



Commission of Architectural Review

10. COA-187634-2026	Final Review	Meeting Date: 7/28/2026
Applicant/Petitioner	Syd Shoaf	
Project Description	Construct a new addition to the side of an existing single-family building	
Project Location		
Address: 2219 M Street		
Historic District: Union Hill		
High-Level Details: The applicant proposes to construct a one-story side addition on the east side of a vernacular one-story frame cottage circa 1891.		
Staff Recommendation	Approval, with Conditions	
Staff Contact	Alex Dandridge, Alex.Dandridge@RVA.gov, (804)646-6569	
Previous Reviews	This application was conceptually reviewed at the May 2026 Meeting. The applicant presented two potential side addition treatments, one contemporary, and one traditional. The Commission expressed broad agreement that the historic cottage is a significant and character-defining building type within the Union Hill neighborhood and emphasized the importance of ensuring that any addition remain clearly subordinate to the original structure. Commissioners generally found that the proposed additions, particularly in terms of height and massing, risked overwhelming the existing cottage and diminishing its historic prominence on the site. The Commission discussed the relative merits of the two proposed options and generally viewed Option One as more compatible because of its more traditional appearance and subordinate relationship to the historic building. However, Commissioners noted that aspects of both options could potentially be combined into a	

	more appropriate solution. The Commission emphasized that successful differentiation between historic and new construction does not require overtly modern design and can instead be achieved through subtle treatment of materials and detailing. Commissioners repeatedly stressed the importance of reducing the visual impact of the addition through adjustments to scale, setback, and roof form. Several members supported moving the addition farther back from the front façade and exploring expansion toward the alley in order to preserve a deeper setback and maintain the prominence of the cottage. The Commission also generally favored limiting the overall height of the addition, with many members expressing support for a one-story or one-and-a-half-story approach, while acknowledging that strict limitation to a single story might not be necessary if subordination could otherwise be achieved. The Commission further discussed roof design, encouraging exploration of an alternate roof form rather than replicating the existing gable roof, which was viewed as competing with the historic roofline. Concerns were also raised regarding the extent of demolition of historic material, and the Commission encouraged more thorough documentation of existing conditions and clearer identification of selective demolition areas within future submissions.
Staff Recommendations	Staff Recommends • The addition be clad in a material that is more visually compatible with the historic district, such as horizontal lap siding. Final siding specifications be submitted for staff review and approval. Any proposed lap siding must be smooth and unbeaded and have a different reveal than the primary building. • The TPO roofing be a dark color rather than white to minimize its visual impact. • The proposed windows closely match the size and proportions of the existing historic windows and be constructed of either wood or aluminum-clad wood with simulated divided lights (SDLs). Final window specifications, including dimensions of both the existing and proposed windows, should be submitted for staff review and approval. • Final treatment/design/material of all exterior doors be submitted for staff review and approval. • The front porch feature a finished appearance with no exposed hardware, be painted or stained a neutral color that complements the building and use a Richmond Rail railing system. • Both existing exterior chimney stacks be repaired and retained. If the chimneys are no longer functional, they may be capped as necessary while preserving their exterior appearance. • Extant windows be repaired and retained; extant trim, decorative moldings, and built-in gutter be retained and repaired; and that the siding be retained or replaced with appropriate horizontal siding. Staff recommends that all repairs and preservation methods pertaining to the primary cottage be submitted for staff review and approval.

Staff Analysis

Surrounding Context

The subject property is located within the Union Hill Historic District, in a block that features late nineteenth-century frame buildings with Italianate and vernacular residential forms. Surrounding buildings are generally one-story and two-story frame structures with vertically proportioned windows, bracketed cornices, projecting bays, and full-width elevated porches.

According to the Union Hill nomination form, the subject building at 2219 M Street is described as an 1891 one-story, two-bay, gable-roofed frame cottage building. Nearby buildings include larger two-story Italianate dwellings at 604–606 North 23rd Street, 608 North 23rd Street, 612–614 North 23rd Street, 614½ North 23rd Street, and 616 North 23rd Street, all of which feature decorative cornices, porches, and vertically proportioned façades. Despite the larger scale of many neighboring structures, the subject cottage contributes to the district through its modest scale and vernacular residential character.

Guideline Reference	Reference Text	Analysis
New Construction, Residential Outbuildings, pg. 51	<i>1. Additions should be subordinate in size to their main buildings and as inconspicuous as possible. Locating additions at the rear or on the least visible side of a building is preferred.</i> <i>2. Materials used in new residential construction should be visually compatible with original materials used throughout the district.</i> <i>3. Paint colors for new additions should complement the historically appropriate colors used on the primary structure. Paint colors used should be similar to the historically appropriate colors already found in the district (see Painting Section starting on page 60).</i> <i>4. 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> <i>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.</i>	The guidelines specify that any new addition should remain visually subordinate to the historic cottage and should clearly read as a later addition rather than as part of the original historic structure. Appropriate methods for achieving this include setbacks from the primary façade, differentiated materials or detailing, lower overall height, and simplified massing. Additions should avoid creating a false sense of historical development while remaining compatible with the scale and character of the district. In the conceptual application, the applicant presented two addition options: one that proposed the demolition of the existing side addition and another that retained it. The new addition will be smaller than the existing building, being approximately 273 square feet. The current proposal preserves the existing side addition rather than demolishing it. While the new addition will obscure much of the north elevation of the existing addition, it is set back slightly, allowing the existing addition to function as a hyphen between the historic primary mass of the building and the proposed new construction. Although staff does not typically support additions that are constructed in front of portions of a historic building, staff finds that the existing side addition does not contain character-defining features whose partial obscuration would substantially diminish the historic integrity of the primary structure. Given the modest scale of the historic building and the constraints of the site, this location represents the most appropriate opportunity for an addition. The additional square footage will improve the building's functionality and long-term livability, helping to make the rehabilitation project more feasible while supporting the continued use and preservation of this historic resource. Exterior Materials The proposed addition will be clad in board-and-batten siding and constructed on a parged masonry

		foundation. The addition will feature a low-sloped shed roof finished with TPO roofing. The proposed windows are double-hung, six-over-six units intended to be compatible with the existing historic windows. Board-and-batten siding is not a common exterior cladding material within the City's Old and Historic Districts. <u>Staff recommends that the addition instead be clad in a material that is more visually compatible with the historic district, such as horizontal lap siding. Any proposed lap siding must be smooth and unbeaded in a different reveal than the primary building.</u> <u>Staff further recommends that final siding specifications be submitted for staff review and approval.</u> <u>Staff recommends that the TPO roofing be a dark color rather than white to minimize its visual impact.</u> Staff supports the proposed parged masonry foundation, as this treatment is common throughout the historic district and is compatible with the character of the property. Window dimensions were not included with the application. <u>Staff recommends that the proposed windows closely match the size and proportions of the existing historic windows and be constructed of either wood or aluminum-clad wood with simulated divided lights (SDLs). Final window specifications, including dimensions of both the existing and proposed windows, should be submitted for staff review and approval.</u> Details on the exterior door of the extant addition were not included in the application. <u>Staff recommends that the final treatment/design/material of all exterior doors be submitted for staff review and approval.</u>
The Secretary of the Interior Standards for Rehabilitation, pg. 4	<i>9. New additions, exterior alterations or related new construction shall not destroy historic materials that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible with the massing, size, scale and architectural features to protect the historic integrity of the property and its environment.</i>	The proposed addition will not result in the destruction of historic materials that characterize the property. The addition is designed with a low-sloped TPO shed roof and is separated from the historic primary mass of the dwelling by the existing side addition, allowing it to read as a distinct contemporary intervention. The offset placement and contrasting roof form clearly differentiate the new construction from the historic building while maintaining the prominence and legibility of the original structure.
New Construction, Building Elements, Porches and Porch Details, pg. 49	<i>2. When designing a new railing for a new infill building, or for an existing building which has lost its railing and for which no documentary or physical evidence survives, the balusters in the traditional Richmond rail are generally rectangular in section (with the narrow dimension facing the street) or square. The baluster is fitted into the recess in the top rail and a sloped bottom rail. Typical deck railings, consisting of nailed-up stock elements, are not</i>	The existing front porch consists of a raised concrete slab and stairs enclosed by a parged masonry wall capped with a single course of brick. Based on a site visit, staff observed that this feature is in poor condition and appears to contribute to water retention and drainage issues that are accelerating the deterioration of the building. While the construction date of the masonry porch is unknown, staff believes it is not an original feature of the building. It is more likely that the dwelling originally featured a smaller wood porch, which is more typical

	<i>approved as they are not based on a compatible historical model found in Richmond's Old and Historic Districts.</i> <i>3. New porch railing designs, compatible with the overall design of the building, will also be considered.</i>	of the modest cottages found throughout the Union Hill neighborhood. In addition to its apparent drainage deficiencies, the opaque parged masonry enclosure obscures views of the historic cottage from the public right-of-way and detracts from the building's historic character. Staff finds that the existing masonry porch has likely contributed to the deterioration of the foundation and is detrimental to both the long-term preservation and visual appearance of the building. Accordingly, staff finds that its removal is appropriate, as it does not appear to possess significant historic or architectural significance. To replace the existing porch, the applicant proposes constructing a simple wood entrance porch at the primary entrance. The porch will be supported by simple wood posts and will feature a straightforward wood railing system. Staff finds that the proposed porch is compatible with the modest scale and character of the historic building. Its simple design is appropriate for the dwelling and is more consistent with the historic character of similar cottages within the district. <u>Staff recommends that the porch feature a finished appearance with no exposed hardware, be painted or stained a neutral color that complements the building, and use a Richmond Rail railing system.</u>
Building Elements, Roofs, Removal of Elements, pg. 66	<i>10. Original chimneys, skylights and light wells that contribute to the style and character of the building should be retained, as their removal could alter the overall character of the structure.</i>	The building contains two existing chimneys: a central chimney serving the primary historic mass of the building and a smaller chimney located at the rear of the existing side addition. The plans indicate that both chimneys will be retained. To further emphasize the preservation of historic building elements that reflect the building's original heating system and historic evolution, staff recommends that both existing exterior chimney stacks be repaired and retained. If the chimneys are no longer functional, they may be capped as necessary while preserving their exterior appearance.
SOI Standards for Rehabilitation, pg. 4	<i>2. The historic character of a property shall be retained and preserved. The removal of historic materials or alteration of features and spaces that characterize a property shall be avoided.</i>	Staff finds that the sensitive rehabilitation of the main cottage be prioritized. <u>Staff recommends that the extant windows be repaired and retained, extant trim, decorative moldings, and built-in gutter be retained and repaired, extant center chimney be repaired and retained, and that the siding be retained, or replaced with an appropriate horizontal siding. Staff recommends that all repairs and preservation methods pertaining to the primary cottage be submitted to staff for review and approval.</u>

It is the assessment of staff that, with the conditions above, the application is consistent with the Standards for Rehabilitation and New Construction outlined in Section 30-930.7 (b) and (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 the code.

Figures



Figure 1: Sanborn Map, 1905

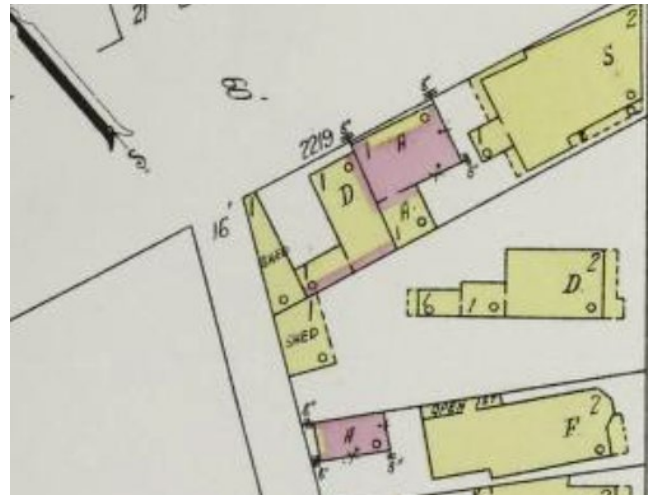


Figure 2: Sanborn Map, 1925



Figure 3. 2219 M Street 1950s.



Figure 4. 2219 M Street, 2025.