

**COMMISSION OF ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW
STAFF REPORT
July 26, 2016 Meeting**

8. **CAR No. 16-114** (M. Jareau)

**2411 M Street
Union Hill Old and Historic District**

Project Description:

**Construct a new 3-story, mixed use
building with an enclosed rooftop
amenity room and terraces**

Staff Contact:

M. Pitts

The application to construct a three-story, mixed use building with an enclosed rooftop amenity room and terraces on a vacant lot in the Union Hill Old and Historic District was reviewed conceptually at the May 24, 2016 meeting. At the May meeting, the Commission approved the demolition of the structure at 2416 Jefferson Avenue, and this lot is included in the subject property. During the conceptual review, the Commission was generally favorable in its comments but requested additional details for final review of the project. The Commission discussed whether the proposed balconies should project or be recessed as the design proposed a mix of both, and the majority of the Commissioners supported the use of projecting balconies to break up the massing of the structure.

The following modifications have been made to the project since the project's conceptual review:

- Details of the building materials on the third floor were provided to include fiber cement panels in Artic White and clear anodized aluminum cladded canopies. Additional material details were provided for all elements of the proposed construction.
- Introduction of a three story narrow window in the stair tower.
- The storefront was elongated through the inclusion of spandrel panels at the top.
- All balconies excluding one balcony on the Jefferson Street elevation near the intersection with M Street are projecting balconies.
- Multi-lite porch doors have been replaced with single lite double doors
- On the Jefferson Street elevation, the wider upper story balconies adjacent to the stair tower have been replaced with a balcony consistent in size with the other balconies and a double window.
- On the M Street elevation, the paired windows on the 2nd and 3rd stories have been replaced with evenly spaced single 2/2 windows. On the first floor, two areas of storefront have been replaced with fiber cement panels and metal doors.

The applicant is seeking final approval for the design. Commission staff reviewed the project through the lens of the "Standards for New Construction:

Residential” on pages 44 and 45 of the *Richmond Old and Historic District Handbook and Design Review Guidelines* and the resulting comments follow.

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* as the project is largely compatible with the historic features that characterizes its setting and context. The setting and context is a mixture of one, two and 2 ½ story residential and commercial buildings. The building massing and size is significantly larger than the adjacent historic buildings but the design minimizes the impact by creating a transparent, human scale first story, stepping back the third story and roof top amenity, and using an alternative material on the third story to reduce the impact of the height. The use of pilasters to organize and separate the bays also reduces the scale of the building. The use of brick for the lower two stories is compatible with the brick commercial buildings in vicinity. The simplification of the design and the lack of ornamentation compliments the nearby commercial buildings and does not conflict with the adjacent residential buildings.

The changes in design from the conceptual review to this final review aid in creating a more residential composition to the upper floors of the structure appropriate to the neighborhood as compared with a more warehouse details of the previously reviewed design. The changes on the upper stories from paired to single windows and from the larger multi-lite to the double single lite balcony doors is more consistent with the residential character of the area. Additionally, the use of projecting balconies on all elevations helps to break up the mass of the structure.

Staff recommends the approval be conditioned on the following:

- Windows should be true or simulated divided light, and
- Cementitious siding should be smooth and un-beaded

It is the assessment of staff that with the acceptance of the stated conditions the application is consistent with the Standards for New Construction outlined in Section 30.930.7(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.