**Staff Report**
**City of Richmond, Virginia**

# Commission of Architectural Review

| 11. COA-126478-2023 | **Conceptual Review** | **Meeting Date:** 3/28/2023 |
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| **Applicant/Petitioner** | Will Gillette | |
| **Project Description** | Construct five single-family attached dwellings. | |
| **Project Location**<br>**Address**: 220 N 20th Street<br>**Historic District**: Shockoe Valley<br>**High-Level Details:**<br>Applicant proposes to construct five single-family attached dwellings.<br>The new construction will be contemporary in design, being 3-stories tall with a roof top deck.<br>The building will be one unit wide and five units deep.<br>It will be clad in varying cementitious materials and feature varying window sizes.<br>The site is vacant, the original building being demolished sometime in the mid-2010s, likely demolition by neglect. |  | |

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| **Staff Recommendation** | Conceptual Review |
| **Staff Contact** | Alex Dandridge, alex.dandridge@rva.gov, (804) 646-6569 |
| **Previous Reviews** | None |
| **Staff Recommendations** | • A site plan be submitted for final review that includes the front and rear setbacks.<br>• Front unit facing 20th street have a primary entrance that faces 20th Street, as well as an additional human scale feature on the front façade such as a covered porch or a similar feature.<br>• The new construction feature a more robust cornice element on the front a side elevations.<br>• The small square windows be eliminated from the design and full-sized windows be used on all elevations. Additionally, Staff recommends that a more consistent fenestration pattern and overall window dimension be used on the entire building.<br>• Applicant consider using brick in the design, or using horizontal siding that matches the reveal of historic horizontal siding found in the district. |

## Staff Analysis

| Guideline Reference | Reference Text | Analysis |
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| Siting, pg. 46, #2-3 | 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.* | A front setback measurement was not provided in the conceptual submittal. Staff recommends that a site plan be submitted for final review that includes the front and rear set back distances.<br><br>There will be a 3'1" side yard setback on the north and south sides of the building. |
| Form, pg. 46, #1-3 | 1. *New construction should use a building form compatible with that found elsewhere in the historic district.*<br>2. *New residential construction should maintain the existing human scale of nearby historic residential construction in the district*<br>3. *New residential construction and additions should incorporate human-scale elements such as cornices, porches and front steps into their design.* | The proposed building will be three stories tall, one unit wide, and five units deep. There will be a third story roof top deck on each unit with a stair tower/canopy feature.<br><br>Due to this configuration, the entrances to the units will be located on the side of the building, and not facing the public ROW. In order to maintain the human scale of the block, staff recommends that the front unit facing 20th street have a primary entrance that faces 20th Street, as well as an additional human scale feature on the front façade such as a covered porch or a similar feature.<br><br>Staff recommends that the new construction feature a more robust cornice element on the front a side elevations. |
| Height, Width, Proportion, & Massing, pg. 47, #1-3 | 1. *New residential construction should respect the typical height of surrounding residential buildings.*<br>2. *New residential construction should respect the vertical orientation typical of other residential properties in the surrounding historic districts.*<br>3. *The cornice height should be compatible with that of adjacent historic buildings.* | The proposed building will be three stories tall with a projecting stair tower on the third floor roof top deck. This height is generally in-keeping with heights found on the subject block. There are larger, taller apartment buildings and two-story historic dwellings nearby. |
| New Construction, Doors and Windows, pg.49 #3 | 3. *The size, proportion, and spacing patterns of doors and window openings on free standing, new construction should be compatible with patterns established in the district.* | The proposed building will feature varying window sizes. The front and right side elevations will have small square windows and pairs/groupings of larger windows. The left side elevation will feature groupings and pairs of larger windows and first floor transoms. The rear elevation features small square windows only.<br><br>Small square windows are not a common fenestration found in COHD's. Staff recommends that the small square windows be eliminated from the design and full-sized windows be used on all elevations. Additionally, Staff recommends that a more consistent fenestration pattern and overall |

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| | | window dimension be used on the entire building. |
| New Construction, Materials & Colors, pg. 53, #2, #5 | *2. Materials used in new construction should be visually compatible with original materials used throughout the surrounding neighborhood.*<br>*5. Rooftop mechanical equipment should be located as discretely as possible to limit visibility. In addition, appropriate screening should be provided to conceal equipment from view. When rooftop railings are required for seating areas or for safe access to mechanical equipment, the railings should be as unobtrusive as possible, in order to minimize their appearance and visual impact on the surrounding district.* | The building will be clad in varying sizes of cementitious siding. Staff notes that there are examples of horizontal siding used on new and old construction within the district. To better reference the prominent exterior materials found in the district, staff recommends that the applicant consider using brick in the design, or using horizontal siding that match the reveal of historic horizontal siding found in the district.<br>HVAC equipment will be located adjacent to a secondary elevation, and upper parapet walls will serve as unobtrusive railings to the rooftop terraces. |
| Standards for New Construction, pg. 46 | *3. New buildings should face the most prominent street bordering the site* | The building will be approximately 20' wide and 115' deep, meaning that the primary façade that faces the most prominent street, 20th Street, will be a small portion of the building. The four units behind the front unit will be access from the side of the building via a concrete sidewalk. |

## Figures

Figure 1. 1924-1925 Sanborn Map

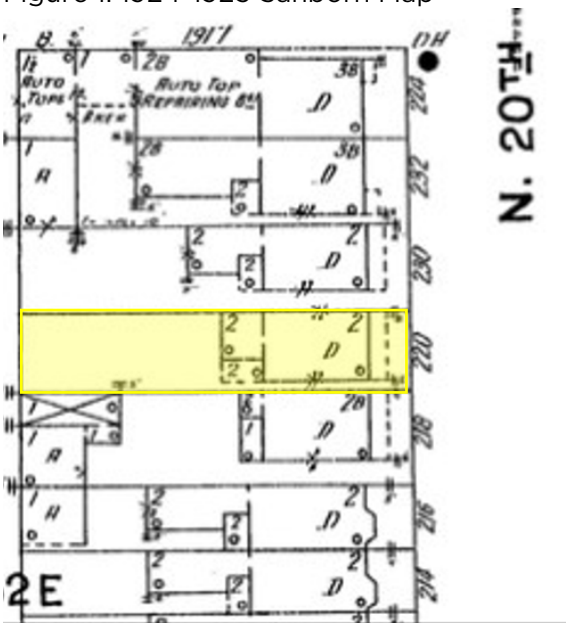


Figure 2. Site

Figure 3. Large new construction nearby