



City of Richmond

City Hall
900 East Broad Street

Meeting Minutes Commission of Architectural Review

Tuesday, February 23, 2021

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, February 23, 2021 at 3:30 PM, you have several options outlined in the following document:

[PDRPRES 2021.089](#) Public Access and Participation Instructions - Commission of Architectural Review

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

Call to Order

Roll Call

Present -- 8 - * Commissioner James W. Klaus, * Commissioner Neville C. Johnson Jr., * Commissioner Ashleigh N. Brewer, * Commissioner Kathleen Morgan, * Commissioner Sean Wheeler, * Commissioner Lawrence Pearson, * Commissioner Mitch Danese and * Commissioner Coleen Bulter Rodriguez

Excused -- 1 - * Commissioner Sanford Bond

Approval of Minutes

January 26, 2021

To be approved at future meeting.

OTHER BUSINESS

Secretary's Report

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

Ms. Jones stated that all 5th floor staff (which includes Planning & Preservation and Land Use) are working remotely as offices are still non-functional due to water damage and extensive mold testing is underway and a return to normal usage date is unknown.

Ms. Jones mentioned that email is the best way to communicate with staff and all meetings and customer assistance are being handled electronically at this time.

Ms. Jones informed the Commission that in terms of current staff responsibilities Will Palmquist is currently dealing with Section 106 matters, with assistance from Ms. Jones; Alex Dandridge is handling the Urban Design Committee; and Matt Everett is providing general administrative support for the division.

Administrative Approval Report

There were no comments or questions regarding the Administrative Approval Report.

Enforcement Report

Ms. Jones reported that there is one enforcement item on the meeting agenda. She also reported that a paint violation on West Grace Street has been resolved and staff is still working on another one which was reviewed by the Commission a few months ago. As per usual, staff are able to work with some members of the public to resolve smaller violations.

A meeting has been planned with members of Property Maintenance and Code Enforcement staff to discuss improving ways to report violations. Staff have recently started reporting all violations using RVA-311, which is a public-based website for reporting violations as well as concerns such as downed trees can be reported.

Other Committee Reports

There were no other committee reports.

Review of National Register Nominations

[NRHP 2021 1](#) St. John's United Holy Church of America

Attachments: [NRHP Nomination](#)

The nomination was presented by Ms. Jones.
Commission Chair Johnson asked if there was any public comment on the nomination.
There was none.

A motion was made by Commissioner Wheeler, seconded by Commissioner Klaus, to recommend approval of the nomination of St. John's United Holy Church of America to the National Register.

The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye -- 8 - Commissioner James W. Klaus, Commissioner Neville C. Johnson Jr., Commissioner Ashleigh N. Brewer, Commissioner Kathleen Morgan, Commissioner Sean Wheeler, Commissioner Lawrence Pearson, Commissioner Mitch Danese and Commissioner Coleen Bulter Rodriguez

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 there is an order to the meeting, starting with the Consent Agenda, which are items earmarked for the staff recommendations to be approved by Commission without formal review, followed by the Regular Agenda, and concluding with the Conceptual Review.

At appropriate times, applicants will have an opportunity to speak in regard to their applications, or to request that their items from the consent agenda.

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 Klaus, seconded by Commissioner Wheeler, to move the 15th item, 3420 East Broad Street, to the Consent Agenda.

The applicant, Ms. Debra Sinnott, stated that she would have no objection to the application being moved to the Consent Agenda.

Commission Chair Johnson asked if there was any public comment.

Ms. Elisabeth Price of Historic Richmond stated that the organization supports the installation of solar panels on historic homes, when and where appropriate, and is supportive of the application with staff conditions regarding the roof slope.

The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye – 8 - Commissioner Sean Wheeler, Commission Chair Neville Johnson, Commissioner James Klaus, Commissioner Mitch Danese, Commissioner Ashleigh Brewer, Commissioner Colleen Butler Rodriguez, Commissioner Kathleen Morgan, Commissioner Lane Pearson
Excused – 1 – Commissioner Sanford Bond

A motion was made by Commissioner Wheeler, seconded by Commissioner Klaus, to move the 12th item, 2325 Venable Street, to the Consent Agenda.

Commission Chair Johnson asked if there was any comment from the applicant, or public comment. There was neither.

The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye – 6 - Commissioner Sean Wheeler, Commission Chair Neville Johnson, Commissioner James Klaus, Commissioner Mitch Danese, Commissioner Ashleigh Brewer, Commissioner Colleen Butler Rodriguez,
No – 1 – Commissioner Kathleen Morgan
Abstain – 1 - Commissioner Lane Pearson
Excused – 1 – Commissioner Sanford Bond

Commissioner Klaus stated that there was a letter of concern received regarding the 1st item on the consent agenda, 2701 East Grace Street, but that he supported retaining it in the Consent Agenda. Commissioner Klaus stated that it would be a heavy lift, but he

expressed confidence that the staff could work with applicants while being mindful of neighborhood concerns.

Commissioner Klaus stated that he was generally in agreement with staff conditions for item #3, 116 West Leigh Street, including the straight run for the steps, but expressed concern regarding the steep slope recommended for the steps, and suggested that this might not be within Zoning code guidelines and if not, this should be addressed.

Commission Chair Johnson stated that there had been letters regarding 2107 East Grace Street, but that conditions seemed favorable for the applicants to work with staff and effectively address neighborhood concerns, since comments from the neighborhood had been largely positive thus far.

Commissioner Pearson stated that due to a potential conflict of interest regarding item 12, 2325 Venable Street, he would have to change his earlier vote to abstain.

Commissioner Morgan stated that she had concerns, although not major ones, regarding the false historic details on the 2325 Venable Street project.

A motion was made by Commissioner Klaus, seconded by Commissioner Rodriguez, to approve the Consent Agenda.

A motion was made by Commissioner Klaus, seconded by Commissioner Rodriguez, to approve the Consent Agenda.

The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye -- 7 - Commissioner James W. Klaus, Commissioner Neville C. Johnson Jr., Commissioner Ashleigh N. Brewer, Commissioner Kathleen Morgan, Commissioner Sean Wheeler, Commissioner Mitch Danese and Commissioner Coleen Bulter Rodriguez

Excused -- 1 - Commissioner Sanford Bond

Abstain -- 1 - Commissioner Lawrence Pearson

1. [COA-086178-2021](#) 2701 E. Grace Street - Construct a new rear shed.

Attachments: [Application and Plans](#)

[Base Map](#)

[Staff Report](#)

A motion was made by Commissioner Klaus, seconded by Commissioner Rodriguez, to approve the application for the reasons cited in the staff report provided the following conditions are met: a different roofing material, rather than the asphalt shingles proposed, be used and specifications be submitted to staff for administrative approval; a contemporary garage door be installed, and specifications be submitted to staff for administrative approval; the fiber cement siding be smooth and unbeaded.

The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye -- 7 - Commissioner James W. Klaus, Commissioner Neville C. Johnson Jr., Commissioner Ashleigh N. Brewer, Commissioner Kathleen Morgan, Commissioner Sean Wheeler, Commissioner Mitch Danese and Commissioner Coleen Bulter Rodriguez

Excused -- 1 - Commissioner Sanford Bond

Abstain -- 1 - Commissioner Lawrence Pearson

2. [COA-086182-2021](#) 608 N. 24th Street - Construct a new rear shed.

Attachments: [Application and Plans](#)

[Base Map](#)

[Staff Report](#)

A motion was made by Commissioner Klaus, seconded by Commissioner Rodriguez, to approve the application for the reasons cited in the staff report provided the following conditions are met: the applicant work with staff to relocate the stairway to not extend past the south wall; the final material specifications including railing profile, materials, and colors be submitted to staff for review and approval; the final window specifications be submitted to staff for review and approval.

The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye -- 7 - Commissioner James W. Klaus, Commissioner Neville C. Johnson Jr., Commissioner Ashleigh N. Brewer, Commissioner Kathleen Morgan, Commissioner Sean Wheeler, Commissioner Mitch Danese and Commissioner Coleen Bulter Rodriguez

Excused -- 1 - Commissioner Sanford Bond

Abstain -- 1 - Commissioner Lawrence Pearson

3. [COA-086191-2021](#) 116 W. Leigh Street - Reconstruct a front porch.

Attachments: [Application and Plans](#)

[Base Map](#)

[Staff Report](#)

A motion was made by Commissioner Klaus, seconded by Commissioner Rodriguez, partially approve the application for the reasons cited in the staff report provided the following conditions are met: the final window specifications be submitted to staff for review and approval; denied the proposed new northernmost window openings on the west elevation, as they would be highly visible from East Main Street and do not align with existing openings on this elevation.

The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye -- 7 - Commissioner James W. Klaus, Commissioner Neville C. Johnson Jr., Commissioner Ashleigh N. Brewer, Commissioner Kathleen Morgan, Commissioner Sean Wheeler, Commissioner Mitch Danese and Commissioner Coleen Bulter Rodriguez

Excused -- 1 - Commissioner Sanford Bond

Abstain -- 1 - Commissioner Lawrence Pearson

4. [COA-086194-2021](#) 2229 Monument Avenue - Construct a new rear roof-top deck, and convert a window opening into a door.

Attachments: [Application and Plans](#)

[Base Map](#)

[Staff Report](#)

A motion was made by Commissioner Klaus, seconded by Commissioner Rodriguez, to approve the application for the reasons cited in the staff report provided the following conditions are met: the wrought iron fence be of a simple design, and specifications be submitted to staff for administrative review and approval; the brick piers be compatible with but differentiated from the existing brick, and brick specifications and colors be submitted to staff for administrative approval.

The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye -- 7 - Commissioner James W. Klaus, Commissioner Neville C. Johnson Jr., Commissioner Ashleigh N. Brewer, Commissioner Kathleen Morgan, Commissioner Sean Wheeler, Commissioner Mitch Danese and Commissioner Coleen Bulter Rodriguez

Excused -- 1 - Commissioner Sanford Bond

Abstain -- 1 - Commissioner Lawrence Pearson

5. [COA-086234-2021](#) 316 W. Leigh Street - Install rear door and staircase and add new fiber cement siding.

Attachments: [Application and Plans](#)

[Base Map](#)

[Staff Report](#)

A motion was made by Commissioner Klaus, seconded by Commissioner Rodriguez, to partially approve the application for the reasons cited in the staff report provided the following conditions are met: additional information regarding any alterations to the door opening for the fire escape on the west elevation be submitted to staff for administrative approval; details for the proposed bike shelter and dumpster screening be submitted to staff for administrative review and approval; the work be performed in conformance with the Part II Tax Credit application approval and conditions; and any additional conditions subsequently imposed by DHR or the National Park Service be provided to staff for administrative review and approval.

The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye -- 7 - Commissioner James W. Klaus, Commissioner Neville C. Johnson Jr., Commissioner Ashleigh N. Brewer, Commissioner Kathleen Morgan, Commissioner Sean Wheeler, Commissioner Mitch Danese and Commissioner Coleen Bulter Rodriguez

Excused -- 1 - Commissioner Sanford Bond

Abstain -- 1 - Commissioner Lawrence Pearson

6. [COA-086244-2021](#) 412 N. 24th Street - Rehabilitate exterior of building; convert a rear window into a door; and construct a rear deck.

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

A motion was made by Commissioner Klaus, seconded by Commissioner Rodriguez, to approve the application for the reasons cited in the staff report provided the following conditions are met: the applicant remove the vertical trim from the design; the applicant use fiber cement siding that is smooth and without a decorative bead or pattern; all final material specifications, including windows, trim, and decking, be submitted to staff for review and approval; the applicant install a fence or other screening to minimize the visual impact of the HVAC equipment.

The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye -- 7 - Commissioner James W. Klaus, Commissioner Neville C. Johnson Jr., Commissioner Ashleigh N. Brewer, Commissioner Kathleen Morgan, Commissioner Sean Wheeler, Commissioner Mitch Danese and Commissioner Coleen Bulter Rodriguez

Excused -- 1 - Commissioner Sanford Bond

Abstain -- 1 - Commissioner Lawrence Pearson

7. [COA-086237-2021](#) 2218 E. Grace Street - Construct a gazebo and outdoor fireplace, install awning on rear elevation.

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

A motion was made by Commissioner Klaus, seconded by Commissioner Rodriguez, to approve the application for the reasons cited in the staff report provided the following conditions are met: the applicant remove the vertical trim from the design; the applicant use fiber cement siding that is smooth and without a decorative bead or pattern; all final material specifications, including windows, trim, and decking, be submitted to staff for review and approval; the applicant install a fence or other screening to minimize the visual impact of the HVAC equipment.

The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye -- 7 - Commissioner James W. Klaus, Commissioner Neville C. Johnson Jr., Commissioner Ashleigh N. Brewer, Commissioner Kathleen Morgan, Commissioner Sean Wheeler, Commissioner Mitch Danese and Commissioner Coleen Bulter Rodriguez

Excused -- 1 - Commissioner Sanford Bond

Abstain -- 1 - Commissioner Lawrence Pearson

8. [COA-086427-2021](#) 316 N. 25th Street - Replace a masonry wall with a frame wall and alter window openings.

Attachments: [Application and Plans](#)

[Base Map](#)

[Staff Report](#)

A motion was made by Commissioner Klaus, seconded by Commissioner Rodriguez, to approve the application for the reasons cited in the staff report provided the following conditions are met: the applicant remove the vertical trim from the design; the applicant use fiber cement siding that is smooth and without a decorative bead or pattern; all final material specifications, including windows, trim, and decking, be submitted to staff for review and approval; the applicant install a fence or other screening to minimize the visual impact of the HVAC equipment.

The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye -- 7 - Commissioner James W. Klaus, Commissioner Neville C. Johnson Jr., Commissioner Ashleigh N. Brewer, Commissioner Kathleen Morgan, Commissioner Sean Wheeler, Commissioner Mitch Danese and Commissioner Coleen Bulter Rodriguez

Excused -- 1 - Commissioner Sanford Bond

Abstain -- 1 - Commissioner Lawrence Pearson

9. [COA-086581-2021](#) 2007 Monument Avenue - Convert an existing window into a doorway and install an ADA lift.

Attachments: [Application and Plans](#)

[Base Map](#)

[Staff Report](#)

A motion was made by Commissioner Klaus, seconded by Commissioner Rodriguez, to approve the application for the reasons cited in the staff report provided the following conditions are met: the applicant remove the vertical trim from the design; the applicant use fiber cement siding that is smooth and without a decorative bead or pattern; all final material specifications, including windows, trim, and decking, be submitted to staff for review and approval; the applicant install a fence or other screening to minimize the visual impact of the HVAC equipment.

The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye -- 7 - Commissioner James W. Klaus, Commissioner Neville C. Johnson Jr., Commissioner Ashleigh N. Brewer, Commissioner Kathleen Morgan, Commissioner Sean Wheeler, Commissioner Mitch Danese and Commissioner Coleen Bulter Rodriguez

Excused -- 1 - Commissioner Sanford Bond

Abstain -- 1 - Commissioner Lawrence Pearson

15. [COA-086174-2021](#) 3420 E. Broad Street - Construct new rear stairs and roof top patio, enlarge basement windows, and install solar panels.

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

A motion was made by Commissioner Klaus, seconded by Commissioner Rodriguez, to approve the application for the reasons cited in the staff report provided the following conditions are met: the east elevation basement level window sills be lowered to maintain the original height, and the new windows fit within the existing jambs; the east elevation first-floor-level existing transom opening be maintained, the new window be a one-over-one to maintain the open appearance, the infill masonry be recessed, and the new window fit within the existing jambs to maintain the original width; the new rear stair railing be a Richmond Rail, not the nailed-up pockets shown on the elevations; and the railings be painted or stained a neutral color found on the Commission palette; the rooftop deck railing be painted a dark color found on the Commission palette; the roof slope remain intact with the installation of the solar panels
The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye -- 7 - Commissioner James W. Klaus, Commissioner Neville C. Johnson Jr.,
Commissioner Ashleigh N. Brewer, Commissioner Kathleen Morgan, Commissioner Sean Wheeler, Commissioner Mitch Danese and Commissioner Coleen Bulter Rodriguez

Excused -- 1 - Commissioner Sanford Bond

Abstain -- 1 - Commissioner Lawrence Pearson

12. [COA-086190-2021](#) 2325 Venable Street - Construct a new two-story, single-family detached residence.

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

A motion was made by Commissioner Klaus, seconded by Commissioner Rodriguez, to approve the application for the reasons cited in the staff report provided the following conditions are met: the inconsistencies between the narrative and the elevations, including the window patterns, materials, and colors, be corrected prior to applying for building permits.
The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye -- 7 - Commissioner James W. Klaus, Commissioner Neville C. Johnson Jr.,
Commissioner Ashleigh N. Brewer, Commissioner Kathleen Morgan, Commissioner Sean Wheeler, Commissioner Mitch Danese and Commissioner Coleen Bulter Rodriguez

Excused -- 1 - Commissioner Sanford Bond

Abstain -- 1 - Commissioner Lawrence Pearson

REGULAR AGENDA

10. [COA-086192-2021](#) 2012 W. Grace Street - Alter roof form of a rear carriage house.

Attachments: [Application and Plans \(2/23/2021\)](#)

[Base Map](#)

[Staff Report \(2/23/2021\)](#)

[Application and Plans](#)

[Staff Report](#)

The application was presented by Ms. Jones.

Commissioner Danese asked if the project had had any permits. Ms. Jones stated that it had not.

The applicant, Mr. Greg Snyder, stated that the intent with the project had not been to change the look and feel of the property, but only to address an emergency roof problem. He explained that the roof was assessed by repair people, who found that the collar ties had been cut and that the brick was unstable. A mason was hired to attempt to rebuild the existing roof structure, in the historic slope, with historic lime mortar, but the roof again began to collapse. Mr. Snyder stated that many of the buildings in the area of the subject property are in poor condition, without historically appropriate repairs, and that he had put a lot of money into repairs thus far. Mr. Snyder stated that the roof slope has remained the same but that it was necessary to raise the level.

Commissioner Pearson asked the applicant to explain the relevance of the other violations in the neighborhood, which the applicant had just mentioned. Mr. Snyder stated that he wished to retain the historic look and feel of his property.

Commissioner Johnson stated that the presentation materials describe the property as a one-bedroom, one-bath carriage house guest suite asked for clarification regarding which floor is pictured in the photos, and whether the home office space is located in the carriage house or in the main house on the property. Mr. Snyder stated that the photo mentioned by Commissioner Johnson is of the carriage house and is the one provided by the realtor when Mr. Snyder purchased the property. Mr. Snyder stated that the carriage house was sold as a one-bedroom studio with a shower and other amenities, which turned out to have damage at the time of purchase. Mr. Snyder stated that his home office is located in the carriage house.

Commission Chair Johnson asked if Mr. Snyder had on previous occasions gone through the CAR process of approval, or the process of acquiring building permits, and whether he had been aware that the house was in a historic district. Mr. Snyder stated that previous work had been electrical repairs and work of that nature, for which third parties would have acquired permits. Mr. Snyder stated that he had not been familiar with the process associated with exterior work in a historic district. Mr. Snyder stated that he had experienced delays in getting repair people to respond to the leak situation in the carriage house.

Commissioner Johnson asked again if Mr. Snyder had been aware that he was in a CAR district.

Mr. Snyder stated that he did not think that he had been aware that his property was in a CAR district, and that he had thought it was only necessary to apply for building permits. Commissioner Rodriguez asked Mr. Snyder if he had built the West Grace Street Association website, as he had mentioned when introducing himself. Mr. Snyder

confirmed this. Commissioner Rodriguez stated that the West Grace Street Association website states on its first page that his property is in a Richmond City Old and Historic District.

Commissioner Rodriguez stated that in the diagram submitted, the roof slant is shown, but does not show if the applicant intends to build back the parapet wall higher than the roof line, as it is in the original structure. Mr. Snyder stated that he believed the details are in the description provided, and include the historic brick which has been removed being placed back up to the soffit, as it was before.

Commissioner Rodriguez stated that at the rear of the building there was originally a taller parapet wall above the soffit, and asked if it was the applicant's intent to restore this.

Mr. Snyder stated that the applicants were going to make it look the exact same, and that he believed that what was previously there was some basic boards that went around, almost like moulding that went around the building on that side. Commissioner Rodriguez stated that, on the back face of the building where the garage door is located, there is an entire brick wall that goes up higher than the roof line, and that it would probably be necessary to work with staff on the details of this portion of the work plan.

Mr. Snyder stated that the applicants' goal was to make it look exactly as it did before. Commission Chair Johnson stated that intent is great, and that applicants frequently inform the Commission of what they say they are going to do, but if those details are not specified in the terms of the Commission's approval, the applicants do not carry it out; therefore, details in writing will be necessary in order to insure that the work is actually done in the manner promised. Mr. Snyder agreed to this.

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 Morgan, seconded by Commissioner Danese, to defer the application to allow the applicant the opportunity to provide additional information in a subsequent application.

Commissioner Morgan stated that she heard the applicant saying it would be the exact same, but that this is simply not true; it will not be exactly the same. Commissioner Klaus expressed agreement with Commissioner Morgan, and with Commissioner Rodriguez regarding her concerns about the height of the roof relative to the parapet wall height, and stated that the roof slope may be the same, but that it appears from the plans that there would be no parapet at all in the front. Commissioner Klaus stated that the plans as submitted entailed raising the roof by several feet, and that if the plans were for a design that was more modernist and not trying to be consistent with the historic appearance of the building, this might actually be easier to approve.

Commissioner Klaus stated that he did not see how the building could be how it was before at its current height.

Commissioner Sanford Bond joined the meeting at about this juncture, and expressed agreement with Commissioner Klaus. Commission Chair Johnson stated to the applicant that more details would be needed, and that the applicant should come back before the Commission with a proposal that differentiates the design with increased height from the original structure.

A motion was made by Commission Chair Morgan, seconded by Commissioner Danese, to defer the application to allow the applicant the opportunity to provide additional information in a subsequent application.

The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye -- 8 - Commissioner Sanford Bond, Commissioner James W. Klaus, Commissioner Neville C. Johnson Jr., Commissioner Ashleigh N. Brewer, Commissioner Kathleen Morgan, Commissioner Lawrence Pearson, Commissioner Mitch Danese and Commissioner Coleen Bulter Rodriguez

Excused -- 1 - Commissioner Sean Wheeler

11. [COA-086233-2021](#) 813 N. 28th Street - Install an electronic freestanding sign.

Attachments: [Application and Plans](#)

[Base Map](#)

[Staff Report](#)

The application was presented by Ms. Jones.

Mr. Robert Stone of Richmond DPU stated that he was not aware of anyone from Richmond Public Schools present at the meeting. Mr. Stone stated that the proposal is in response from RPS and the Richmond School board to add a small LED banner strip marquee modification to the existing sign, and to add an additional sign by the main entrance to the school, with a larger LED panel. Commission Chair Johnson asked about the reason for the sign modification, and the additional signage.

Mr. Michael McIntyre, Project Manager with AECOM, stated that the applicants do not wish to alter the raised lettering of the existing sign, but do wish to have a second sign of the same dimensions, materials, and design style as the existing sign, with an LED display for announcements and messages instead of the raised lettering of the existing sign. Mr. McIntyre stated that the school board had requested the additional sign to be used for messages to parents and the neighborhood, in both Spanish and English.

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 Commissioner Danese, seconded by Commissioner Morgan, to deny the application for window replacement for the reasons cited in the staff report, and recommend that the applicant work with staff on a lighting plan for the existing sign that can be administratively approved.

Commissioner Klaus pointed out that an identical signage request by the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts had been denied, and that signs such as the one proposed are generally not allowed in a historic district.

A motion was made by Commissioner Danese, seconded by Commissioner Morgan, to deny the application for window replacement for the reasons cited in the staff report, and recommend that the applicant work with staff on a lighting plan for the existing sign that can be administratively approved.

The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye -- 9 - Commissioner Sanford Bond, Commissioner James W. Klaus, Commissioner Neville C. Johnson Jr., Commissioner Ashleigh N. Brewer, Commissioner Kathleen Morgan, Commissioner Sean Wheeler, Commissioner Lawrence Pearson, Commissioner Mitch Danese and Commissioner Coleen Bulter Rodriguez

13. [COA-086499-2021](#) 304 N. 21st Street - Partial demolition and rehabilitation of an existing masonry garage building; construct eight new townhouses.

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

The application was presented by Ms. Jones. Ms. Jones stated that a few public comment letters had been received regarding this application.

Commissioner Morgan stated that she would have to recuse herself from review of this application.

Commissioner Wheeler asked if there was information provided about the HVAC mechanicals for the existing building. Ms. Jones stated that this would be a good question for the applicants to respond to.

Commissioner Pearson asked, regarding the fiber cement panels proposed for the new construction, if staff had a particular recommendation for the materials. Commissioner Pearson stated that he was less concerned about the rear than about the front façades of the buildings, where the material is inset around the windows on the first and second floors. Ms. Jones stated that staff's concern had been primarily about the number of materials proposed for the highly visible façade elevations, including the inset panels, and that staff would be open to specific Commission suggestions for working with the applicants on those details.

Ms. Catherine Easterling introduced herself as well as the owner, Zach Frederick, and Heather Grutzius of 510 Architects. Ms. Easterling expressed her appreciation for the staff presentation, and for the Commission feedback at the December 2020 CAR meeting, which she stated was very helpful in enabling the applicants to arrive at a distant that fits within the guidelines and does not overwhelm the historic single-family homes in the district.

Ms. Easterling stated that the property site is a unique one in the district, as the Shockoe Valley City Old and Historic District tends to be industrial and larger in scale and this property, though in the district, is adjacent to another neighborhood with smaller-scale residential buildings, as well as the St. John's Church and Church Hill North districts. Ms. Easterling stated that the applicants would be glad to work with Commission and Zoning staff to address any necessary refinements and changes.

Ms. Easterling stated that the applicants were concerned about the staff recommendation that the paired door design on the east elevation be denied. The doors had been arrived at as a solution for trash can placement, in response to neighborhood concerns that had been expressed about having numerous trash cans in the alley. Ms. Easterling stated that there would also be residential units in the garage building, which would also have a need to conceal their trash receptacles. Ms. Easterling stated that the simple metal double doors would be unobtrusive, would not be highly visible once the new infill construction is completed, and could be painted in such a way to further reduce their

visibility. Regarding the new doors on the front elevation, Ms. Easterling stated that the applicants' intent was to restore the historic opening to its historic dimensions, and that they would make sure it conformed to the parameters of the historic opening.

Ms. Easterling stated that the additional height of the top, third floor is due to the inclusion of a parapet which is intended to conceal some rooftop HVAC machinery. Ms. Easterling stated that the brick cladding material on the second floor could potentially be raised, which could create a better-proportioned appearance. Ms. Easterling stated that, since the grade slopes down at the northernmost side, it did not seem necessary to reduce the height of the building on that side.

In terms of materials, Ms. Easterling stated that the applicants decided to use fiber cement panels for the inset areas around the windows on the front façade as a response to Commission comments that the design could be more modern.

Ms. Grutzius stated that the existing building would contain small residential condos and that the applicants hoped to contain the HVAC equipment entirely within the building. Ms. Grutzius stated that the small trash room was intended to contain a trash compactor and a larger recycling area which would be serviced by a trash removal company, and thus the double doors would allow access for both residents and the removal company. Ms. Grutzius stated that due to the tight space between the back of the planned townhomes and the existing building, it will be challenging to have trash pickup next to the townhomes, and it also does not seem feasible to have city trash pickup for those residents, as this would require hauling trash some distance uphill.

Ms. Grutzius stated that the applicants would be open to reducing the number of materials and that the applicants are open to suggestions, and that they do like that the building has a modern aesthetic; the small size lends itself to an open floor plan. Ms. Grutzius continued that the applicants would also be open to ways of making the proportions work more harmoniously, but that they do not see a better location for the townhome units than having them on the roofs, as currently proposed, with the concealment provided by the front and rear parapets.

Commissioner Wheeler asked if the applicants had considered filling in more of the Broad Street façade.

Ms. Easterling stated that maintaining room for vehicle movement and parking had been deemed crucial, and this prevented putting more units along Broad Street, although the proposed micro-unit was brought closer to the street, which did substantially increase the Broad Street-facing area of the project. Commissioner Wheeler stated that it looked as if, were the project to go further in, this would yield an additional micro-unit.

Commission Chair Johnson asked for detail about the parking spaces, stating that parking was one of the areas of concern brought up by neighbors. Ms. Grutzius stated that the units on Broad Street do not have dedicated garages, and have one parking space per unit, while all the houses on North 21st Street would have garages built in. Commission Chair Johnson asked for totals of all types of parking for the residents. Ms. Grutzius stated that there would be 17 total, 12 surface and 5 garaged.

Commissioner Wheeler stated that he had some concerns about outdoor HVAC condenser units for the existing building. Commissioner Wheeler stated that, unless there is a way to have an open-air space within the building, it seemed as if it would be necessary to place the HVAC equipment outside, and suggested having a corral for it. Ms. Grutzius stated that because the units are small, that applicants were hoping to use a mini split HVAC machines which would not require a condenser. Ms. Grutzius stated that the applicants are not at the stage of having this fully designed, so the need for an

external condenser could arise. Commission Chair Johnson stated that even mini split HVAC units need some sort of outside condenser unit, so the applicants should incorporate a corral into their plans regardless of their intent for the HVAC equipment. Commissioner Wheeler stated that the Commission would like to avoid having the HVAC machinery on the roof.

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

Commission Chair Johnson pointed out that there had been comment letters from the public.

A motion was made by Commissioner Wheeler, seconded by Commission Chair Johnson, to approve the application for the reasons cited in the staff report provided the following conditions are met: for 2018 E Broad Street: the paired door opening in the east elevation be located in the footprint of the demolished carport section and be a roll-up door if needed to accommodate trucks; the new windows in the former garage bays fit within the existing openings; the new doors in the re-opened former garage bays be the same size and width as the historic opening; the infill masonry for the door to window conversion be recessed to maintain the appearance of the door opening; the new opening on the rear elevation not increase the width of the opening; if outdoor condenser units are needed they be located on the ground, not the roof, and screened from view; the skylights be installed flush with the roof slope; any replacement materials match the historic materials in design, composition, texture, profile, size, and color; the final window and door specifications be submitted to staff for review and approval;

for 304 N. 21st Street: the applicant consider reducing the height of the top floor to be consistent with the other two floors or increase the amount of red brick to reduce the appearance of the third floor; the applicant provide a transition on the northernmost end unit between the historic building and the new construction; a consistent material be used on the new-construction buildings and the applicant continue to work with staff on the material and color palette during the special use permit review process; the applicant submit specifications for windows that are either wood or aluminum-clad wood for review and approval; the applicant continue to work with Commission and Land Use Administration staff on the proposed screening during the special use permit application review process; the applicant consider providing a location for the trash receptacles in each garage space for the individual townhouses; a line-of-sight drawing from East Broad Street be submitted to indicate the visibility of the rooftop HVAC units for review during the special use permit review process.

Ms. Easterling asked for clarification regarding pushing the trash room doors out, and expressed concern about blocking the drive aisle. Commissioner Wheeler stated that his meaning was that it should fall within the footprint of the former addition, slated to be demolished.

Commission Chair Johnson stated that it seemed as if a dumpster would be typical and probably necessary, and that the applicants should make sure there is room for a truck to be able to pick up the dumpster as needed.

Commissioner Pearson asked for clarification regarding Commissioner Wheeler's additions and alterations to the staff recommendations. Ms. Jones summarized the staff conditions and Commission additions.

Commissioner Pearson stated that he supported staff recommendations about the

materials, and that he would not be supportive of the panels as submitted.

Commissioner Wheeler asked the applicants if there would be painted brick on the new structure. Ms. Grutzius stated that this was intentional, and that it would correspond to the painted parapet of the existing building. Ms. Jones stated that this would fall within the condition of working with the applicant to revise materials.

A motion was made by Commissioner Wheeler, seconded by Commission Chair Johnson, to approve the application for the reasons cited in the staff report provided the following conditions are met: for 2018 E Broad Street: the paired door opening in the east elevation be located in the footprint of the demolished carport section and be a roll-up door if needed to accommodate trucks; the new windows in the former garage bays fit within the existing openings; the new doors in the re-opened former garage bays be the same size and width as the historic opening; the infill masonry for the door to window conversion be recessed to maintain the appearance of the door opening; the new opening on the rear elevation not increase the width of the opening; if outdoor condenser units are needed they be located on the ground, not the roof, and screened from view; the skylights be installed flush with the roof slope; any replacement materials match the historic materials in design, composition, texture, profile, size, and color; the final window and door specifications be submitted to staff for review and approval;

for 304 N. 21st Street: the applicant consider reducing the height of the top floor to be consistent with the other two floors or increase the amount of red brick to reduce the appearance of the third floor; the applicant provide a transition on the northernmost end unit between the historic building and the new construction; a consistent material be used on the new-construction buildings and the applicant continue to work with staff on the material and color palette during the special use permit review process; the applicant submit specifications for windows that are either wood or aluminum-clad wood for review and approval; the applicant continue to work with Commission and Land Use Administration staff on the proposed screening during the special use permit application review process; the applicant consider providing a location for the trash receptacles in each garage space for the individual townhouses; a line-of-sight drawing from East Broad Street be submitted to indicate the visibility of the rooftop HVAC units for review during the special use permit review process.

The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye -- 8 - Commissioner Sanford Bond, Commissioner James W. Klaus, Commissioner Neville C. Johnson Jr., Commissioner Ashleigh N. Brewer, Commissioner Sean Wheeler, Commissioner Lawrence Pearson, Commissioner Mitch Danese and Commissioner Coleen Bulter Rodriguez

Abstain -- 1 - Commissioner Kathleen Morgan

14. [COA-086186-2021](#) 311-313 N. 33rd Street - Reconstruct front and rear railings and relocate rear porch stairs.

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

The application was presented by Ms. Jones.

The applicant, Ms. Tia Bouman, stated that the buildings are currently connected via a party wall, and that the steps do not meet current building codes. Ms. Bouman stated that maintaining the current layout of steps, with each set having its own individual porch, would cause the landings at the top and bottom to be quite small, and that this is why she changed the layout to connect the two stairs and bring them out toward the tree which is currently on the property. Ms. Bouman stated that if the roof is an issue, she could keep it separated, but that she was not certain how it could be better laid out while still being in keeping with the surrounding buildings. Ms. Bouman stated that the front porch is in very poor condition, and that with the porch renovations she planned to maintain the existing paint colors, and match the railing and other woodwork to those of neighboring porches.

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 Commission Chair Johnson, seconded by Commissioner Klaus, to partially approve the application for the reasons cited in the staff report provided the following conditions are met: denial of the proposal to combine the two rear porches; any necessary repairs to the rear porch roof be submitted to staff for review and approval; approval of the new railing for the second floor with the condition that it matches the specifications for Richmond Rail, including a top and bottom rail, and balusters that are rectangular in section and fitted into recesses between the top and bottom rail ;the exterior stairs be reconfigured as two separate staircases, and the revised plans be submitted to staff for review and approval, and the porch railings be Richmond Rail painted or stained a neutral color found on the Commission palette.

Commissioner Wheeler stated that removing the stairs from their current configuration would open up the window that is situated on the porch, and that the question was whether the Commission would require the applicant to build one or two sets of stairs.

Commission Chair Johnson stated that he was not sure if there was a lot limitation, and that it was not clear why the proposed layout has the stairs coming down to a landing and then going off to the side. Ms. Bouman stated that there is a large tree and that this is part of the reason for the proposed configuration, with the stairs going to right and left. Commission Chair Johnson stated that he had seen the tree, but that the stairs could come down in a different location.

Commission Chair Johnson stated that he understood the applicant's intent, and that he had seen a configuration in a non-historic district in which stairs were placed in between two porches, with access in the center, but that he was not sure if that could be done in this case, and whether that would even be acceptable.

Commissioner Klaus asked the applicant if the reason for the proposed change to the stairs' configuration was that the current configuration takes up so much otherwise usable space, without being usable as balconies.

Ms. Bouman stated that this is one reason for the proposed change, and the other is that the stairs are currently much steeper than the building code allows.

Commissioner Klaus stated that the staff concern seems to be that it looks like one big porch at the back, and suggested a compromise could be that the porch not be covered at the top, in which case it would still look like two separate porches. Commission Chair Johnson stated that he would be amenable to some such solution, as long as the roof line and the porches are not being connected.

Commissioner Wheeler suggested that putting in two separate stairs would be another option, and would take up about the same footprint. Commissioner Danese stated that that would seem to change the entire look of the back of the house, which would go against the Guidelines. Commissioner Danese stated that this area of the house is fairly visible.

Commissioner Klaus suggested that there be two stairways, like now, with the same angle as now, but moved to the exterior of the existing deck, and not extending into the backyard. Commissioner Klaus suggested that this would be better for the applicant and would also be more typical historically and meet safety requirements.

Commissioners Danese and Johnson expressed agreement with Commissioner Klaus' suggestion.

Commissioner Wheeler stated that the stairs going up to the first level might have to come out as well.

Commissioner Klaus stated that they might also potentially have to be moved to the other side.

Ms. Bouman stated that she would be amenable to the suggested compromise.

Commissioners Johnson and Klaus withdrew the motion.

A motion was made by Commission Chair Klaus, seconded by Commission Chair Johnson, to partially approve the application for the reasons cited in the staff report provided the following conditions are met: denial of the proposal to combine the two rear porches and instead the applicant move the stairs to the exterior in the same direction as the current stairs as allowed by code; change the first floor stairs if necessary, and the revised plans be submitted to staff for review and approval; any necessary repairs to the rear porch roof be submitted to staff for review and approval; approval of the new railing for the second floor front elevation with the condition that it matches the specifications for Richmond Rail, including a top and bottom rail, and balusters that are rectangular in section and fitted into recesses between the top and bottom rail; and the porch railings be painted or stained a neutral color found on the Commission palette.

A motion was made by Commission Chair Klaus, seconded by Commission Chair Johnson, to partially approve the application for the reasons cited in the staff report provided the following conditions are met: denial of the proposal to combine the two rear porches and instead the applicant move the stairs to the exterior in the same direction as the current stairs as allowed by code; change the first floor stairs if necessary, and the revised plans be submitted to staff for review and approval; any necessary repairs to the rear porch roof be submitted to staff for review and approval; approval of the new railing for the second floor front elevation with the condition that it matches the specifications for Richmond Rail, including a top and bottom rail, and balusters that are rectangular in section and fitted into recesses between the top and bottom rail; and the porch railings be painted or stained a neutral color found on the Commission palette.

The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye -- 9 - Commissioner Sanford Bond, Commissioner James W. Klaus, Commissioner Neville C. Johnson Jr., Commissioner Ashleigh N. Brewer, Commissioner Kathleen Morgan, Commissioner Sean Wheeler, Commissioner Lawrence Pearson, Commissioner Mitch Danese and Commissioner Coleen Bulter Rodriguez

CONCEPTUAL REVIEW

16. [COA-086180-2021](#) 803 Jessamine Street - Construct a new three-story, single-family detached residence.

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

Commissioners Pearson and Danese stated that they would have to recuse themselves from review of this application.

The application was presented by Ms. Jones.

The applicant, Mr. Gregory Shron, stated that he had had the opportunity to meet with staff prior to the meeting in order to discuss their comments and concerns, and that he had in mind some straightforward ways to simplify the exterior palette. Mr. Shron stated that the applicants would propose a revision to a large-format reveal panel on the third floor, and eliminate the contrasting wood-look siding on the rear and substitute something that relates more to the third-floor palette.

Mr. Shron stated that he would be interested to know what staff thinks of the contrasting bay on the front of the proposed design. Mr. Shron stated that he is not committed to having a stained wood type of finish, but that he would like there to be some sort of contrast or visual interest, and a focal point of some sort for the projecting bay.

Mr. Shron stated that Center Creek Homes generally strives to stay in keeping with the scale, proportion, and rhythmic patterns of the historic neighborhoods, while exploring different contemporary expressions of materials and details.

Commission Chair Johnson asked if there was any public comment.

Ms. Nancy Lampert expressed concern about the height of the project, and stated that a similar proposed project had been brought down by the use of an English basement design. Ms. Lampert stated that the different height of the project will skew the appearance of the area, and that the adjoining vacant lot is church parking and thus not likely to be developed in the near future. Ms. Lampert stated that other modern construction in the area had been respectful of the height and the cottage-like norms of the area.

Mr. Charlie Field stated that the house next to the project site was the oldest house in the area, and is elevated due to the City leveling the streets when the area was annexed. Mr. Field suggested that the applicant could move their proposed building down into the ground to match the floor levels of the adjacent historic properties, thus reducing the height without sacrificing interior space. Mr. Field stated that the lot is small and that three stories are probably necessary in order to have three baths, three bedrooms, and an open floor plan. Mr. Field stated that the house around the corner has a first floor level that is a floor above the street.

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

Mr. Shron stated that the applicants would be submitting an application to the Board of Zoning Appeals for a front setback variance. Mr. Shron stated that the area's zoning does

not in general convey a setback requirement, but the setback of the houses next door, which were built in 2006, establishes a setback norm which, barring a variance, the applicants would be obliged to observe.

Commissioner Brewer expressed agreement with staff regarding the busyness of the material palette. Commissioner Brewer stated that she liked the general look of the project but that some of the materials and colors could be scaled back to reduce the busy appearance, and that the third-floor bump-out in the back is highly visible from the corner and is not a form that fits well with the neighborhood.

Commissioner Rodriguez asked if the door on the third floor that goes directly to the toilet would be frosted. Mr. Shron stated that this would be a frosted window, and that this was mislabeled as a door in the plans. Commissioner Rodriguez expressed agreement with Commissioner Brewer's comments.

Commissioner Klaus stated that this is a different sort of neighborhood from other projects which Mr. Shron has done, and that the applicants have not picked up on stylistic nuances of the more horizontally oriented houses in this area. Commissioner Klaus stated that he would like to see some sort of conversation between the proposed building and its neighbors, and cited as an example of this disconnect that the proposed building has no front porch. Commissioner Klaus stated that the building's incongruity is more of an issue than its height.

Commissioner Wheeler stated that he is appreciative of the concept and aesthetic of this infill project, and commented that it is almost the inverse of an English basement design. Commissioner Wheeler expressed general agreement with staff and Commission comments, but suggested not changing the materials at the 3rd level, and instead making the siding appearance more continuous from the lower levels to the 3rd floor. Commissioner Wheeler stated that the proposed height did not bother him too much, but expressed agreement with Mr. Field's suggestion about lowering the level to match that of the historic house adjoining. Commissioner Wheeler stated that dropping the height by a step or two could have an interesting effect on the massing. Commissioner Wheeler stated that a porch would be nice and would help tie the building into the neighborhood, but that he understood there are site constraints.

Commissioner Morgan stated that she had no comments to add.

Commissioner Bond appeared to have left the meeting at this juncture.

The application was conceptually reviewed. The Commission discussed the proposal with the applicant and made recommendations in an advisory capacity. A record of the comments will be made available to the applicant upon the approval of the meeting minutes.

Adjournment