

**COMMISSION OF ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW
STAFF REPORT
October 28, 2014 Meeting**

9. **CAR No. 14-115** (Augustine Construction LLC) **870 North 22nd Street
Union Hill Old and Historic District**

Project Description: **Construct new duplex**

Staff Contact: **W. Palmquist**

The applicant requests approval to construct a new duplex on a vacant lot located in the Union Hill Old and Historic District. The proposed building is a two-story building with a shed roof that replicates the Italianate buildings style found throughout the district.

The building is situated between two existing two-story homes on the west side of N. 22nd Street. The proposed building would be about 27' in height. The dwelling will have 3'-6" side yard setbacks and a 15' front yard setback, which would align with the existing homes on either side. The building will have a one-story front porch and a two-story rear porch. The applicant proposes smooth cement board siding with 7" reveal, parged concrete block foundation, brick porch piers, modified bituminous main roof, dimensional asphalt shingled porch roof, fiberglass porch columns, composite porch decking, Fypon cornice brackets, Hardiepanel above the roof plate, Hardie "arctic white" corner trim, and steel doors. All trim will be painted white. The applicant is proposing MW Jefferson 300 double-hung PVC windows with a 2/2 grid pattern.

The applicant is seeking final approval for the design. Commission staff reviewed the project through the lens of the Standards for New Construction on pages 44 and 45 and the Standards for Site Improvements on pages 66 and 67 of the *Richmond Old and Historic District Handbook and Design Review Guidelines* and the resulting comments follow.

Staff Findings based on Commission of Architectural Review Guidelines

STANDARDS FOR NEW CONSTRUCTION

New construction should be compatible with the historic features that characterize its setting and context. To protect the significance of the historic context, the new work should reference the historic materials, features, size, scale, proportions, and massing of its setting. However, new construction should be clearly discernible from the old to protect the authenticity of the historic district.

SITING

1. *Additions should be subordinate in size to the main structure and as inconspicuous as possible. Locating them at the rear or least visible side of the structure is preferred.*

This standard is not applicable.

2. *New infill construction should respect the prevailing front and side yard setback patterns of the surrounding block. The minimal setbacks evident in most districts reinforce the traditional street wall.*

The proposed 3'-6" side yard setbacks will reflect the typical pattern along the block. The 15' front yard setback will match that of the existing houses on this side of the block, maintain a consistent street wall.

3. *New structures should face the most prominent street bordering the site.*

The proposed dwelling will face North 22nd Street, the most prominent street bordering the site.

FORM

1. *New construction should use a building form compatible with that found elsewhere in the immediate area. Building form refers to the specific combination of massing, size, symmetry, proportions, projections, and roof shapes that lend identity to a structure. Building form is greatly influenced by the architectural style of a given structure.*

The form of the building is typical of two-story Italianate buildings located in the Union Hill Old and Historic District. Staff recommends that the applicant align the center 1st and 2nd story windows to create a more balanced front façade.

SCALE

1. *New construction should maintain the existing human scale of historic residential and commercial neighborhoods. The inappropriate use of monumentally-scaled buildings that overwhelm pedestrians at the street level is discouraged.*

The proposed building maintains the existing human scale of the neighborhood.

2. *New additions and infill structures should incorporate human-scale elements such as storefronts and porches into their design.*

The proposed design calls for a front porch that has a form that is comparable to other porches in the area.

HEIGHT, WIDTH, PROPORTION, & MASSING

1. *New construction should respect the typical height of surrounding houses and commercial structures.*

The proposed structure will be about 27' tall at the ridge of the roof. The context rendering supplied by the applicant indicates that the height of the proposed building will be comparable to that of adjacent buildings. It will be slightly higher than the building to the south and lower than the building to the north.

2. *New construction should respect the vertical orientation typical of commercial and residential properties in historic districts. New designs that call for wide massing of more than 30 feet should be broken up by bays.*

The design respects the typical vertical orientation of two-story residences in the district.

3. *Typical massing patterns throughout city historic districts are simple and block-like; therefore, new structures should avoid the use of staggered setbacks, towers, or elaborate balconies.*

The proposed massing is generally simple and block-like.

MATERIALS, COLORS, & DETAILS

1. *New construction should not cover or destroy original architectural elements.*

This standard is not applicable.

2. *Missing building elements should be replaced with new elements compatible in size, scale, and material to the original elements without creating a false historical appearance.*

This standard is not applicable.

3. *Materials used in new construction should be compatible with original materials used throughout the surrounding neighborhood.*

The applicant proposes smooth cement board siding with 7" reveal, parged concrete block foundation, brick porch piers, modified bituminous main roof, dimensional asphalt shingled porch roof, fiberglass porch columns, composite porch decking, Fypon cornice brackets, Hardiepanel above the roof plate, Hardie "arctic white" corner trim, and steel doors. All trim will be painted white. The applicant is proposing MW Jefferson 300 double-hung PVC windows with a 2/2 grid pattern. Staff recommends the use of a metal or membrane roof above the front porch in place of the proposed architectural shingles.

4. *Paint colors for new additions should complement those of the primary structure. Paint colors used should be similar to the historically appropriate colors found in the immediate neighborhood and throughout the larger district.*

The applicant proposes installing Hardieplank siding in the “Monterey taupe” color shade, a gray color which is similar to that found on the color palette developed by the Commission to help staff approve paint colors. All trim will be painted white.

5. *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.*

The application calls for smooth fiber cement siding for the dwelling. The siding should have a smooth finish (and not a faux grain), in accordance with the Commission’s guidelines for synthetic materials.

6. *Vinyl windows are strongly discouraged and rarely permitted.*

The application specifies the installation of MW Jefferson 300 series which are PVC clad.

Staff recommends approval of the project with conditions. The proposed infill project appears generally to be in keeping with the Standards for New Construction outlined in the *Guidelines*. Staff recommends that approval be conditioned with the substitution of a metal or membrane front porch roof in place of the proposed asphalt shingles. Staff recommends that the applicant align the center 1st and 2nd story windows to create a more balanced front façade. Also, staff recommends that the applicant add a decorative element to the front of the building, either to the cornice, porch frieze, or porch railings, in order to differentiate the structure from other Italianate new construction which is occurring throughout the district.

It is the assessment of staff that, with the conditions above, the application is consistent with the Standards for New Construction outlined in Section 114.930.7(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 code.