



Staff Report
City of Richmond, Virginia



Commission of Architectural Review

10. COA-105888-2022	Conceptual Review Meeting Date: 2/22/2022
Applicant/Petitioner	John Vetrovec
Project Description	Construct a new 2-story duplex with a roof-top deck on a vacant lot.
Project Location	
Address: 313-315 N. 32nd St.	
Historic District: Chimborazo Park	
High-Level Details: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The applicant is proposing to construct a two-story duplex dwelling on a vacant lot. • The units of the duplex will be divided vertically. The applicant notes that the proposed dwelling could be converted into a single-family dwelling in the future. • The proposed dwelling features a two story rear porch and a roof top terrace. 	
Staff Recommendation	Conceptual Review
Staff Contact	Alyson Oliver, alyson.oliver@RVA.gov , 804-646-3709
Previous Reviews	None.
Staff Recommendations	<p>Staff recommends the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The proposed dwelling incorporate a design that is more compatible with the architecture featured on other dwellings found on the surrounding block. • The design of the proposed dwelling be updated so that the rear stairwell projection is less prominent, better blends with the design of the rest of the dwelling, or is better screened. • The proposed lap siding be smooth and without a bead. Final material and color specifications to be submitted to staff for review and approval. • HVAC units and any other mechanical equipment be screened from visibility from the street and alley.

Staff Analysis

Guideline Reference	Reference Text	Analysis
Siting, #2, p. 46	<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>	An exhibit provided by the applicant indicates that the proposed dwelling will be setback approximately 14 feet from the property line, with the porch extending into the setback by approximately 6 feet. This is consistent with the setback of other dwellings found on the same block.
Siting, #3, p. 46	<i>New buildings should face the most prominent street bordering the site.</i>	The proposed dwelling is located along North 32 nd Street and will face the street accordingly.
Form, #1, p. 46	<i>New construction should use a building form compatible with that found elsewhere in the historic district.</i>	<p>Though the form of the proposed dwelling can be found on other dwellings within the district, it is atypical when compared to other houses found on the surrounding block. The dwellings surrounding the subject parcel feature vernacular architecture with asymmetrical cross-gable roofs and projecting bays (see Figures 1 and 3).</p> <p><u>Staff recommends the proposed dwelling incorporate a design that is more compatible with the architecture of other dwellings found on the block.</u></p> <p>Staff also notes that the proposed design incorporates a rear stairwell projection, which provides access to a rooftop deck. This is also a form that is not typically found in the district. <u>Staff recommends that the design of the proposed dwelling be updated so that the rear stairwell projection is less prominent, better blends with the design of the rest of the dwelling, or is better screened.</u></p> <p>Redesigning the roof-form on the front façade in a way that makes the proposed architecture more compatible with the surrounding architecture may allow opportunities to better blend or screen the stairwell projection into the overall design.</p> <p>Staff also notes that the folding door proposed on the north façade is not a typical element found in the district.</p>
Form, #2 and #3, p. 46	<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>	The proposed dwelling incorporates an elevated, covered porch and a simple, historically-inspired cornice. These pedestrian-scale elements are consistent with other human-scale details found in the district.
Height, Width, Proportion, &	<i>New residential construction should respect the typical height of surrounding residential buildings.</i>	An exhibit provided by the applicant indicates that the top of the roof on the proposed dwelling will be approximately 4' lower than

Massing, #1 - 3, p. 47	<i>New residential construction should respect the vertical orientation of other residential properties in surrounding historic districts.</i>	the dwelling immediately adjacent to the south, but is in keeping with the heights of the other dwellings found on the block. Staff finds that the height of the proposed dwelling is generally compatible with the massing of the surrounding dwellings.
	<i>The cornice height should be compatible with that of adjacent historic buildings.</i>	The proposed two-story dwelling features vertically aligned elements that reflect the vertical alignment and form of the other nearby dwellings in the district.
Materials and Colors, #2-4, p. 47	<i>Materials used in new residential construction should be visually compatible with original materials used throughout the district.</i>	The applicant is proposing to use smooth cementitious lap siding as the primary material on the proposed dwelling with a brick masonry foundation. These materials are generally acceptable. <u>Staff recommends that the proposed lap siding be smooth and without a bead. Final material and color specifications to be submitted to staff for review and approval.</u>
	<i>Paint colors used should be similar to the historically appropriate colors already found in the district.</i>	
	<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>	The applicant is also proposing one-over-one, aluminum clad windows, which is generally acceptable.
Mechanical Equipment, p. 68	<i>The visual impact of new mechanical equipment should be minimized to protect the historic character of the district.</i>	<u>Staff recommends that HVAC units and any other mechanical equipment be screened from visibility from the street and alley.</u>

Figures



Figure 1. Vacant Lot. The proposed dwelling will be located on the southern (to the right) portion of the property.

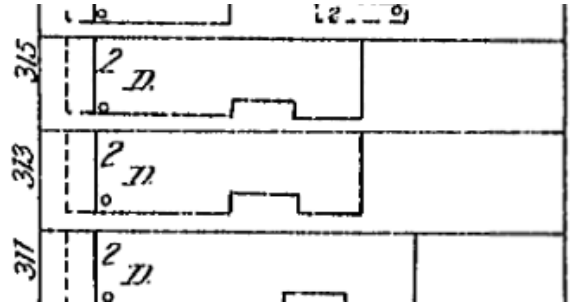


Figure 2. 1924-1925 Sanborn map



Figure 3. View of existing structure across the street from the subject parcel, including a recent infill development (second from left).



Figure 4. Historic photo of the subject parcel (c.a. 1970).