



**Staff Report**  
**City of Richmond, Virginia**



*Commission of Architectural Review*

3.COA-149482-2024	Final Review	Meeting Date: 6/25/2024
Applicant/Petitioner	Will Gillette – Baker Development Resources	
Project Description	Construct a multifamily dwelling.	
Project Location		
Address: 812-814 North 21 <sup>ST</sup> Street		
Historic District: Union Hill		
<p><b>High-Level Details:</b></p> <p>The applicant requests conceptual review to construct a multi-family building on a vacant lot near the corner of Carrington Street and North 21<sup>st</sup> Street.</p> <p>The new construction will be clad in brick and feature traditional architectural elements found in Union Hill such as a cornice feature and a one story covered front porch. The site will be elevated like other existing buildings on the subject block due to the site’s topography.</p> <p>The building will contain a total of seven dwelling units and parking located at the rear of the property and accessible from the rear alley.</p> <p>The façade and rear will both be similar in design and read as entrances. The front mass will be joined to the rear mass by a slightly inset hyphen containing a side entrance and stair well.</p>		
Staff Recommendation		
Staff Contact	Alex Dandridge, alex.dandridge@rva.gov, (804) 646-6569	
Previous Reviews	The Commission conceptually reviewed this application in May 2024. Overall, the Commission did not have many comments on this project and supported the overall design, massing, and materials.	
Staff Recommendations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• final color specifications be submitted for administrative review and approval.</li> <li>• cladding material for the hyphen be submitted for final review.</li> <li>• decking boards be installed perpendicular to the face of the building on the front and rear, and that they be tongue and groove in profile.</li> <li>• Final fence design and color/stain be submitted for administrative review and approval.</li> </ul>	

## Staff Analysis

Guideline Reference	Reference Text	Analysis
<b>Siting, #2, p. 46</b>	<i>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 existing dwellings on the subject block have varying setbacks due to configuration of North 21 <sup>ST</sup> Street. Based on the plans submitted, the façade of the new building will be aligned with the face of the neighboring building to the south, 810 North 21 <sup>ST</sup> Street. Because of the angle of the street, the new construction will have a deeper setback than 810 North 21 <sup>ST</sup> Street; however, staff finds this appropriate due to the irregular setback patterns of this block.
<b>Siting, #3, p. 46</b>	<i>New buildings should face the most prominent street bordering the site.</i>	The new building will have three entrances. One entrance, which reads as a primary entrance will face North 21 <sup>ST</sup> Street, which is the most prominent street, and the rear entrance will face the alley. The rear entrance will have a full-width, two-story, covered porch. This reads as an entrance; however, it is not uncommon for rear porches in Union Hill to be covered with two stories.  There will be a small, recessed, side entrance within the hyphen.
<b>Form, #1, p. 46</b>	<i>New construction should use a building form compatible with that found elsewhere in the historic district.</i>	Most historic buildings along North 21 <sup>ST</sup> Street are two stories and three bays wide. The new construction will be two stories tall and four bays wide. Given that the primary facade features two entrances, and it reads as a semi-attached house, staff finds the number of bays and stories compatible with the block, and the district.  The building form is atypical of the district. The building will consist of two main masses that are back-to-back and joined by a hyphen. Due to the hyphen, the length of the building is broken up and the massing reads as two distinct buildings that are scaled appropriately for the district. Staff finds that the design decisions have made an otherwise atypical form compatible with the district and an appropriate solution to add density.
<b>Form, #2 and #3, p. 46</b>	<p>2. <i>New residential construction should maintain the existing human scale of nearby historic residential construction in the district.</i></p> <p>3. <i>New residential construction and additions should incorporate human scale elements such as cornices, porches and front steps into their design.</i></p>	Existing historic dwellings on the subject block feature front porches that address the street. While sitting on higher lots, most also feature retaining walls, sidewalks, and stairs that address the public sidewalk.  The new building will feature porches on the front and rear. The front porch will face the main street, North 21 <sup>ST</sup> Street, and the rear porch will face a parking area.  The site plan submitted indicates that there will be a front sidewalk and stairs that lead to the public sidewalk. It does not appear that there will be a retaining wall.
<b>Height, Width, Proportion, &amp; Massing, #1 - 3, p. 47</b>	<p><i>New residential construction should respect the typical height of surrounding residential buildings.</i></p> <p><i>New residential construction should respect the vertical orientation of other</i></p>	The heights of the neighboring buildings were not provided with the application. A context elevation rendering implies that the building will be shorter than the historic building to the south. The dimensioned drawings label the height of the building as 27 feet.

	<p><i>residential properties in surrounding historic districts.</i></p> <p><i>The cornice height should be compatible with that of adjacent historic buildings.</i></p>	<p>PDR files from 2018 indicate that the new construction located at 808 North 21<sup>st</sup> Street was approximately 28 feet in height.</p> <p>The context renderings indicate that the cornice height will be like the neighboring building. Staff notes that there are varying cornice heights on this block.</p>
<p><b>Materials and Colors, #2-4, p. 47</b></p>	<p><i>Materials used in new residential construction should be visually compatible with original materials used throughout the district.</i></p> <p><i>Paint colors used should be similar to the historically appropriate colors already found in the district.</i></p> <p><i>Vinyl, asphalt, and aluminum siding are not permitted for use in City Old and Historic Districts. Other synthetic siding materials with a smooth, untextured finish may be allowed in limited cases, but approval by the Commission is always required.</i></p>	<p>Exterior Materials:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Composite fascia with metal drip edge</li> <li>• Painted HardiPanel Cornice and fascia elements</li> <li>• Composite Brackets</li> <li>• Virginia face Red Brick Veneer</li> <li>• Soldier Coarse Brick window detailing</li> <li>• Row lock brick windowsills</li> <li>• Square Composite, painted columns</li> <li>• Composite decking boards</li> <li>• Aluminum railings</li> <li>• Rear asphalt parking area</li> </ul> <p>Staff finds that these materials are appropriate for new construction and has the following conditions:</p> <p><u>Staff recommends that final color specifications be submitted for administrative review and approval.</u></p> <p><u>Staff recommends that the final cladding material for the hyphen be submitted for final review.</u></p> <p>During the first review, Staff and the Commission recommended that the decking boards be installed perpendicular to the face of the building on the front and rear, and that they be tongue and groove in profile. The applicant has revised the plans to adhere to these recommendations.</p> <p>During the last review, Staff and the Commission recommended that screening be provided for the rear asphalt parking area, screening specification submitted for final review. Screening to be fencing or landscaping.</p> <p>The applicant has revised the plans to show that there will be a rear, wooden privacy fence that will screen the rear parking area and exterior HVAC equipment. <u>Staff recommends that the final fence design and color/stain be submitted for administrative review and approval.</u></p> <p>Windows will be two-over-two aluminum clad wood windows and vertically aligned on the front and rear façade. Windows will be one-over-one aluminum clad wood on the side facades and will be vertically aligned.</p> <p>Exterior doors will be faux paneled fiberglass.</p>
<p><b>Mechanical Equipment, p. 68</b></p>	<p><i>The visual impact of new mechanical equipment should be minimized to protect the historic character of the district.</i></p>	<p>The application indicated that exterior HVAC equipment will be screened by a wooden privacy fence.</p>
<p><b>Administrative Approval for Fences</b></p>	<p><i>Fences may be approved administratively by staff.</i></p>	<p><u>Staff recommends that any proposed fencing on the property be submitted for administrative 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. View of lot looking west.



Figure 2. Subject block context.



Figure 3. Looking north down N. 21<sup>st</sup> Street.



Figure 4. Subject lot.

