




Staff Report
City of Richmond, Virginia



Commission of Architectural Review

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| 14.COA-150915-2024 | Conceptual Review | Meeting Date: 7/23/2024 |
| Applicant/Petitioner | Will Gillette, Baker Development Resources | |
| Project Description | Construct a new, three-story dwelling | |
| Project Location |  | |
| Address 2201 Venable Street | | |
| Historic District: Union Hill | | |
| <p>High-Level Details:</p> <p>The applicant proposes to construct a detached dwelling on the corner of Venable and 22nd streets</p> <p>The dwelling will be three-stories in height. There will be a three-sided, two-story bay on the corner with a roof top balcony accessed from the third floor. The dwelling will be clad with lap siding and ranked 2-over-2 windows on the façade and west elevation and have a decorative cornice at the roof line.</p> | | |
| Staff Recommendation | Conceptual Review | |
| Staff Contact | Alex Dandridge, alex.dandridge@rva.gov, (804) 646-6569 | |
| Previous Reviews | None. | |
| Conditions for Approval | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce the height to two-stories like the historic dwellings in the subject block • Set the dwelling back from the property line like the adjacent dwellings to the east • Eliminate the corner bay and incorporate a full façade porch | |

Staff Analysis

| Guideline Reference | Reference Text | Analysis |
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| 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</i> | The new construction will be located on the southwest corner of a largely intact block primarily composed of two-story, Italianate, and Victorian-influenced, detached frame dwellings. The two-story, frame dwelling immediately to the east, and a single, two-story, brick dwelling near the eastern end of the block are set over English basements. All the dwellings are set back from |

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| | <i>construction should reference the materials, features, size, scale, proportions, and massing of the existing historic buildings in its setting.</i> | <p>the sidewalk with small front yards enclosed by fences. The houses all have full façade front porches except for a pair of attached earlier Greek Revival dwellings on the eastern corner that have porticoes at the entrances. The block directly north across Venable Street, while not as intact, is composed of pairs of brick and frame, two-story Victorian-inspired dwellings with full façade porches.</p> <p>The new construction will be three stories in height and set close to the sidewalk. In lieu of a porch, the new dwelling has a recessed, two-story, three-sided bay, that addresses the corner, with a roof top terrace. This is an architectural form not found in the Union Hill District. The dwelling will be frame, with ranked windows and a decorative cornice -- features that reference the neighboring buildings. <u>Staff recommends that the new construction incorporate more traditional architectural elements commonly found in the district and on this residential block, especially including: two-stories, a front yard setback, and a front porch.</u></p> |
| 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> | <p>The site plan provided indicates that there will be a 10" front yard setback from the property line. The application also refers to the prior development pattern for the property which was a brick commercial building set close to the street with a transparent storefront wrapping the corner. Corner brick commercial buildings in Union Hill do sit closer to the property lines and proud of their residential neighbors. They also feature large transparent sections at the corner. <u>Staff recommends that the setback for the new dwelling be like that of the existing residential precedent on the subject block to continue the existing street wall.</u></p> |
| 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> | <p>Massing: The massing of the proposed new dwelling is taller than what is seen on the subject block. The recessed, two-story, three-sided bay on the corner with a roof top terrace is a form not found in the district.</p> <p>Symmetry: The new construction is generally symmetrical but the recessed, two-story, three-sided bay on the corner with a roof top terrace is a form not found in the district.</p> <p>Proportions: The proposed dwelling is taller than existing historic residential buildings on this subject block in Union Hill and the recessed, two-story, three-sided bay on the corner with a roof top terrace is a form not found in the district.</p> <p>Projections: the proposed dwelling will feature a roof-top terrace on the corner while not a projection it is a feature not found in the district.</p> <p>Roof shapes: The roof shape of the proposed new construction is in-keeping with roof shapes and forms found in the Union Hill City Old and Historic District except for the two-story bay with a roof-top terrace.</p> |
| Standards For New Construction: Form, page 46 | <i>2. New residential construction should maintain the existing human scale of</i> | <p>As proposed, the new construction will not feature any human scale elements. Common human scale features</p> |

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| | <i>nearby historic, residential construction in the district.</i> | <p>in the Union Hill City Old and Historic District include front porches and low front yard picket fences.</p> <p>The dwelling is set near the sidewalk and lacks a yard and front porch. It will have a simple entrance in the corner of the bay that is approached by a few steps and an uncovered landing. The corner bay, unlike an open porch, lacks transparency. The corner landing and steps is a feature not found in the district. <u>Staff recommends that the dwelling feature a deeper set back and a full width, covered front porch with a roof form that resembles adjacent dwellings (visible/pitched roof form).</u></p> |
| Standards for New Construction: Height, Width, Proportion & Massing, page 47 | <p>1. <i>New residential construction should respect the typical height of surrounding residential buildings.</i></p> <p>2. <i>New residential construction should respect the vertical orientation typical of other residential properties in surrounding historic districts. New designs that call for wide massing should look to the project's local district for precedent. For example, full-block-long row house compositions are rare in Richmond. New residential buildings that occupy more than one third of a block face should still employ bays as an organizational device, but the new building should read as a single piece of architecture.</i></p> <p>3. <i>The cornice height should be compatible with that of adjacent historic buildings.</i></p> | <p>Most of the historic dwellings in this block of Venable Street, on both the north and south sides, are two stories in height except for two-dwellings that are set on English basements. <u>Staff recommends that the applicant reduce the height of the dwelling by one story to better reference the typical height of residential buildings on the subject block.</u></p> <p>The historic dwellings on the block are three-bays wide with ranked windows on the façade. There is a notable absence of projecting bays in this area. The proposed recessed, two-story, three-sided bay on the corner with a roof top terrace is a form not found in the district. <u>Staff recommends that two-story, three-sided bay on the corner be eliminated, and a compatible, transparent porch element be introduced.</u></p> <p>No context elevations or building heights were provided. <u>Staff recommends that dimensioned context elevations be provided for final review.</u></p> |
| Standards for New Construction: Materials & Colors, page 47 | 2. <i>Materials used in new residential construction should be visually compatible with original materials used throughout the district.</i> | <p>The new dwelling will be clad in horizontal siding, which generally resembles other types of horizontal siding found within the district.</p> <p>Material specifications and a color palate have not been submitted. <u>Staff recommends that material specifications be provided for final review.</u></p> |
| Standards For New Construction: Doors and Windows, page 56 | 2. <i>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 dwelling will have two, single, ranked windows on the façade and west elevation on all three stories and single ranked windows in each face of the corner bay. Staff finds that the ranked fenestration pattern is generally in keeping with the pattern found in the district except for the two-story, three-sided bay on the corner. <u>Staff recommends that the two-story, three-sided bay on the corner be eliminated and a more traditional three bay façade with ranked windows be incorporated.</u></p> <p>Drawings were provided for the façade and west elevation, only. Drawings for the other elevations should be provide, even though they may be marginally visible. <u>Staff recommends that drawings of all four sides of the dwelling be provided for final review.</u></p> |

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| | | No specification for the door or window materials were provided. <u>Staff recommends that material specifications be provided as part of the final review.</u> |
| Site improvements and hardscaping | | Based on the site plan submitted in the application, the dwelling will be set close to the property line and there will be an open landing with steps at the corner. From the plans, it is unclear what the treatment of this landing area will be. <u>Staff recommends that information on proposed material treatment of this landing be submitted as part of the final review.</u> |
| Standards for New Construction, Residential, Fences & Walls, pg. 51 | <p>1. Fence, wall, and gate designs should reflect the scale of the historic structures they surround, as well as the character of nearby fences, walls, and gates.</p> <p>2. Fence, wall, or gate materials should relate to building materials commonly found in the neighborhood.</p> <p>3. Privacy fences along the side and rear of a property should be constructed of wood of an appropriate design. Privacy fences are not appropriate in front of a historic building.</p> | The context elevation provided appears to indicate that a board fence will be installed along 22 nd Street between the new dwelling on Venable Street and the proposed new dwelling at 817 N. 22 nd Street. No fencing was indicated on the site plan on the east side of the proposed dwelling. <u>Staff recommends that details on any proposed fencing be submitted for Administrative Review.</u> |

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. 2201 Venable Street, ca. 1880s commercial building demolished in 1977

Figure 2. 1905 Sanborn Map



Figure 3. 1952 Sanborn Map