



Staff Report
City of Richmond, Virginia



Commission of Architectural Review

7. COA-104804-2022	Conceptual Review Meeting Date: 1/25/2022	
Applicant/Petitioner	Josh Bosler	
Project Description	Construct a two 3-story attached of single family dwelling	
Project Location		
Address: 207 N. 31 st St.		
Historic District: St. John's Church		
High-Level Details: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The applicant proposes to construct a 3-story attached pair of single family homes. • The third story is recessed. • The applicant proposes white, horizontal cementitious siding and a standing seam metal roof. • The structure will have a rooftop terrace. • The applicant proposes to demolish the existing structure on site. 		
Staff Recommendation	Conceptual Review	
Staff Contact	Alex Dandridge, alex.dandridge@RVA.gov , 804-646-6569	
Previous Reviews	None	
Staff Recommendations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff recommends changing the color of the downspouts to help create a more uniform massing. • Staff recommends extending the mansard to the rear roof line to help with a more uniform appearance. • Staff recommends providing just one post in the center of the porch roof to be more in keeping with historic forms found in the district. • Staff recommends enlarging the narrow windows on the side elevation towards the front of the house since they will likely be visible from the street. • Staff recommends the applicant incorporate elements and treatments more architecturally significant for corner properties since it will be visible from the alley. • Staff recommends any HVAC unit provided be screened 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>	The proposed setback is 15' which is consistent with dwellings in this area.
Siting, #3, p. 46	<i>New buildings should face the most prominent street bordering the site.</i>	The proposed will face 31 st street, which is the most prominent street bordering the site.
Form, #1, p. 46	<i>New construction should use a building form compatible with that found elsewhere in the historic district.</i>	<p>Each attached pair is 3 bays wide which is compatible with structures in the district, but it is deeper than structures in the surrounding area and the downspouts break up the massing making it read as though the rear is a separate structure. <u>Staff recommends changing the color of the downspouts to help with a more uniform massing.</u></p> <p>The proposed residential building will have a mansard, standing seam metal roof between the second-floor and the setback third-floor. This is not a common building form found in the district, but has been approved by the Commission previously. <u>Staff recommends extending the mansard to the rear roof line for a more uniform appearance.</u></p>
Form, #2, p. 46	<i>New residential construction should maintain the existing human scale of nearby historic residential construction in the district.</i>	Many residential buildings in vicinity have front porches and the applicant proposes a full width front porch, although most historic forms of double porches have just one post in the middle when sharing a full width porch. <u>Staff recommends providing one shared post in the middle to be more in keeping with the district. Or breaking the roof line between the two units.</u>
Form, #3, p. 46	<i>New residential construction and additions should incorporate human-scale elements such as cornices, porches and front steps into their design.</i>	The proposed structure will have a full width front porch.
Height, Width, Proportion, & Massing, #1, p. 47	<i>New residential construction should respect the typical height of surrounding residential buildings.</i>	The proposed building is below the districts 35' maximum and stands at 29' at the second story and 31' at the third.
Height, Width, Proportion, & Massing, #2, p. 47	<i>New residential construction should respect the vertical orientation of other residential properties in surrounding historic districts.</i>	<p>The proposed residential dwelling will be three stories, however the third story will be set back to reduce its visibility from 31st street.</p> <p>There will be a mansard, standing seam metal roof between the second floor and the setback third floor.</p>

		<p>Windows and doors on the proposed dwelling will match the vertical orientation of existing properties in the district, having vertically aligned windows and doors.</p> <p>The side elevation shows narrow windows towards the front façade that staff believes will be visible from the street. <u>Staff recommends enlarging these windows to be more in keeping with the district.</u></p>
Height, Width, Proportion, & Massing, #3, p. 47	<i>The cornice height should be compatible with that of adjacent historic buildings.</i>	A context drawing has been provided by the applicant, but the only neighboring property is a small garage.
Materials and Colors, #2-4, p. 47	<p>2. <i>Materials used in new residential construction should be visually compatible with original materials used throughout the district.</i></p> <p>3. <i>Paint colors used should be similar to the historically appropriate colors already found in the district.</i></p> <p>4. <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></p>	The applicant proposes horizontal cementitious smooth face lap siding, black aluminum clad windows, a standing seam metal roof and a district approved accent color for the front door. Staff finds that this is in keeping with materials used in new construction.
New Construction, Corner Properties, #5, p. 48	<i>For residential corner properties, we strongly encourage the use of architectural elements that are typical of residential corner properties in Richmond's historic districts: porches that turn from primary to secondary elevations, corner towers, projecting bay windows, side entrances (including porticos, and shed roofs, where appropriate), side porches, lighting related to that on the primary elevation, and other similar treatments that treat the secondary corner elevation as an architecturally important elevation.</i>	The secondary elevations proposed do not have architectural elements typical of residential corner properties in Richmond's historic districts. While this isn't located on a corner, due to configuration of the street staff believes the side elevation will be visible from the street and <u>recommends the applicant consider incorporating elements and treatments that are more architecturally significant.</u>
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 any HVAC unit proposed be screened from visibility from the street and alley.</u>
Standards for Demolition, p. 82	<i>According to Sec. 114-930.7(d) and 114-930.9 of the Historic Preservation Ordinance: The Commission shall not issue a Certificate of Appropriateness for demolition of any building or structure within an Old and Historic District unless the applicant can show that there are no feasible alternatives to demolition. The demolition of historic</i>	The applicant did not provide an engineer's report showing the current condition of the existing structure on site, but it does not appear to be a contributing building to the St. John's Historic District.

buildings and elements in Old and Historic Districts is strongly discouraged.

Under the provisions of Sec. 32-930.7., the Commission shall approve requests for demolition when:

- 1) There are no feasible alternatives to proposed demolition. "Feasible alternatives" include an appropriate new use and rehabilitation, relocation of the structure to a compatible site or re-sale of the property to an individual committed to suitable rehabilitation or relocation.*
- 2) A building or structure is deemed not to be a contributing part of the historic character of an Old and Historic District.*
- 3) The Commission deems that a building or structure has deteriorated beyond the point of feasible rehabilitation.*

In addition to the above criteria, the Commission has the authority to consider four other factors in arriving at decisions involving proposed demolitions:

- 1) The historic and architectural value of a building.*
- 2) The effect that demolition will have on the surrounding neighborhood.*
- 3) The type and quality of the project that will replace the demolished building.*
- 4) The historic preservation goals outlined in the Master Plan and Downtown Plan.*

Figures



Figure 1.



Figure 2.



Figure 3.



Figure 4.