



Staff Report
City of Richmond, Virginia



Commission of Architectural Review

10. COA-147348-2024	Final Review	Meeting Date: 5/28/2024
Applicant/Petitioner	James Catts	
Project Description	Construct a new two-story building.	
Project Location		
Address: 4002 Hermitage Road		
Historic District: Hermitage Road		
<p>High-Level Details:</p> <p>The applicant proposes to construct a new two-story garage in the rear side yard of an 1870s Queen Anne Style building.</p> <p>The building will be similar in design to the primary building on the site, using a similar massing, cladding, and color.</p> <p>The combined two floors of the garage will be approximately 2,200 square feet.</p> <p>The garage will be approximately 28' tall, 26' wide, and 50' long.</p> <p>Preliminary conversations with the Zoning Division and Land Use Administration indicate that this project will require a Special Use Permit to allow for the proposed height.</p>		
Staff Recommendation	Deferral	
Staff Contact	Alex Dandridge, (804) 646-6569, alex.dandridge@rva.gov	
Previous Reviews	<p>This application was conceptually reviewed at the December 2023 meeting of the Commission of Architectural Review. While most Commissioners agreed that the placement of the new garage was appropriate, there was some conversation about placing it behind the primary dwelling. Overall, the Commission believed that the new garage was quite large and read as a second dwelling on the site rather than being subordinate to the primary dwelling. Copying some of the architectural features of the primary dwelling like the flared base and hipped roof with cross gable was determined to be inappropriate. The applicant was asked to revise the plans with design inspirations derived from the existing carriage house at the rear of the property.</p>	
Staff Recommendations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> exterior HVAC equipment be in an area that is minimally visible from the public right-of-way and screened from view; final location to be shown on a final site plan. 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the proposed garage have a consistent, simplified window design and light configuration. • Staff recommends that the proposed garage reference the design of the existing carriage house more so than the primary dwelling. • Staff recommends that the applicant reduce the overall size and height of the proposed garage and simplify the details to further subordinate it to and differentiate it from the primary dwelling.
<p>Surrounding Context:</p> <p>4002 Hermitage Road is located within the Hermitage Road City Old and Historic District as well as the Hermitage Road National Register Historic District. The subject parcel is zoned R-1, residential single-family and is just over one acre (1.1364 acres). The site consists of a primary, frame, two-story, Queen Anne Style building that was constructed ca. 1870 and a secondary 1 ½ story rear carriage house. There appear to be additional smaller auxiliary structures near the rear alley. On the west side of Hermitage (location of 4002 Hermitage), the block features estate-style, single family dwellings with large front yards, landscaping, and driveways. On the east side of Hermitage Road there are more modestly sized single-family dwellings with smaller front yards and shallower side yard setbacks, which give this side a “denser” appearance. The dwellings on east side of the street are staggered with the curve of the road. There is a religious institution on the west side of the block as well as attached town houses. Most dwellings in the immediate area are two and two and a half stories in height.</p>	

Staff Analysis

Guideline Reference	Reference Text	Analysis
Standards for New Construction, Siting, pg. 46	<i>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.</i>	<p>The Hermitage Road City Old and Historic District is characterized by estate-style buildings with large front yards and gardens. The proposed garage will be set on the lot farther back than the primary dwelling. Based on the site plan, the proposed garage will be set back quite far from the street and be towards the side and rear of the primary dwelling, a location that suggests subordination to the original dwelling. The existing carriage house is set at the rear of the lot behind the primary dwelling.</p>
Standards for New Construction, Materials & Colors, pg. 47	<p><i>2. Materials used in new residential construction should be visually compatible with original materials used throughout the district.</i></p> <p><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></p>	<p>The new garage will use materials that are compatible with the primary dwelling and with the context of the district. It will be clad in wood siding and will have a brick foundation. The roof will be slate or faux slate. The columns, doors, and windows will be wooden and painted or stained to match the primary dwelling.</p> <p><u>Staff recommends that exterior HVAC equipment be in an area that is minimally visible from the public right-of-way and screened from view; final location to be shown on a final site plan.</u></p>

<p>New Construction, Windows & Doors, pg. 49</p>	<p>3. <i>The size, proportion, and spacing patterns of doors and window openings on free standing, new construction should be compatible with patterns established within the district.</i></p>	<p>The primary dwelling features a variety of window types, including one-over-one, two-over-two, and Queen Anne-style windows with smaller lights surrounding a central larger lite.</p> <p>The proposed garage will feature a variety of windows, most of which will be vertically aligned. Windows will be of varying sizes, some being square and others being a more typical dimensions with Queen Anne-style sash over two pane configurations. While these are window designs found on the primary dwelling, staff finds that a simpler one-over-one pane configuration for all windows would help further differentiate the new building from the primary building. Staff believes that the one-over-one window design is most appropriate for new construction, and this would address commission comments from the first review.</p> <p><u>Staff recommends that the proposed garage have a consistent and simplified window design and light configuration.</u></p>
<p>New Construction, Residential Outbuildings, pg. 50</p>	<p>1. <i>Outbuildings, including garages, sheds, gazebos and other auxiliary structures, should be compatible with the design of the primary building on the site, including roof slope and materials selection.</i></p> <p>2. <i>Newly constructed outbuildings such as detached garages or tool sheds should respect the siting, massing, roof profiles, materials and colors of existing outbuildings in the neighborhood.</i></p> <p>3. <i>New outbuildings should be smaller than the main residence and be located to the rear and/or side of the property to emphasize that they are secondary structures.</i></p>	<p>The primary dwelling is a two-story, three-bay, simple Queen Anne-style dwelling with a complex plan, built ca. 1870. It is clad in Dutch-cut lap siding and staggered wood shingles. It has a complex, slate roof with five interior chimneys. Stylistic elements include a full-width, single-story entry porch with balustrades and a pedimented hip roof supported by slender, squared columns. The dwelling sits on a deep rectangular lot with a deep setback and an asphalt driveway. The first story is clad in horizontal siding, and the second story is clad in wooden shingles and is separated from the first floor visually by a flared base.</p> <p>The proposed garage's east elevation, (shorter side) which will face Hermitage Road, has a front facing gable roof which relates to the front facing cross gable on the primary dwelling's façade, which is a prominent feature. Copying this feature on the new garage competes with the design of the primary dwelling. The west elevation will have a hipped roof which is similar to the side and rear elevations of the primary dwelling and the existing carriage house.</p> <p>The overall design of the new garage has not substantially changed from the initial review, except for the inclusion of a porch on the second story of the south facing elevation. Staff's conditions remain unchanged from the previous review.</p> <p><u>To differentiate the two building's Staff recommends that the proposed garage reference the design of the existing carriage house more so than the primary dwelling.</u> The existing, large carriage house at the rear of the lot is 1 ½-stories and features a hipped roof with a smaller dormer and cupola. This alteration would further differentiate the proposed garage from the primary dwelling, and it would retain the primary dwelling's front facing cross gable as a prominent feature on the Hermitage Road facing elevations of the two buildings.</p>

The proposed garage will be of a similar design to the primary dwelling, using the same materials, color, and general roof form.

According to the site plan, the proposed garage will be located towards the rear of the side yard and will be set further back on the lot than the primary dwelling. The garage will be oriented so that the "long side" featuring the garage doors will face the north side of the primary dwelling and the asphalt driveway.

While the new garage will be located towards the rear of the side yard, staff finds that its size is quite large and not subordinate to the primary dwelling. The proposed new garage will be approximately 2,200 square feet as compared to the primary dwelling which is 3,753 square feet and the existing carriage house which is 1,079 square feet (according to city assessment records).

Context elevation drawings were submitted. The renderings demonstrate that the base, porch roof, and main roof will all align with that of the primary dwelling. On the drawings, the grade to peak is labeled as 28 feet 8 inches, which is shown as being identical to the height of the primary dwelling. When assessing the new garage through the lens of the Guidelines for accessory buildings, the proposed garage relates to the roof slope and materials of the primary dwelling; however, it is also clear that the new garage is not subordinate to the primary dwelling and references the primary dwelling in design more so that other detached garages or accessory buildings onsite or in the district.

The underlying zoning states that no building accessory to a single-family or two-family dwelling shall exceed 20 feet in height, nor shall the building area of all accessory buildings on any lot devoted to single-family or two-family dwelling use exceed the building area of the main building on the lot. For zoning purposes, the building height is defined as the mean height level between the eaves and the ridge of a gable, hip, shed, or gambrel roof.

The proposed height of 28' exceeds the height permitted by zoning, and the combined building area of the existing carriage house, another one-story frame accessory building on the lot, and new garage will exceed the building area of the primary dwelling. The Commission of Architectural Review may not approve items that exceed the underlying zoning designations. Staff recommends that the applicant reduce the overall size and height of the proposed garage and simplify the details to further subordinate it to and differentiate it from the primary dwelling.

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. 4002 Hermitage, 2023. View looking west along driveway and side yard.



Figure 2. 4002 Existing Rear Carriage House, 2021. Hipped roof with through-the-eave dormer and cupola. (pre-rehabilitation).



Figure 3. Footprint of existing building.

