



Staff Report
City of Richmond, Virginia



Commission of Architectural Review

7. COA-149479-2024	Conceptual Review	Meeting Date: 6/25/2024
Applicant/Petitioner	Sarah McInerney, Walter Parks Architects	
Project Description	Construct new two-story building to replace, failing building.	
Project Location		
Address: 524-526 North 1 st Street		
Historic District: Jackson Ward		
<p>High-Level Details:</p> <p>On May 3, 2024, staff met with the Building Commissioner at the property, to evaluate the current building.</p> <p>During this site visit, the Building Commissioner and a Structural Engineer determined that the building is not structurally sound and needs to be torn down.</p> <p>The construction date of the building is unknown, but it was likely built in the late nineteenth century.</p> <p>The applicant submitted plans for the new construction of the façade and requests Commission feedback on the proposed façade design options.</p>		
Staff Recommendation	Conceptual Review	
Staff Contact	Annie Delaroderie, anne.delaroderie@rva.gov , 804-646-6335.	
Previous Reviews	<p>Staff visited the site in May 2024. The building was determined to be in an unsafe and dangerous condition due to bulging exterior walls and structural issues. The Building Commission determined that the COA process is to be waved for the demolition. Staff signed-off on the demolition permit at the request of the Building Commissioner with the following conditions:</p> <p><i>Based on the Building Commissioner's assessment of the buildings as an imminent threat and health and safety hazard, a COA from the Commission Architectural Review will not be required according to section 30-930.6(j) which states that, Unsafe and dangerous conditions. Nothing in this division shall be construed to prevent the construction, reconstruction, alteration, or demolition of any such building or feature which the commissioner of buildings shall determine is required for public safety because of an unsafe or dangerous condition. Upon the</i></p>	

	<p><i>determination of such a condition, the commissioner of buildings shall provide notice to the commission of architectural review.</i></p> <p><i>However, staff of the Commission of Architectural Review have the following conditions associated with this demolition approval.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>•Plans for new constructions be provided to staff in a timely manner, to be reviewed and approved by the commission of architectural review.</i> <i>•New construction references the front façade massing and fenestration as closely as possible, including door location and arched openings.</i> <i>•New construction be no taller than the existing building to maintain the existing street wall and to reference the character and scale of the historic building being lost.</i> <i>•New construction features a full width one story front porch that is based off historic documentation.</i> <i>•The existing front façade cornice be retained and repaired and incorporated into the new construction.</i> <i>•If the cornice is not salvageable, portions be saved as physical documentation, or photographic documentation be taken to be used as reference for recreating an accurate and exact replica of the original cornice.</i> <i>•The building be removed in a way that does not disturb adjacent historic buildings.</i> <i>•Window and door dimensions and design be documented and used as reference for new windows and doors on the new construction.</i> <i>•Any new construction uses similar materials such as brick veneer, wood/aluminum clad wood windows, and rounded gutters and downspouts.</i> <i>•New construction should be unpainted masonry, unlike the existing one which was inappropriately painted prior to the Jackson Ward District creation.</i> <p>A rehabilitation project for this property was presented to the Commission of Architectural Review in November 2019. The Commission approved the project but had comments about the conditions of the windows. The front porches were never reconstructed.</p>
Conditions for Approval	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drawings of each elevation be submitted for final review and that the new building be no taller than the existing. • Applicant submit a site plan and a context plan to show the new construction and surrounding buildings. • Facade option #1 be used, as the door and window pattern most closely resemble that of the original; however, • Staff recommends that window and door openings be based on the historic dimensions and that a one-story full-width porch be added to the design, based on historic documentation and physical evidence. • Final plans include specifications for the window and door materials.

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Staff Analysis

Guideline Reference	Reference Text	Analysis
Standards For New Construction, page 46.	<i>All new residential and commercial construction, whether in the form of additions or entire buildings should be compatible with the historic features that characterize the setting and context. To protect the context of the surrounding historic district, new construction should reference the materials, features, size, scale, proportions, and massing of the existing historic buildings in its setting.</i>	The new construction proposed for this address needs to have a compatible height with the existing building and the surrounding buildings. The height of the existing building or the proposed building was not submitted to staff. <u>Staff recommends dimensioned drawings be submitted for final review and that the new building be no taller than the existing.</u> All of the buildings on this block of North 1 st Street are two-story brick dwellings. One building is much lower than the rest and has a raised lower level.
Standards For New Construction: Siting, page 46	<i>2. New residential infill construction should respect the prevailing front and side yard setback patterns of the surrounding block. The minimum setbacks evident in most districts reinforce the traditional street wall.</i>	The proposed front and side yard set-backs are not clear, based on the submitted plans. <u>Staff recommends the applicant submit a site plan and a context plan to show the new construction and surrounding buildings.</u>
Standards For New Construction: Form, page 46	<i>1. New construction should use a building form compatible with that found elsewhere in the historic district. Building form refers to the specific combination of massing, size, symmetry, proportions, projections, and roof shapes that lend identity to a building</i>	The existing building is slightly taller than the adjacent building, 522-522.5 North 1 st Street. The form of the current and proposed building is compatible with the buildings in the district, except for the lack of a porch. All of the buildings on this block and the next block have front porches. This building, along with the other buildings on this block have detailed cornices with dentil moldings and large brackets. The applicant has agreed to rebuild the existing cornice. Staff recommends that a drawing of each elevation be submitted with the final review. Two façade design options were submitted. <u>Staff recommends that façade option #1 be used, as the door and window pattern most closely resemble that of the original; however, staff recommends that window and door opening be based on the historic dimensions and that a one-story full width porch be added to the design.</u>
Standards For New Construction: Form, page 46	<i>2. New residential construction should maintain the existing human scale of nearby historic, residential construction in the district.</i>	A Sanborn map from 1905, conveys that this building originally had one-story wooden porches. An old assessor's card has a historic, undated photograph which shows a front porch on this building with thin wooden pillars. <u>Staff recommends that a one-story, full-width front porch be added to the façade of this</u>

		<u>building, the design referencing the historic photograph.</u>
Standards For New Construction: Doors and Windows, page 56	<i>2. The size, proportion and spacing patterns of door and window openings on free-standing new construction should be compatible with patterns established in the district.</i>	<p>The proposed second-floor windows will be very similar to the existing second-floor windows of the historic building. The extant building has windows of the same size on the first and second floor. The proposed windows on the first floor will be as long as the entry doors and transom windows. According to a historic photograph, the first floor used to have much longer windows. Several houses on the east side of the block have long first floor windows. <u>Staff recommends the final plans include specifications for the window materials.</u></p> <p><u>Staff recommends that the window and door openings have the same dimensions of the historic windows based on photographic documentation and physical evidence.</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. Façade of existing building.



Figure 2. Cornice detail.



Figure 3. Separating brick on right side of façade due to failing south wall.



Figure 4. Floor joists separating from interior, bulging wall.



Figure 5. Accessor's Card image 1950s. Full width one story front porch present.



