



City of Richmond

City Hall
900 East Broad Street

Meeting Minutes Commission of Architectural Review

Tuesday, August 25, 2020

3:30 PM

5th Floor Conference Room of City Hall

This meeting will be held through electronic communication means.

This meeting will be held through electronic communication means pursuant to and in compliance with Ordinance No. 2020-093, adopted April 9, 2020. This meeting will be open to participation through electronic communication means by the public and closed to in-person participation by the public. Less than a quorum of Richmond City Commission of Architectural Review members will assemble for this meeting in the 5th Floor Conference Room of City Hall at 900 East Broad Street in Richmond, Virginia 23219, and most Commission members and other staff will participate by teleconference/videoconference via Microsoft Teams.

Special Guidelines for Public Access and Citizen Participation:

To access or participate, or both, in the Commission of Architectural Review meeting on Tuesday, August 25th, 2020 at 3:30 PM, you have several options outlined in the following document:

[PDRPRES 2020.046](#) Public Access and Participation Instructions - Commission of Architectural Review.

Attachments: [Public Access and Participation Instructions -COMMISSION OF ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW](#)

Audio of the meeting will be streamed live online at the following web address: <https://richmondva.legistar.com/Calendar.aspx>. To listen to the meeting's live stream at the web address provided, find and click the link that reads, "In Progress" in the farthest right hand column entitled, "Video". Interested citizens who wish to speak will be given an opportunity to do so by following the outlined in the Public Access and Participation Instructions - Commission of Architectural Review document.

Citizens are encouraged to provide their comments in writing to carey.jones@richmondgov.com in lieu of speaking through audio or video means during the meeting. When submitting your comments by email, be sure to include in your email (i) your full legal name, (ii) any organizations you represent, and (iii) any economic or professional relationships that would be affected by the approval of the application on which you are commenting. The person responsible for receiving written comments is Carey L. Jones, Secretary to the Commission of Architectural Review. All written comments received via email prior to 12:00 p.m. (noon) on Tuesday, August 25, 2020, will be provided to all members of the Commission of Architectural Review prior to the beginning of the meeting and will be included in the record of the meeting.

Call to Order

Commission Chair Neville Johnson called the August 25 meeting of the Commission of Architectural Review to order at 3:34 pm.

Secretary to the Commission, Carey L. Jones, read the announcement for virtual public

meetings:

This meeting of the Commission of Architectural Review will be held as an electronic meeting pursuant to and in compliance with Ordinance 2020-093. The public has been notified of this meeting and how to participate by a notice in the Richmond Times Dispatch, and an instruction sheet posted with the agenda on the Legistar website. The public may participate in the meeting by calling *67-804-316-9457 and entering 201-932-327#. Public comment will be heard for each item on the agenda after the applicant has responded to staff recommendations. Members of the public will be limited to 3 minutes for their comments.

The person responsible for receiving the comments from the public is me, Carey L. Jones, Secretary to the Commission of Architectural Review.

Commission members are electronically present, none are physically present in City Hall.

We will be conducting a roll call vote with the Secretary stating each Commissioners name prior to voting.

Roll Call

All members of the Commission of Architectural Review participated by electronic communication means.

Staff in Attendance: Commission Secretary Carey L. Jones, Senior Planner Chelsea Jeffries, Senior Planner William Palmquist, Administrative Support Matt Everett

- Present --** 7 - * Commissioner Sanford Bond, * Commissioner Ashleigh N. Brewer, * Commissioner Kathleen Morgan, * Commissioner Sean Wheeler, * Commissioner Lawrence Pearson, * Commissioner Mitch Danese and * Neville C. Johnson Jr.
- Excused --** 1 - * Commissioner James W. Klaus

Approval of Minutes

July 14th, 2020 - Quarterly Meeting Minutes

A motion was made by Commissioner Wheeler, seconded by Commissioner Morgan, that the July 14, 2020 Quarterly Meeting minutes be approved. The motion carried by the following vote:

- Aye --** 6 - Commissioner Ashleigh N. Brewer, Commissioner Kathleen Morgan, Commissioner Sean Wheeler, Commissioner Lawrence Pearson, Commissioner Mitch Danese and Neville C. Johnson Jr.
- Excused --** 2 - Commissioner Sanford Bond and Commissioner James W. Klaus

July 28th, 2020

A motion was made by Commissioner Wheeler, seconded by Commissioner Brewer, that the July 28, 2020 Meeting minutes be approved. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye -- 6 - Commissioner Ashleigh N. Brewer, Commissioner Kathleen Morgan, Commissioner Sean Wheeler, Commissioner Lawrence Pearson, Commissioner Mitch Danese and Neville C. Johnson Jr.

Excused -- 2 - Commissioner Sanford Bond and Commissioner James W. Klaus

OTHER BUSINESS

Jackson Ward Intersection Enhancements and Public Art

Ms. Susan Glasser, the Secretary to the Public Art Commission, gave a summary about a project at the intersection of West Marshall and Brook Streets. The City of Richmond and Venture Richmond have awarded a \$25,000 Bloomberg Philanthropies Grant for Jackson Ward Intersection Enhancements and Public Art. Venture Richmond is also contributing an additional \$5,000 to this project as a result of the Park(ing) Day design/build competition the organization hosted in September of 2019. More than 200 cities applied and Richmond was one of only 16 grant-award recipients. Community partners for the project include ART 180; Big Secret; The City of Richmond; Gallery 5; Vanderbilt Properties; Venture Richmond; and Walter Parks Architects.

The purpose of the project is to increase pedestrian traffic by enhancing safety and street life; to create a revitalized and beautified environment in an underutilized public space; and to promote civic engagement in the neighborhood. The project consists of three conceptual elements that will transform the intersection: a pedestrian plaza, an intersection mural, and a parklet. The parklet and pedestrian plaza is being designed by Walter Parks Architects. The intersection mural will be designed by an artist from Art 180 and installed with help from kids from Art 180. Community engagement for the project includes a survey, which ends in mid-September. The process for community engagement for design selection is still being discussed.

Response to the survey has been very good, with 312 responses so far. Of note about the survey: When asked if people had a better understanding of the project after taking the survey, 80% said yes, 18% said sort of, and 2% said no; When asked if they support the concept based on what they know, over 80% said yes, about 8% said no, and about 12% said they need more info; About one-third of the people who took the survey live in Jackson Ward.

There has been considerable press coverage for the project, from outlets including Richmond Times Dispatch; NBC 12; Richmond Magazine; Richmond Biz Sense; and Good Morning RVA!

Commissioner Morgan asked if the Maggie Walker site had been involved in the project, or if there were plans to involve them, and how the outreach to local businesses had been, specifically black-owned businesses. Ms. Glasser stated that input was solicited through the Jackson Ward neighborhood association, and that the Maggie Walker Plaza is actually a Parks & Recreation facility. Ms. Glasser stated that interest had been expressed in increasing the plantings in the Plaza as a commemoration of recent events in Richmond; people interested in pursuing this were directed to Parks & Recreation as the responsible entity. Ms. Glasser stated that the project is not directly tied to Maggie Walker, and that input has been requested as to themes, both historic and contemporary, that people feel are important to promote Jackson Ward as a neighborhood, so that this can be conveyed to the architects and the project artist.

Commissioner Morgan stated that her specific meaning was that the Maggie Walker National Park site and input from black-owned businesses would provide opportunities to explore certain themes for the mural and other project components. Ms. Glasser expressed agreement, and stated that the input from community was being gathered before giving the artists direction on their design work, in order to insure that community input will be integral. Ms. Glasser stated that the desire with this project was to have it be a gateway into Jackson Ward which in some way echoes the Maggie Walker statue, and to have it be about Jackson Ward. Ms. Glasser stated that community input will also be sought to select among the design options that emerge.

Secretary's Report

The Secretary's Report was provided by Commission Secretary Ms. Carey L. Jones.

Ms. Jones stated that the City of Richmond has a new website nearly ready, and it will have updated content, links, and forms.

Ms. Jones reported that there is a candidate for the vacant Commission seat. The candidate will be vetted at the Land Use, Housing, and Transportation Subcommittee and then to full City Council. Ms. Jones anticipates the new Commission member will be in place by the November meeting.

Ms. Jones provided an update on the landscaping and site improvements project for the Virginia Museum of History and Culture. Ms. Jones and staff from Land Use Administration met with representatives from VMHC to discuss the amendment to the special use permit and landscaping changes. Ms. Jones anticipates an updated application will be forthcoming.

Enforcement Report

There were no enforcement updates.

Administrative Approval Report

Ms. Jones stated that two of the project on the report were initially denied and show as such, but have since been approved.

Ms. Jones stated that the new applicant for the vacant CAR member should hopefully be able to join by October or November.

Other Committee Reports

Ms. Jones stated that Ms. Maritza Pechin, manager of the Richmond 300, had given an update on the timeline for the master plan, which will hopefully culminate in the Planning Commission at their October meeting. Ms. Jones pointed out that a recent New York Times article had been about redlining and other historic prejudicial practices in Richmond, and that the article had also mentioned the Richmond 300 plan.

Richmond 300 in the News -

The Master Plan was mentioned in a New York Times article published on August 24, 2020 and the article included a direct link to the Richmond 300 website. Mark Olinger was interviewed by Richmond Magazine on August 18, 2020.

Richmond 300 Adoption Timeline -

Given the large number of comments PDR received on the draft Richmond 300 Master Plan, PDR needs additional time to review and respond to the comments as staff revises the plan accordingly. The new timeline:

- September 8: Pre-Final Plan sent to the Advisory Council and City Planning Commission
- September 16: Advisory Council Meeting (agenda: PDR presentation on plan changes, public hearing, AC discussion)
- September 21: City Planning Commission Meeting (PDR staff presents Plan)
- October 5: City Planning Commission Meeting (CPC votes on Plan)

Commission Chair Johnson adjourned the business portion of the meeting at 3:54 PM.

CONSENT AGENDA

The regular portion of the meeting was called to order at 4:00 PM.

Ms. Jones re-read the announcement info for virtual meetings.

Commission Chair Johnson explained that items on the consent agenda can be approved without meeting discussion, unless the applicant wishes for it to be removed and placed on the regular for more comprehensive review and discussion. Commission Chair Johnson explained time limits for applicant and public comment, and asked that speakers avoid duplication of comments.

Commission Chair Johnson asked if the Commissioners wished to move any items from the regular agenda to the consent agenda.

A motion was made by Commissioner Wheeler, seconded by Commissioner Johnson, to move the 7th item, 428 North Arthur Ashe Boulevard, to the consent agenda.

Commissioner Bond joined the meeting at this juncture, at approximately 4:07 PM

The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye – 6 - Commissioner Sean Wheeler, Commission Chair Neville Johnson, Commissioner Kathleen Morgan, Commissioner Mitch Danese, Commissioner Ashleigh Brewer, Commissioner Sanford Bond

No – 1 - Commissioner Lane Pearson

Excused – 1 - Commissioner James Klaus

A motion was made by Commission Chair Johnson to move the 6th item, 316 North 36th Street, to the consent agenda. The motion was not seconded.

Commission Chair Johnson asked if there was any public comment regarding the consent agenda items. There was none.

Commissioner Pearson stated that he did not want to minimize the importance of the landscaping changes for 428 Arthur Ashe Boulevard, and that he felt they are significant and merit further evaluation.

A motion was made by Commissioner Morgan, seconded by Commissioner Bond,

that the consent agenda be approved.

The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye -- 6 - Commissioner Sanford Bond, Commissioner Ashleigh N. Brewer, Commissioner Kathleen Morgan, Commissioner Sean Wheeler, Commissioner Mitch Danese and Neville C. Johnson Jr.

Excused -- 1 - Commissioner James W. Klaus

Recused -- 1 - Commissioner Lawrence Pearson

1. [COA-076919-2020](#) 3312 E. Broad Street - Construct a rear addition and deck.

Attachments: [Base Map](#)
[Application and Plans](#)
[Staff Report](#)

A motion was made by Commissioner Morgan, seconded by Commissioner Bond, to approve the application for the reasons cited in the staff report provided the following conditions are met: the windows on the addition be 1/1 aluminum clad wood; the deck railing be Richmond rail and the deck be painted or opaquely stained a neutral color; all material specifications be submitted for administrative approval and the plans be revised to reflect the approved materials.

The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye -- 6 - Commissioner Sanford Bond, Commissioner Ashleigh N. Brewer, Commissioner Kathleen Morgan, Commissioner Sean Wheeler, Commissioner Mitch Danese and Neville C. Johnson Jr.

Excused -- 1 - Commissioner James W. Klaus

Recused -- 1 - Commissioner Lawrence Pearson

2. [COA-077142-2020](#) 2216 Venable Street - Rehabilitate a semi-attached brick home, construct a small addition in the rear.

Attachments: [Base Map](#)
[Application and Plans](#)
[Staff Report](#)

A motion was made by Commissioner Morgan, seconded by Commissioner Bond, to approve the application for the reasons cited in the staff report provided the following conditions are met: the fiber cement siding be smooth and unbeaded; the new window in the addition be a simple 1/1 design; the chimneys be retained and the elevations be revised to show the existing chimneys; the exterior cleaning be done with the gentlest means possible, to prevent damage to historic materials, and if the brick requires cleaning, it should be cleaned by the gentlest means possible with a low-pressure wash only; any unpainted brick on the sides and rear of the building remain un-painted; the façade be red-washed to match the attached home; the rear wall be rebuilt to match the existing brick wall, including replicating the brick pattern and window arches and openings; the new front door be of a simple design; the front porch railing be replaced in-kind with

wood Richmond rail, painted to match the existing building; any remaining window components from the rear windows such as sashes, glass and frames be salvaged and relocated to more prominent locations as necessary to repair other windows; the applicant work with staff to restore the historic 2/2 light configuration; the rear second-story window be enclosed from the interior only, preserving the exterior appearance of the window; window and door specifications, final paint colors, any changes to the plans based on zoning review, and details for the roof replacement, including materials specifications, be submitted for administrative approval.

The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye -- 6 - Commissioner Sanford Bond, Commissioner Ashleigh N. Brewer, Commissioner Kathleen Morgan, Commissioner Sean Wheeler, Commissioner Mitch Danese and Neville C. Johnson Jr.

Excused -- 1 - Commissioner James W. Klaus

Recused -- 1 - Commissioner Lawrence Pearson

3. [COA-077120-2020](#) 3509 E. Marshall Street - Construct a single family detached building with accessory garage on a vacant lot.

Attachments: [Base Map](#)
[Application and Plans](#)
[Staff report](#)

A motion was made by Commissioner Morgan, seconded by Commissioner Bond, to approve the application for the reasons cited in the staff report provided the following conditions are met: the fiber cement siding for the house and garage be smooth and without a decorative bead; the rear deck and steps be painted or stained a neutral color found on the Commission's paint palette; the applicant submit the following to staff for administrative review and approval: a fully dimensioned context elevation; a site plan showing the location of the HVAC equipment; the total height of the garage; final window and door specifications; the location and design of the fence.

The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye -- 6 - Commissioner Sanford Bond, Commissioner Ashleigh N. Brewer, Commissioner Kathleen Morgan, Commissioner Sean Wheeler, Commissioner Mitch Danese and Neville C. Johnson Jr.

Excused -- 1 - Commissioner James W. Klaus

Recused -- 1 - Commissioner Lawrence Pearson

4. [COA-076911-2020](#) 313 N. 28th Street - Replace rear, wooden deck with composite materials and install a new rear privacy fence.

Attachments: [Base Map](#)
[Application and Plans](#)
[Staff Report](#)

A motion was made by Commissioner Morgan, seconded by Commissioner Bond, to approve the application as submitted.

The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye -- 6 - Commissioner Sanford Bond, Commissioner Ashleigh N. Brewer, Commissioner Kathleen Morgan, Commissioner Sean Wheeler, Commissioner Mitch Danese and Neville C. Johnson Jr.

Excused -- 1 - Commissioner James W. Klaus

Recused -- 1 - Commissioner Lawrence Pearson

7. [COA-077065-2020](#) 428 N. Arthur Ashe Boulevard - Modify existing parking lot, lighting, and landscaping

Attachments: [Base Map](#)
[Application and Plans](#)
[Staff Report](#)

A motion was made by Commissioner Morgan, seconded by Commissioner Bond, to approve the application for the reasons cited in the staff report provided the following conditions are met: any changes to the plans be reviewed and approved by the Commission Secretary and the Director of Planning and Development Review.

The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye -- 6 - Commissioner Sanford Bond, Commissioner Ashleigh N. Brewer, Commissioner Kathleen Morgan, Commissioner Sean Wheeler, Commissioner Mitch Danese and Neville C. Johnson Jr.

Excused -- 1 - Commissioner James W. Klaus

Recused -- 1 - Commissioner Lawrence Pearson

REGULAR AGENDA

5. [COA-076916-2020](#) 2306 W. Grace Street - Paint exterior of a previously unpainted masonry building.

Attachments: [Application and Plans \(8/25/2020\)](#)
[Staff Report \(8/25/2020\)](#)
[Application and Plans](#)
[Base Map](#)
[Staff Report](#)

The application was presented by Ms. Jones.

Commissioner Wheeler asked if the building in question was attached to another building, and if the other building was painted. Ms. Jones affirmed that it was attached, and that the other building was either painted or had a red wash.

Commissioner Wheeler asked if the option of test patch removal of the primer coat had been discussed with the owner. Ms. Jones stated that this had been discussed, but the applicants had stated their wish to keep the paint.

The applicant, Ms. Priscilla George, stated that the applicants would like to paint over the primer which has been applied. Ms. George stated that the primer used is thick and of good quality. Ms. George stated that she had been told initially that she could choose colors from the historic color palette, and had not been told that she was limited to red colors for the brick; she stated that this is why she chose the Downing Sand color. Ms. George stated that she would understand if she has to opt for a red color instead, but that some of the red colors in the palette do not resemble the color that her bricks had been, and that one of the colors is discontinued. Ms. George stated that if she is required to paint a red color, she would use a simple red and white color scheme. Ms. George stated that a color named Crabby Apple would be her preference if she is required to paint the brick red. Ms. George stated that she finds red to be a harsh color.

Ms. George asked why there are no houses on her street that are painted in colors from the historic palette, and what the regulations signify if the other houses are not in accord with them. Ms. George stated that the applicants would be the first people on the street to paint their houses an approved color; she then stated that some of the houses are painted a red brick color.

Mr. George stated that there is historic brick of a beige color used for the facade section on several houses in the district, and this is the basis for the applicants' Downing Sand color selection. Mr. George stated that the applicants would like to paint the fascia brick of their house in the Downing Sand color, with the remaining colors as have already been approved by staff.

Commissioner Bond asked if the applicants had consulted with Commission staff about colors. Ms. George stated that she had consulted with Ms. Jones, and that it was from the list of colors forwarded by Ms. Jones that Ms. George then chose the colors.

Commissioner Johnson asked if the applicants had been made aware, before purchasing their house, that they would be in a historic district and thus would be prevented by historic guidelines from painting the brick portion of their house. Ms. George stated that they had not been told, by either the house owner or the real estate agent, and that the real estate agent had discussed repainting the house, without mentioning this.

Commissioner Wheeler pointed out that there are two different brick surfaces on the front of the house, one of which is smoother and thus easier to strip. Commissioner Wheeler asked if the applicants would entertain stripping the smooth face brick off the top part, and not painting the rusticated portion that is lower, at the porch level. Ms. George stated that the rusticated surface would not do well, but that the smooth brick would also be difficult to strip, because the primer used is a thick oil-based paint. Ms. George stated that she would be concerned about damage to the brick if an attempt is made to remove it. Ms. George stated that the thick paint was used with the idea of minimizing water damage to the front of the house, as the owners have had water damage to the back of the house.

Commission Chair Johnson asked if there was any public comment.

Mr. David Smith of 2303 W. Grace Street introduced himself on behalf of the West Grace Street Neighborhood Association, and stated that he has a great deal of experience with

Commission meetings, though he had not interacted with any of the current Commissioners. Mr. Smith stated that he had been present at many meetings at which approval after the fact was sought for window replacements and painting of brick. Mr. Smith stated that he had witnessed the Commission having difficulty deliberating over these applications, and applicants stating that unscrupulous realtors had misled them. Mr. Smith stated that he observed that in every instance, applicants made the changes immediately upon taking possession of the house. Mr. Smith stated that more than half the time the Commission had decided in favor of the applicant, and that he had felt badly for the Commission in this situation, as there is no way to tell in these situations if applicants are sincere about their ignorance of the rules.

Mr. Smith stated the West Grace Street board has hitherto simply complied with Commission decisions, but due to inconsistent decisions by past groups of Commissioners, they are now moving away from this and advocating strongly that the current application not be approved, and that the paint be removed, and that all such applications be denied, as there are other options. Mr. Smith stated that the West Grace Street Board knows of instances in which even multiple layers of paint have been removed successfully. Mr. Smith stated that requiring the removal of the paint and all other similar cases is the only way to prevent homeowners from making an end run around the historic guidelines.

Commission Chair Johnson asked if there was further public comment. Hearing none, he closed public comment and opened the floor for Commission motion and discussion.

Ms. Jones stated that staff had received public comment letters regarding this application, and that these had been provided to Commissioners.

A motion was made by Commissioner Pearson, seconded by Commissioner Bond, to deny the application.

Commissioner Bond stated that Mr. Smith made a good point, and that the Commission undermines its own authority if it is not consistent in its decisions.

Commissioner Bond stated that there might possibly be extenuating circumstances, if the Commission staff had not informed the applicants properly of their options as to paint colors, and that he was not clear on why the applicants had not been told that they could not paint the brick. Commissioner Bond stated that he was in support of Commissioner Pearson's motion.

Commission Chair Johnson asked when staff had been approached. Ms. Jones stated that staff had not been approached by the applicants until after the primer had been applied, and that at that point staff had concerns about removing the primer, especially from the rusticated surface, and therefore repainting had been entertained as possibly a safer alternative.

Commissioner Danese expressed concern that the primer would be difficult to remove and would leave a whitewash-like residue, and asked if Commissioners with building knowledge had thoughts on other options.

Commissioner Morgan stated that in the comment letters, some members of the public had recommended removal of the paint, and had recommended a firm, Envirowash, with which Commissioner Morgan also had experience. Commissioner Morgan suggested that a test patch be tried, and that perhaps the Commission could oversee this. Commissioner Danese expressed agreement.

Commissioner Danese asked what the Commission position is regarding brick sealant. Ms. Jones stated that Commission staff generally has concerns about sealing historic masonry; they had considered it at times, but had found that it was usually not necessary if underlying drainage issues were addressed.

Commissioner Bond stated that in his experience, it is possible to remove paint and not leave a residue, and that it is not as big a challenge as people tend to think.

Commission Chair Johnson stated that the discussion seemed to be tending toward a deferral decision, to allow applicants to test a patch of brick for paint removal, to see if it could be done without damage. Commission Chair Johnson stated that any such test should be done with both of the two types of brick on the building.

Commissioner Pearson withdrew his motion.

A motion was made by Commissioner Morgan, seconded by Commissioner Danese, to defer to allow the applicant the opportunity to investigate removal of the primer with multiple test patches on both the flat brick and the rusticated masonry.

Commissioner Morgan stated that she regretted that this was the applicants' initial experience of the Commission, and encouraged them to remain in contact with Commission staff for any future work.

Commissioner Wheeler asked if the Parks Department had specific guidelines for washing brick. Commissioner Morgan stated that they have recommendations for water pressure amount. Commissioner Wheeler suggested that a chemical wash should be tried and might be more effective than pressure washing. Commissioner Morgan asked if Commissioner Wheeler had used this method on entire elevations of buildings, or only in spots; Commissioner Wheeler stated that he had used chemical removers in both spot and whole-elevation contexts. Commission Chair Johnson expressed agreement regarding the chemical wash option, and stated that there should be test patches tried with a chemical wash as well.

Commissioner Wheeler stated, in regard to Ms. George's question, that the variety of colors on the block, some of which are not on the historic color palette, could be due to the Commission approving those non-palette colors on a case-by-case basis in the past, which the Commission is entitled to do.

A motion was made by Commissioner Morgan, seconded by Commissioner Danese, to defer to allow the applicant the opportunity to investigate removal of the primer with multiple test patches on both the flat brick and the rusticated masonry.

The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye -- 7 - Commissioner Sanford Bond, Commissioner Ashleigh N. Brewer, Commissioner Kathleen Morgan, Commissioner Sean Wheeler, Commissioner Lawrence Pearson, Commissioner Mitch Danese and Neville C. Johnson Jr.

Excused -- 1 - Commissioner James W. Klaus

8. [COA-077183-2020](#) 3101-3105 E. Marshall Street - Modify previously approved plans to rehabilitate an existing building and build an addition onto the roof and rear, and to construct a new, connected mixed-use addition on the corner.

Attachments: [Base Map](#)[Application and Plans \(8/25/202\)](#)[Staff Report \(8/25/2020\)](#)[3101-3105 E Marshall St - Application and Plans](#)[Staff Report](#)

The application was presented by Ms. Jones.

The applicant, Mr. Sean Jefferson, introduced himself. Mr. Jefferson stated that he had prepared a presentation with 24 items, 14 of which had to do with windows. Mr. Jefferson stated that based on previous reviews, he understood that if due to zoning issues the applicants had to cover over some window openings, this would require considerable re-design. Mr. Jefferson stated that this is what in fact had happened: the entire design of the building had changed – thus the 14 comments regarding windows.

Mr. Jefferson stated that the changes had impacted everything except the storefront; the applicants' goal was to mimic the historic storefront precisely, and to recreate the historic storefront as it had been in 1936 or thereabouts. Mr. Jefferson apologized if this was not illustrated in their drawings.

Mr. Jefferson stated that the parapet walls would not be changed, other than to stabilize them. Mr. Jefferson stated that previously submitted drawings of the elevations had not been to scale, and that some heights submitted for the previous review had some inaccurate measurements, which have since been corrected.

Mr. Jefferson stated that the shed entry to the basement, which is shown as brick in the staff presentation, is in fact currently CMU, so would not be historically important. Mr. Jefferson stated that the applicants would not be destroying any brick.

Mr. Jefferson stated that the scupper at mid-level is located so as to catch water draining from the patio drain situated at the opposite side of the masonry.

Mr. Jefferson stated that the Trex composite the applicants intend to use is a composite material which is widely used.

Mr. Jefferson stated that the side windows had been reconfigured due to the bedroom orientation changing and facing the back as opposed to the side, as the previous configuration was not workable.

Mr. Jefferson stated that many changes had been necessary due to the balconies and entrance being pushed back, and windows being closed up.

Mr. Jefferson stated that the columns had been reduced from 4 to 3 to allow for vehicle maneuvering for parking.

Regarding the brick pier located on the 3rd story, Mr. Jefferson stated that he would have to defer to the owner.

Mr. Jefferson stated that due to encroachment regulations, some parts of the building would have to be pulled in a foot or thereabouts.

Regarding the difference between the curtain wall and the storefront, Mr. Jefferson stated

that the applicants' intent had been to include the hyphen and to make sure that it was pronounced. Mr. Jefferson stated that the applicants had reviewed with two Commissioners several options for ways to incorporate the hyphen, and had determined that they did not want to use the curtain wall because on the opposite side of the storefront or curtain wall there would be an offshoot of a bedroom, and the applicants were concerned about privacy and efficiency. Mr. Jefferson stated that this is the reason for the spandrel glass covering the floor systems of those elevations. Mr. Jefferson stated that his understanding is that in residential parts of the building, on the 2nd and 3rd floors, the windows must have the potential to be operable. Mr. Jefferson stated that the applicants had wanted to have a design unique in the area, and thought that their idea would be workable based on a review of other storefronts.

Mr. Jefferson stated that on the west elevation, the window design has been completely changed due to changes in the floor plan design for all of the apartments, due to patio encroachment issues requiring that the balcony be pulled in, which in turn required reconfiguration of the rooms.

Mr. Jefferson stated that, in light of the many comments and the many variables, he would like to know which aspects of the design could be approved by the Commission and which could not, based on the Special Use Permit, the various comments, and the encroachment issues.

Mr. Jefferson stated that another change in the design was prompted by regulations limiting the extent of the commercial space, which had been about 1700 square feet. This being reduced to less than 1500 square feet had prompted reappportioning the square footage for the apartment space. Mr. Jefferson stated that he would check to make sure that the plans were not incurring an encroachment issue.

Commissioner Wheeler asked why the roof design had been changed.

Mr. Jefferson stated that the roof had been changed due to the height requirements for a Special Use Permit, which required that all floors have 9 feet clear span. Mr. Jefferson stated that the height constraint of the property is 32 feet, 6 inches, and the current building is 23 inches off the ground. Mr. Jefferson stated that a sprinkler system cannot be located in a voided space. With the previously approved parapet design, there would have been an unconditioned space between the ceiling of the third floor and the roof, which would have been a problem. Mr. Jefferson stated that the applicants have attempted to simplify the design to make everything work.

Commissioner Morgan asked why the side windows needed to be bricked in, if the building would have sprinklers. Mr. Jefferson stated that this was due to the neighboring building being less than 3 feet away.

Commissioner Morgan asked if it was necessary to brick in the windows, even if there are sprinklers installed. Mr. Jefferson stated that the window openings are already partially bricked in, and that it would probably be possible to have some type of sprinkler configuration, but that there is no line of sight or public right of way between the two buildings.

The property owner, Ms. Jing Jing Ye, stated that she strives to keep communication open with the Commission and with the community, and that she had met with the Church Hill Association many times, and they were supportive of the project. Ms. Ye stated that the applicants had to respond to many requirements due to the Special Use Program and zoning and accommodating neighbors. Ms. Jing stated that the application

is in line with the priorities of the Richmond 300 city master plan.

Mr. John Trotta, a neighbor, stated that though the CHA has voted to approve the project, most nearby residents have many concerns about the effect the project will have, and that due to neighborhood turnover there are many new residents who were not involved in the prior discussion and approval of the project. Mr. Trotta stated that though the preservation of the original façade is appreciated, the new building itself looks more like something one would see in Shockoe Bottom or Rocketts Landing, and very modern for St. John's Historic District and not what Mr. Trotta anticipated he might be living near when he moved to the neighborhood.

Ms. Lauren Trotta stated that it seemed as if a lot of historic architectural detail was being squeezed out in order to squeeze in residential and commercial space, and as if the reason that encroachment issues were being encountered was that the applicants are attempting to make the building so large. Ms. Trotta stated that she and Mr. Trotta were shocked that a project of this size, containing 9 apartments, had been approved.

Ms. Melissa Newell stated that she moved to the area in February, and would not have moved to the area had she known that such a large building would be built on the corner near her. Ms. Newell expressed concern about the new portion of the building, its orientation to and lack of setback on 31st Street, as well as the mass and height of the building and the use in its construction of non-historic materials. Ms. Newell stated that she was glad the Commission seemed inclined to defer the project for further changes, but expressed hope that the Commissioners would do more to address the issues she raised. Ms.

Newell stated that the property also seemed to be in violation of regulations for an R-63 zoning district on the amount of usable open space as a ratio to built square footage, and asked that the Commissioners address this in their discussion.

Mr. Neal Stublen, another neighbor, stated that he had submitted comments via email, and expressed agreement with comments from other neighbors as well as his own concerns about the fenestration and materials of the proposed construction not being in keeping with the neighborhood.

Mr. Jim Dedie, a 32nd Street resident, echoed remarks of other neighbors and expressed concern about the look of the proposed construction, the lack of green space, lack of parking, and cramped appearance. Mr. Dedie stated that he has recently moved to Church Hill, and that he finds that the proposed building significantly differs from the general look and feel of the area, even compared to other modern construction in the area.

Mr. Jacob Dubois, a resident on East Marshall Street, stated that he moved to Richmond in May, and that his choice of region was based on the historical value, and that it is very disheartening to find out that construction of this kind is happening; the materials and scale seem out of keeping with the area. Mr. Jacob Dubois asked that his current privacy be maintained, and that the windows facing his property be bricked up.

Commission Chair Johnson asked if there was further public comment. Hearing none, he closed public comment and opened the floor for Commission motion and discussion.

A motion was made by Commissioner Brewer, seconded by Commissioner Danese, to defer the application for the reasons cited in the staff report to allow the applicant the opportunity to address staff and Commission comments and to clarify the proposed plans and elevations.

Commissioner Johnson stated that the Commission does not have control over several aspects of the construction, such as the setback, for which the applicants have obtained permission via a Special Use Permit.

Commissioner Johnson stated that where there are vacant lots, a neighborhood can be altered by construction on those lots; and that the Commission's charge is to maintain the historic integrity of existing buildings, and to accommodate new construction in such a way that it is distinguishable from the historic property.

Commissioner Wheeler stated that a SUP rewrites the zoning for a specific project, so setbacks, height, and spacing between buildings can differ from conventional code.

Commissioner Wheeler stated that the roof design change is problematic and would necessitate other changes, due to the downspouts draining stormwater onto the public way and/or the property of neighbors. Commissioner Wheeler stated that he believed, on a project of this size, some sort of stormwater drainage system would be required in order to avoid this.

Commissioner Wheeler stated that the previously approved glass hyphen had the purpose of delineating the new from the old, and that now the revised design is too busy and prominent, and thus detracts from the historic building and defeats its original purpose.

Commission Chair Johnson stated that there are ways to achieve the applicant's goals within the guidelines and the original requests of the Commission.

Commissioner Wheeler stated that the applicant stated in his submitted presentation that he intended to frame the building and then address any issues with Commission staff. Commissioner Wheeler stated that it is far more difficult to correct something that has already been framed than it is to address and resolve issues beforehand by referring to the drawings. Commissioner Wheeler stated that the Commission depends on accurate drawings.

Commissioner Morgan expressed agreement with Commissioner Wheeler, and stated that the questions and concerns of staff and the public stem from the drawings continually changing. Commissioner Morgan stated that she has consistently expressed concerns about the height, and that the newly added enclosed HVAC equipment on the roof were now concerning. Commissioner Morgan suggested that if possible they not be enclosed, as screening measures tend to make them more visible. Commissioner Morgan stated that she is aware that screening is sometimes required by Zoning staff, but that the enclosure as presented is problematic.

Commissioner Morgan stated that what the Commission had approved in January was more in accordance with the historic guidelines, and that if the applicants could submit a design closer to that one, it would be more likely to be approved.

Commissioner Johnson stressed that the design referred to is only the exterior design, and that the interior design is not in the Commission's purview.

A motion was made by Commissioner Brewer, seconded by Commissioner Danese, to defer the application for the reasons cited in the staff report to allow the applicant the opportunity to address staff and Commission comments and to clarify the proposed plans and elevations.

The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye -- 7 - Commissioner Sanford Bond, Commissioner Ashleigh N. Brewer, Commissioner Kathleen Morgan, Commissioner Sean Wheeler, Commissioner Lawrence Pearson, Commissioner Mitch Danese and Neville C. Johnson Jr.

Excused -- 1 - Commissioner James W. Klaus

9. [COA-076904-2020](#) 2004 W. Grace Street - Install iron fence in a side yard; replace front porch handrails and install a metal gate on porch landing.

Attachments: [Base Map](#)
[Application and Plans](#)
[Staff Report](#)

The application was presented by Ms. Jeffries.

Commissioner Wheeler asked if there were any historic photos showing a fence or gate across the front of the house. Ms. Jeffries stated that she had not found any, though she pointed out that she does not currently have access to the Library of Virginia.

The applicant, Chris Grandpre, expressed disappointment about the staff recommendations. Mr. Grandpre stated that, as new residents, the applicants wish to work with staff and observe guidelines but also make investments in their home that make sense for their family and support the value of the property. Unless there is some aesthetic consistency that is maintained by doing so, the applicants are not interested in maintaining a non-historic chain link fence on the property. Mr. Grandpre expressed willingness to compromise on the proposed design by eliminated the proposed ivy motif which was to be included in the fence panel and mimic the iron gates, thus making the fence simpler.

Mr. Grandpre stated that there are safety and health reasons for the applicants' desire to install a replacement fence and a gate. Mr. Grandpre stated that their porch and in front of the house have frequently been occupied and slept on by neighborhood homeless people, and that at times human waste has been left. Thus the gate is desired as a deterrent to unwanted guests occupying the porch of the property.

Commission Chair Johnson asked if there was any public comment. Hearing none, he closed public comment and opened the floor for Commission motion and discussion.

A motion was made by Commission Chair Johnson, seconded by Commissioner Bond, to approve the application for the reasons cited in the staff report provided the following conditions are met: the new fence be of a simple design that does not mimic the existing gates, provided the applicants work with staff to develop a simplified design, and revised drawings be submitted to staff for administrative approval, and the gate be installed in a manner that does not damage the historic brick.

Commissioner Wheeler stated that a privacy fence is not desirable, and that the fence should be metal. Commission Chair Johnson stated that his intent was to keep the fence as submitted but remove the ivy inlays and details of that nature.

Commissioner Bond expressed agreement that the fence should be allowed, and that installing one does not damage any historic fabric. Commissioner Bond stated that he would encourage a simpler design, and also a more contemporary design to indicate

clearly that the fence is not an original feature.

Commissioner Pearson stated that the Commission had reviewed a similar gate proposal in the same neighborhood about a year earlier and that, though he is sympathetic to the property owner's concerns, the gate proposed does go against the guidelines; as with the need for consistency about painted brick guidelines, consistency on other guidelines is needed in order to avoid a slow erosion of the historic character of the district.

Commissioner Brewer stated that since the fence is not on the property, more flexibility can be allowed as long as it is of a contemporary design, and no historic fabric is destroyed in its installation.

Ms. Jeffries stated that her understanding is that the proposed gate is to go across the porch, and would not be in line with the fence.

Commissioner Morgan stated that she would be supportive of a gate aligned with the front fence, but not one that is up against the porch. Commissioner Bond expressed agreement, stating that he had not realized that was the proposed placement, and that the gate placement would not constitute a sensible design as it would be potentially hazardous to use in that location, and would also be liable to damage the historic fabric of the porch. Commissioner Bond stated that in light of Mr. Grandpre's stated security concerns, a placement on the property line, in line with the fence, would seem to be more useful.

The motion failed by the following vote:

Aye – 1 - Commission Chair Neville Johnson

No – 6 - Commissioner Mitch Danese, Commissioner Ashleigh Brewer, Commissioner Sanford Bond, Commissioner Kathleen Morgan, Commissioner Sean Wheeler, Commissioner Lane Pearson,

Excused – 1 - Commissioner James Klaus

Commission Chair Johnson clarified the proposed placement of the gate and fence components of the plan. Mr. Grandpre stated that the applicants had actually wished to set back the fence about 6 feet.

Commissioner Bond stated that a drawing and site plan would be necessary to best understand the proposed plan.

Ms. Jones suggested that the plan could be approved with fence placement to be determined later, or the Commission could specify a position in their motion.

Commissioner Bond asked if the ivy-covered chain link fence would remain. Ms. Jones stated that it would all be removed and a new fence installed in the same place.

Commissioner Bond stated that the applicant had said he wished to set it back 7 or 8 feet, and that therefore a site plan is needed.

Commission Chair Johnson recapped that the original request by the applicant was to have the gate on the porch and a new fence around the adjoining lot, which Ms. Jones confirmed. Commission Chair

Johnson suggested that the Commission focus on and respond to staff's recommendations for the application, and not tell the property owner how to design his fence.

Commissioner Bond asked for clarification regarding the fence location. Chairman

Johnson indicated, referring to a presentation slide, that the new fence would go where there is now a chain link fence, which is obscured from view by ivy; this new fence would go around the property and attach to an existing gate, while an additional new gate would be built closer to and in front of the porch.

Commission Chair Johnson asked for confirmation of these details from Mr. Grandpre, who stated that he had actually wanted, rather than having the fence line be at the sidewalk, to set it back 6 to 8 feet, thus forming a small additional front yard. Commission Chair Johnson stated that he had not realized that this was the plan. Commissioner Bond stated that the yard would exist regardless of the fence placement.

Mr. Grandpre stated that he had not realized it was important whether the fence go all the way out to the sidewalk, or he chose to set it back.

Commissioner Bond stated that a site plan or a drawing was needed in order to make clear the exact plan. Commission Chair Johnson stated that a site plan might be necessary, and asked Ms. Jones if the setback detail had been included in application and presentation materials provided to the Commission. Ms. Jones suggested that, in light of the need for clarification, the Commission could either defer the application; or approve the application with the condition that a site plan be submitted for review and approval by Commission Chair Johnson and Vice-Chair Wheeler; or make a motion that includes a recommendation as to where the fence should be located.

Commission Chair Johnson stated that the motion should include a request for a site plan.

Commissioner Morgan stated that she did not have a problem with the fence being set back.

Commissioner Bond asked whether the ivy-covered chain link fence would remain in place, given that the new fence would not in fact be taking its place. Ms. Jones stated that her understanding was that the applicant intended to remove the chain link fence in its entirety and position the new fence in its place. Commissioner Bond stated that the applicant seemed to have said that the fence would be set back on the side. Commissioner Morgan stated that a site plan would clarify this.

Commissioner Bond stated that there should be a site plan before the Commission approves the application. Commissioner Wheeler asked if it might be best to defer the application.

A motion was made by Commissioner Morgan, seconded by Commissioner Brewer, to partially approved the application for the reasons cited in the staff report provided the following conditions are met: The new fence be of a simple design that does not mimic the existing gates, and revised drawings be submitted to staff for administrative approval and the applicant provide a site plan showing the exact location of the fence for approval by the Chair and Vice-Chair. The Commission denied the proposed gate across the front porch as it is not consistent with the historic design or district.

The motion carried by the following vote:

A motion was made by Commissioner Morgan, seconded by Commissioner Brewer, to partially approved the application for the reasons cited in the staff report provided the following conditions are met: The new fence be of a simple design that does not mimic the existing gates, and revised drawings be

submitted to staff for administrative approval and the applicant provide a site plan showing the exact location of the fence for approval by the Chair and Vice-Chair. The Commission denied the proposed gate across the front porch as it is not consistent with the historic design or district.

The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye -- 4 - Commissioner Ashleigh N. Brewer, Commissioner Kathleen Morgan, Commissioner Lawrence Pearson and Neville C. Johnson Jr.

No -- 3 - Commissioner Sanford Bond, Commissioner Sean Wheeler and Commissioner Mitch Danese

Excused -- 1 - Commissioner James W. Klaus

10. [COA-073712-2020](#) 3303 Monument Avenue - Partial demolition of and alteration of an existing garage.

Attachments: [Base Map](#)

[Application and Plans \(06/23/2020\)](#)

[Staff Report \(06/23/2020\)](#)

[Application and Plans](#)

[Staff Report](#)

The application was presented by Ms. Jones.

One of the project architects, Ms. Emma Fuller stated that the previous review in June 2020 had been helpful and that one of the primary take-aways from that had been the decision to retain as much as possible the existing walls of the garage. The applicants therefore got an engineering report, in order to assess the structural viability of the garage walls and determine what could be changed and which changes would be most efficient. The finding was that the east wall was the most compromised, due to having a hinge point.

Ms. Fuller stated that the applicants had also made an effort to address the alley façade, and reference the historic nature of the garage with its recessed opening.

Ms. Fuller stated that the third priority for the applicants was to make a workable compromise between historic and new forms and construction needed to make a studio space as well as to reconfigure the east section of the garage to make an effective interaction between the interior spaces and the rounded garden wall.

The other project architect, Mr. Michael Overby stated that the applicants had also tried to maintain a distinction between historic elements and new construction, and that one way they had sought to do this was by having the newer elements appear to freestanding and not connected to the two remaining garage walls. Mr. Overby stated that the new set-back area facing the alley is referencing the historic. Mr. Overby stated that the architects were also trying to maintain the old/new separation at the southeast corner, between the new curved wall and the area that referenced the existing orientation of the garage.

Ms. Fuller stated that the architects had been interested in making the southeast corner work in terms of differentiation and materiality. Ms. Fuller stated that, as can be seen in photos and model images provided by the applicants, the visibility of the garage alley

façade from Tilden Street is at an extreme angle, so the eastern wall is not as visible as it might seem.

Mr. Overby stated that the architects' focus is that from that view, one would retain the existing garage orientation, that would be the primary element you see in that direction.

Commissioner Wheeler asked if the new brick would have a running bond pattern, and if there would be a distinction between old brick and new brick, since the provided image shows a common bond pattern. Mr. Overby stated that there would be a clear distinction, and that the submitted image was a leftover from the previous application version.

Commission Chair Johnson asked if there was any public comment. Hearing none, he opened the floor for Commission motion and discussion.

A motion was made by Commissioner Pearson, seconded by Commissioner Danese, to approve the application for the reasons cited in the staff report provided the following conditions are met: glazing be introduced to reflect the original openness of the wall where the garage doors had been, and reference a garage opening; the applicants revise the design to reflect the location of the historic corner to indicate the historic massing of the garage, and the applicants consider relocating the entry court further to the north and maintaining a flat wall at the corner; the parapet line of the west elevation remain intact, especially since the east wall will be removed; the introduction of glazing in the south wall and the reduction in height of the fixed glazing, or that the fixed glazing be carried onto the roof; additional information about a wall feature near the parking area be submitted to staff for review and approval; the applicant work with staff to find a permeable material that does not replicate a historic paving material; the applicant submit the final material selections for administrative review and approval.

Commissioner Wheeler stated that he found the submitted design to be successful as is.

Commissioner Morgan asked if in fact there was no existing garage door. This was confirmed.

Commissioner Morgan pointed out that the virtual meeting format had the advantage of having allowed the

Commission to meet with the architects from New York. Commission Chair Johnson concurred.

A motion was made by Commissioner Pearson, seconded by Commissioner Danese, to approve the application for the reasons cited in the staff report provided the following conditions are met: glazing be introduced to reflect the original openness of the wall where the garage doors had been, and reference a garage opening; the applicants revise the design to reflect the location of the historic corner to indicate the historic massing of the garage, and the applicants consider relocating the entry court further to the north and maintaining a flat wall at the corner; the parapet line of the west elevation remain intact, especially since the east wall will be removed; the introduction of glazing in the south wall and the reduction in height of the fixed glazing, or that the fixed glazing be carried onto the roof; additional information about a wall feature near the parking area be submitted to staff for review and approval; the applicant work with staff to find a permeable material that does not replicate a historic paving material; the applicant submit the final material selections for administrative review and approval.

The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye -- 6 - Commissioner Sanford Bond, Commissioner Ashleigh N. Brewer, Commissioner Kathleen Morgan, Commissioner Lawrence Pearson, Commissioner Mitch Danese and Neville C. Johnson Jr.

No -- 1 - Commissioner Sean Wheeler

Excused -- 1 - Commissioner James W. Klaus

6. [COA-076905-2020](#) 316 N. 36th Street - Replace concrete walkway with bluestone.

Attachments: [Base Map](#)
[Application and Plans](#)
[Staff Report](#)

The application was presented by Ms. Jeffries.

Mr. Drew Harrigan of Four Winds Design introduced himself and stated that he was present to represent the applicants, Adam and Allie Hake. Mr. Harrigan stated that the applicants have no problem with following the staff recommendations and hope to proceed with the project as quickly as possible. Mr. Harrigan stated that the applicants are fine with retaining the concrete at the existing height, if that is the Commission's recommendation, and also with replacing the concrete at the side of the house as per staff recommendations, if the Commission supports this.

Commission Chair Johnson asked if there was any public comment. Hearing none, he opened the floor for Commission motion and discussion.

A motion was made by Commissioner Bond, seconded by Commissioner Pearson, to approve the application for the reasons cited in the staff report provided the following conditions are met: the new concrete curbing match the heights of the adjacent curbing, matching the existing curbing; the concrete walkway to the side yard that is visible from the street be replaced in-kind with new concrete to match the existing design; final specifications for the fence be submitted to staff for administrative approval.

Commissioner Morgan asked if would be necessary to replace the front concrete curbing, if the applicants are permitted to retain it at its current height, and suggested that the motion could be amended to simply allow the retention of the curbing. Ms. Jones stated that the current wording could be useful because, even if the applicants don't need to alter the height, it could potentially be useful for the applicants to have permission to replace the curbing, in the event it turns out to be not structurally sound.

A motion was made by Commissioner Bond, seconded by Commissioner Pearson, to approve the application for the reasons cited in the staff report provided the following conditions are met: the new concrete curbing match the heights of the adjacent curbing, matching the existing curbing; the concrete walkway to the side yard that is visible from the street be replaced in-kind with new concrete to match the existing design; final specifications for the fence be submitted to staff for administrative approval.

The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye -- 7 - Commissioner Sanford Bond, Commissioner Ashleigh N. Brewer, Commissioner Kathleen Morgan, Commissioner Sean Wheeler, Commissioner Lawrence Pearson, Commissioner Mitch Danese and Neville C. Johnson Jr.

Excused -- 1 - Commissioner James W. Klaus

CONCEPTUAL REVIEW

Commissioner Pearson recused himself from the following applications, and left the meeting at this juncture: 6:35 PM.

Commissioner Bond also left the meeting at around this point.

11. [COA-076917-2020](#) 715 Mosby Street - Construct a new, three-story, 15 unit, multi-family building.

Attachments: [Base Map](#)
[Application and Plans](#)
[Staff Report](#)

The application was presented by Ms. Jones.

Mr. Sam Tuttle of Streetcar Properties introduced himself and stated that he was satisfied with the staff recommendations and presentations. Ms. Emily Striffler of 510 Architects stated that the design meets requirements for 30% open space, and that some of the fifteen units would have accessibility features. Ms. Striffler stated she felt the design would tie in nicely with street improvements which are currently underway on Mosby.

Commission Chair Johnson asked if there was any public comment.

Ms. Nancy Lampert, a Union Hill resident stated that the proposed project is out of scale with the area, and that many of the larger, taller projects had been reduced in height, either due to community pressure or other reasons, whereas in this case the large, tall project was forced down the community's throat due to political cronyism. Ms. Lampert expressed disappointment with Mr. Tuttle, stating that he has designed good projects in the past which were on a smaller scale.

Commission Chair Johnson asked if there was any further public comment. There was none.

Commissioner Brewer stated that she was generally in agreement with the project plans and the staff comments.

Commissioner Danese asked for confirmation that the HVAC units are all on the roof. This was confirmed by the applicant. Commissioner Danese asked if the parking screening would be done mostly with landscaping and foliage; Ms. Jones confirmed this.

Commission Chair Johnson stated that he understood the needs of the developer as reflected in the project, and stated that the project met needs of the city in terms of density and that it did a good job of utilizing the lot to its full potential, while still incorporating some outdoor space. Commission Chair Johnson stated that the staff had made some good detailed comments about the cornice line and the screening measures, adding that parking screening will have to be incorporated into final plans. Commission

Chair Johnson stated that the height of the project and neighborhood sentiment would be the main challenges.

Commissioner Morgan stated that she liked the design and appreciated that the massing is broken up. Commissioner Morgan stated that 3 floors is too tall for the location and that approving a structure that is almost 40 feet tall would set a dangerous precedent for that area. Commissioner Morgan stated that the Commission had reviewed another property on the other side of the block, across the street, which had a raised basement and was perhaps equal in height to the project currently under review, but probably not taller. Commissioner Morgan stated that the Commission would usually advise looking to adjacent heights for reference, but that this situation was somewhat different.

Commissioner Morgan stated that there is precedent for multi-family buildings in the area, but that she was not sure that meant that those should be replicated.

Commissioner Morgan stated that the Commission tends to be particular about balconies, but that they can be supported by the guidelines if they are flush with the plane, rather than projecting.

Commissioner Morgan stated that the front porch styles in the region are mixed, and if the applicants had considered a way to implement this blend of styles in the design of their project, given that it has multiple units and it appears that there is room in front to do something of this kind. Overall, Commissioner Morgan stated that she liked the design and its simplicity.

Commissioner Wheeler stated that he agreed with the Commissioners and staff, and commented that the north elevation would be nicer if it turned the corner in some way, rather than changing material at the corner. Commissioner Wheeler asked if the lot is considered a corner lot. Ms. Jones stated that technically it is not, but that one could reference corner guidelines for this location. Commissioner Wheeler agreed with this assessment. Commissioner Wheeler stated that the planned height is probably okay, given that there are even taller buildings in the region and that this property is at the edge of the district.

Commissioner Wheeler pointed out that corner properties are allowed to be 4 stories tall, and that there is one such corner building not far from the project site.

This application was conceptually reviewed.

12. [COA-076913-2020](#) 425 N. 25th Street - Rehabilitate two buildings and construct a new multi-use building.

Attachments: [Base Map](#)
[Application and Plans](#)
[Staff Report](#)

The application was presented by Ms. Jones.

Ms. Brewer having exited the meeting, she did not share comments on this project.

Mr. Joshua Bilder introduced himself and stated that he and his partner Sebastian Quinn have worked on a couple other projects in the area, including the New East End Theater Apartments at 418 N. 25th Street, and Patrick Henry Square at 313 N. 24th Street, and that in the present instance they are taking some steps to preserve elements of the

historic structures.

Mr. Sebastian Quinn introduced himself but was delayed in communicating effectively due to technical difficulties stemming from an attenuated upstate New York internet connection.

Commissioner Danese stated that he had no comments.

Commissioner Morgan stated that she appreciated that the corner building is tied to the lot lines and that there has been consideration of the front yard setbacks with the two adjacent structures.

Commissioner Morgan stated that she does find the buildings to be too tall, especially the one that is closest to a 2-story residential building. Commissioner Morgan expressed agreement with staff comments regarding the cornice line at the top of the proposed commercial building, and added that there could also be a heavier, more defining cornice or bulkhead at the top of the commercial storefront.

Commissioner Morgan stated that she would be interested to know what the East Clay-facing elevation will look like and how it will interact with the street. Commissioner Morgan stated that the windows of the more traditional-appearing, mostly residential buildings were rendered with 4/4 windows, and recommended that a 1/1 window style be used.

Commissioner Wheeler expressed agreement with Commissioner Morgan and the staff, and appreciation of the setback and the mindfulness of the historic home to the east on 25th Street. Commissioner Wheeler expressed concern about the massing in relation to the residential adjacent building on East Clay Street, stating that the historic components of that residence appear to be enveloped by the new construction.

Commissioner Wheeler stated that generally one wants to separate the new construction from the historic sections, and that it was difficult to discern exactly what was happening in the pictures due to tree interference, but that the massing models seemed to indicate the need for a gap or hyphen to prevent the historic component being overwhelmed by the modern, akin to what was done for the nearby New East End Theater project.

Commissioner Wheeler suggested that there be some more interesting detailing at the corner, and that he realized the current plans do not reveal much detail. Commissioner Wheeler stated that it is always better to show more detail sooner than later so that there are not problems later. Commissioner Wheeler stated that he appreciated the detail on the three-story pieces and the setback which indicates an awareness of massing. Commissioner Wheeler stated that he was not certain if the applicants would require a Special Use Permit, and suggested that a similar setback treatment at the 4th floor might be beneficial, but it is difficult because of it being the corner.

Commissioner Wheeler stated that his feedback was somewhat limited due to the minimal detail in the plans.

Commission Chair Johnson stated that he liked the concept of the design and how it was attempt to relate to the historic home, and that he understood the financial pressure to maximize square footage, but that he would prefer if the two newer homes did not have a setback and related more to the older home. Commission Chair Johnson stated that he would then be more receptive to the 4-story structure on the corner.

Commission Chair Johnson stated that changing some of those lines to apply to it or set back on the 4th story would be helpful. Commissioner Johnson stated that the Commission would require a lot more information in order to effectively review the project, and that he would be more inclined to work with the applicants on the corner, if the two homes that correlate to the historic home on 25th Street were more similar.

Ms. Nancy Lampert contrasted the current project with the Patrick Henry Square project, which she stated was more integrated with the historic fabric, and stated that she found the 4-story height excessive and not in keeping with, or well-integrated with, the historic district. Ms. Lampert suggested that a two-story structure could more easily be integrated with the existing historic structures. Ms. Lampert stated that when Mr. Bilder was a member of the Commission, he had opposed a similar project in Shockoe Valley.

Mr. Quinn stated that the applicants see the current project as more of a commercial thoroughfare, that he and Mr. Bilder are striving to balance respect for the historic fabric with modern usage needs, and that the project addresses the need for density in proximity to the urban core. Mr. Quinn stated that the buildings tend to be taller at the corners of 25th Street, and pointed out that the nearby theater is 38 feet tall.

Mr. Quinn stated that the comments have been very helpful, and expressed agreement with staff and Commissioners about the need to make the cornice more substantial.

Commissioner Wheeler asked about the building on the corner of Clay Street, whether anyone present knew what siding material was beneath the vinyl siding. Mr. Quinn stated that he did not know and stated that the condition of that building was of concern to the applicants; Mr. Bilder did not respond due to being accidentally muted. Ms. Jones suggested that this could be investigated and worked into a future application.

This application was conceptually reviewed.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 7:24 PM.