue, and to reflect the established street wall pattern and setbacks.</u></p>
<p>Standards for New Construction: Height, Width, Proportion & Massing, page 47</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>New residential construction should respect the typical height of surrounding residential buildings.</i> 2. <i>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 face should still employ bays as an organizational device, but the new building should read as a single piece of architecture.</i> 3. <i>The cornice height should be compatible with that of adjacent historic buildings.</i> 	<p><i>Height and Massing</i></p> <p>The proposed height is compatible with surrounding development, which includes buildings ranging from two to four stories; adjacent buildings are three-stories high and the proposed development appears appropriate in height. The proposed design features key elements and pedestrian-scale elements that speak to the street-level architectural character of Monument Avenue, such as the raised entrance, three-story balconies with robust columns, and entablatures that align with neighboring buildings.</p> <p>However, the proportional relationship between width of the lot, width of the two porticos, and architectural composition appears compressed. The design borrows from the U-shaped apartment-building typologies typically found on significantly wider sites, including paired porticos and symmetrical façade compositions. When applied to the narrow width of the subject parcel, and with the absence of side setbacks, these elements appear constrained and result in proportions that feel compressed relative to district precedents, with over-emphasized verticality.</p> <p><u>Staff recommends approval of the general height approach. Staff recommends revisiting the overall massing to better reflect the proportions of the site and the architectural patterns found on similar sized parcels within the district.</u></p>
<p>Standards for New Construction: Form, page 46</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>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. Form is greatly influenced by the architectural style of a given structure.</i> 	<p><i>Building Typology & Form</i></p> <p>The proposal introduces a building form that closely resembles larger Monument Avenue apartment buildings. However, these precedents typically occupy wider parcels and are designed with broader frontage dimensions, that allow monumental porch and entry elements to maintain appropriate proportions. The proposed design appears to draw heavily from larger Monument Avenue apartment building typologies, particularly those featuring a central entrance flanked by porticos and/or projecting wings. The design compresses these architectural features into a narrower footprint, resulting in unusually narrow porticos and bays.</p> <p>The proportions of historic buildings are often closely tied to the dimensions of their lots. Staff's review of appropriate infill precedent and comparable Monument Avenue properties indicates that lots with</p>

		<p>widths similar to the subject property, generally approximately 30 feet wide, have historically been developed with building footprints of approximately 25 feet in width and projecting bays or porticos ranging from approximately 13 to 16 feet in width. These proportions allow the projecting elements to remain visually dominant and balanced within the façade composition.</p> <p>Examples in the 2820–2830 block of Monument Avenue demonstrate how similarly sized lots have accommodated Monument Avenue architectural forms through detached building configurations, side setbacks, and a single projecting porch or bay paired with an offset entrance, allowing architectural features to remain proportional to the site while maintaining separation from neighboring structures. Staff finds the configuration of single projecting element with a side entrance to be a more appropriate approach to the site constraints.</p> <p>The building at 3001 Monument Avenue features proportions comparable to those in the proposal here; however, as a corner property with greater openness and side exposure, its massing does not read as compressed.</p> <p><u>Staff recommends revising the façade composition to better reflect the scale and proportions of the lot and avoid the appearance of a compressed larger building type.</u></p>
<p>The Secretary of the Interior, Standards for Rehabilitation, pg. 4</p>	<p><i>3. Each property shall be recognized as a physical record of its time, place and use. Changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding conjectural features or architectural elements from other buildings, shall not be undertaken.</i></p>	<p><i>Architectural expression – New construction</i></p> <p>The proposal incorporates numerous classical design elements, including robust Corinthian columns, Doric entry features, dentils, carved stone panels, and formal Monument Avenue-inspired detailing. While these elements draw from district precedents, the overall design appears to closely replicate historic architectural forms and risks creating a false sense of historical development. New construction should be compatible with historic context while remaining identifiable as a product of its own time.</p> <p>While referencing existing detailing is encouraged, distinction between historic and new construction is necessary. Staff notes that infill projects within the district including (such as 1833 Monument Ave) can successfully achieve compatibility through proportion, massing, materials, and rhythm rather than direct replication of historic architectural ornament, by creating a modern interpretation of historic fabric and simplifying some of the more ornate detailing.</p> <p><u>Staff recommends simplifying the Monument Avenue façade, and considering developing a more contemporary architectural expression. This can include reducing or simplifying elements such as classical orders, dentils, carved panels, and other decorative features that closely replicate historic</u></p>

		<u>architecture. Compatibility with the district can be achieved through scale, massing, proportions, materials, and façade rhythm rather than direct reproduction of historic ornament.</u>
Standards for New Construction: Form, page 46	1. <i>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. Form is greatly influenced by the architectural style of a given structure.</i>	<p><i>Rear Elevation</i></p> <p>The proposed rear elevation design includes a prominent gable form, large French door openings, transoms with a five-bay composition. While appropriate on a primary street-facing elevation, these features are more elaborate than is typically found on rear elevations and alley-facing portions of buildings within the district. Historically, rear elevations in the district are simpler in massing, roof form, and fenestration, with architectural emphasis concentrated on the primary façade. The proposed rear gable increases the visual complexity of the rear elevation and contributes additional massing where a simpler roof form may be more appropriate. Additionally, the fenestration patterns appear to more closely relate to the front elevation than to the typical simpler window patterns found on the more utilitarian rear alleys.</p> <p><u>Staff recommends simplifying the rear elevation to better reflect district precedent. This can include a simpler roof form, such as a shed roof, and a reduction in the complexity of the rear fenestration.</u></p>
		<p><i>Special Use Permit Process</i></p> <p>The proposal introduces six dwelling units on a narrow vacant parcel. While density itself is not necessarily incompatible with the district, the building footprint, lack of side setbacks, and attached-building character appear to be driving many of the massing and design concerns identified above. Staff notes that the project will require Special Use Permit review for density and setback considerations.</p> <p><u>Staff recommends that any future revisions associated with the Special Use Permit process be submitted for review and approval.</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: Site, viewed from Monument Ave



Figure 2: Buildings on rear alley



1833 Monument (New construction)

Lot width: ~ 32 ft
Building width: ~ 25 feet
Front porch width: ~25 feet



2826 Monument

Lot width: ~ 30 ft
Building width: ~ 25.4 feet
Portico width: ~13 feet