

**COMMISSION OF ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW
STAFF REPORT
November 22, 2016 Meeting**

13. CAR No. 16-135 (J. Bolton)

2230 Venable Street
Union Hill Old and Historic District

Project Description: **Construct two new multifamily structures and rehabilitate an existing structure to include new windows.**

Staff Contact: **M. Pitts**

The applicant requests approval of the rehabilitation of an existing structure to accommodate multifamily units and the construction of two multifamily structures on adjacent vacant lots in the Union Hill Old and Historic District. The subject lots are located in a block bound by Venable, Jessamine, Carrington, and Tulip Streets. The majority of this block is vacant land with the exception of the three-story building to be rehabilitated; a single story, 6-bay, brick building which was constructed in 1850 that has been altered through the years; and a vacant service station which was constructed in 1931 at the corner of Venable and Tulip Streets. The surrounding neighborhood is primarily developed with two-story, frame and brick, single-family dwellings with front porches.

The Commission reviewed this application conceptually on June 28, 2016, and reviewed the application for final review on September 27, 2016. At the September meeting, the Commission approved the rehabilitation of the existing three-story, brick Colonial Revival structure. The Commission deferred the approval of the two new multifamily structures to allow the applicant the opportunity to address the Commission's and staff's concerns regarding the height, scale, massing, and material selection including considering ways to redistribute the massing of the project across the site.

The plans have been altered since conceptual review by the following:

- On the Jessamine Street Building:
 - The proportions of the three-part sections have been modified to reduce the width of the center portion.
 - The fenestration pattern has been altered to consist of evenly spaced ranked single windows, and the ground floor windows have been elongated.
 - On the Carrington elevation, stairs leading to the sidewalk have been removed though the applicant has contacted staff to state they intend to provide stairs at this location.
 - The porch railings have been changed from a mix of glass railings and horizontal metal railings to all metal railings with vertical pickets.
 - The fiber cement panels have been replaced with 8" ship lap cementitious siding to be painted Colonial Revival Grey.

- The proposed brick color is a light sandstone color.
- The front doors have been centered and are proposed to be a variety of bright colors.
- On the Venable Street Building
 - The storefront has been reconfigured to consist of a storefront window separated from a single aluminum door.

Commission staff reviewed the two new buildings 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*. Staff finds the design of the proposed project has been revised to respond to many of the Commission’s concerns and to be consistent with some of the Commission’s Guidelines for New Construction. The applicant has revised the fenestration on the Jessamine Street building to include single ranked windows rather than the previously reviewed groupings of three windows which was not a pattern found in the district. The newly incorporated ranked single windows are more in keeping with the scale and rhythm of the fenestration pattern found in the district. The applicant has revised the proposed building materials to include a brick color more consistent with brick in the district and ship-lap siding as opposed to the previously proposed fiber cement panels. The revised material selection is more compatible with the materials found in the historic district.

As the Guidelines recommend parking lots be screened (pg. 73), staff recommends a detailed landscaping plan be submitted to illustrate how the proposed surface parking lot will be screened.

For the Jessamine building, the Carrington Street elevation does not address the street as it is a solid wall. The applicant has stated they intend to modify this elevation to include stairs which were present on the plans in September.

In September, the Commission encouraged the applicant to break up the structure to address concerns with the massing of the large apartment building. The proposed project has received Low Income Housing Tax Credits (LITC) for the current unit mix and changes to the site plan by breaking up the building or reducing the height could affect the LITC allocation as the project may not be able to achieve the required unit mix or other elements of the project that were required as a part of their LITC application.

The applicant has attempted to address the Commission’s concerns while still providing affordable housing and utilizing the Low Income Housing Tax Credits. The applicant has responded to concerns regarding the materials and fenestration, and the additional concerns cannot be addressed because of the timing of the LITC process.