

**COMMISSION OF ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW
STAFF REPORT
July 24, 2018, Meeting**

10. **COA-037911-2018** (2416 Jefferson Avenue LLC) **2411 M Street
Union Hill Old and Historic District**

Project Description: **Construct a 2-story mixed use
building on a vacant lot.**

Staff Contact: **K. Chen**

The applicant requests final review and approval to construct a two-story, mixed use building on a vacant lot in the Union Hill Old and Historic District. This project includes the lot created by the demolition of 2416 Jefferson Avenue (application No. 16-083)

Previous Reviews: The applicant came before the Commission on May 24, July 26, and December 13, 2016 to construct a three-story mixed use building with a roof top amenity space. The project was conditionally approved in February 2017 and a Certificate of Appropriateness was issued.

Proposal: The proposed new construction will be a two-story, masonry, mixed use building. The ground floor will be composed primarily of storefront glazing for a variety of commercial – retail and office -- activities. The second story is residential in scale with paired 2/2 windows and inset balconies. The bays of the first and second stories are organized by pilasters. Commercial uses and storefront are concentrated along Jefferson Avenue, 25th Street and at the eastern end of M Street. The northwest corner at M and 24th streets is more residential in character and is organized by stacked, recessed entries on the first story and balconies on the second story with vertically ranked windows flanking the entries and balconies. Mechanical units will be located on the roof and screened by the parapet. Trash will be accommodated within the building and will be accessed by a single entry point on M Street.

Surrounding Context: The project will encompass nearly the entire triangular block bound by Jefferson Avenue, M and 24th Streets. The eastern end of Jefferson Avenue, as it approaches 25th Street, is commercial in nature. There is a mixture of one-story and two-story commercial buildings. Twenty-Fifth Street also has a mixture of residential and commercial buildings, and some residential buildings that have been converted to commercial uses. The majority of the buildings fronting 25th Street are 2-stories in height and a few have higher gable roof lines. The buildings on M and 24th Streets are primarily 2 to 2 ½ story frame residential buildings.

The applicant is seeking **Final Review** for this project. Commission staff reviewed the project through the lens of the “Standards for New Construction: Residential”

on pages 46-51 of the *Richmond Old and Historic District Handbook and Design Review Guidelines*.

STANDARDS FOR NEW CONSTRUCTION

All new residential and commercial construction, whether in the form of additions or entire buildings, should be compatible with the historic features that characterize their setting and context. To protect the context of the surrounding historic district, new construction should reference the materials, features, size, scale, proportions, and massing of the existing historic building or buildings in its setting. However, compatibility does not mean duplicating the existing buildings or environment. In order to avoid creating a false sense of history, new construction should also be discernible from the old. Perhaps the best way to think about a compatible new building (or addition) is that it should be a good neighbor; one that enhances the character of the existing district and respects its historic context, rather than being an exact (and misleading) reproduction of another building.

Staff found that the revised proposal is largely consistent with the application approved in February 2017 and that the reduction in height and more residential character of the northwest corner make the project more 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 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 the 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.

Staff did find that doors were removed from several of the commercial bays facing Jefferson Avenue and that the lower parged block storefront base had been replaced with a higher cast-in-place concrete wall. Consideration should be given to allowing for the introduction of additional doors on this elevation by creating breaks in the wall below the storefront so that it can be easily removed and doors installed.

Staff also found that there was a discrepancy in the window description and the elevation drawings. The drawings show 2/2 window sash and the material notes call for 1/1. The window material was also not specified. The window material and light configuration should be clarified and can be administratively approved by staff.

Final material selections, especially brick colors, need to be submitted to staff for review and administrative approval.

Staff recommends approval of the project with conditions. Staff finds the proposed project responded to the Commission's concerns and is a building form compatible with the historic and new structures in the district and on the subject block.

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.