



Commission of Architectural Review

9. COA-182850-2026	Final Review Meeting Date: 4/28/2026
Applicant/Petitioner	Alessandro Ragazzi
Project Description	Construct a new three-story multi-family building on vacant lot
Project Location	
Address: 214 W Marshall	
Historic District: Jackson Ward	
<p>High-Level Details:</p> <p>The application proposes the new construction of a new three-story residential building on a vacant parcel. The proposed building features a full-width porch along the Marshall Street elevation, vertically oriented windows, and a combination of brick and siding materials. The project includes a primary entrance located on the side elevation, and an entrance to the first-floor porch on Marshall Street.</p>	
Staff Recommendation	Approval, with Conditions
Staff Contact	Yara Iwaz, Yara.Iwaz@RVA.gov, (804)646-6031
Previous Reviews	<p>February 2026: The Commission reviewed the proposal in a conceptual capacity, and made the following comments and recommendations: The Commission expressed concerns regarding window spacing, overall scale, and building depth, suggesting that the design could benefit from fewer, larger units and the incorporation of rear open space or an accessory dwelling unit. While the proposed height and massing were generally supported, the Commission recommended simplifying the rear cornice and porch elements.</p> <p>The Commission found the overall footprint acceptable but advised refinements to the porch design to better align with district precedent. Concerns were also raised about the project's contextual appropriateness and its similarity to designs seen in other districts. Additional suggestions included exploring a stronger relationship or attachment to the neighboring property. Positive feedback was offered regarding the depth of the porch design.</p>

<p>Staff Recommendations</p>	<p>Staff finds that the proposal has adequately responded to the Commission's previous comments, and recommends approval with the following conditions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Approve fenestration pattern, final window specifications (size, materials) to be submitted for staff review and approval.• Any changes to siting and setbacks as a result of the SUP process be submitted as an updated set of plans, for staff review and approval.• Approve the material selections as submitted.• Approve the updated rear elevation design; staff further recommends that the rear porch columns be revised to simple square posts; Final rear elevation to be submitted to staff for review and approval.• Revise the side elevations to extend the brick treatment by one additional bay back from the front and rear elevations; with revised elevations to be submitted to staff for review and approval.
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Staff Analysis

Guideline Reference	Reference Text	Analysis
Standards For New Construction: Doors and Windows, p.56	<p><i>2. The size, proportion and spacing patterns of door and window openings on free-standing new construction should be compatible with patterns established in the district</i></p>	<p><i>Windows</i></p> <p>Previous comments mentioned the vertical appearance of the building being further emphasized by the window distribution, as well as the width of the porch.</p> <p>The updated submission addresses these concerns and presents an evenly distributed window configuration, along with a larger porch that is more representative of the historic elements seen on this block.</p> <p><u>Staff recommends approval of the window layout; final window specifications (size, materials) to be submitted for staff review and approval.</u></p>
New Construction, Residential Outbuildings, pg. 51	<p><i>1. 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><i>2. 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><i>Street wall alignment</i></p> <p>The proposed porch depth has been reduced in response to prior staff and Commission comments. This improves alignment with the established street wall and adjacent porch projections while maintaining the functionality of the porch.</p> <p>The siting remains consistent with the neighboring buildings, and appropriately fills a vacant lot in the existing streetscape.</p> <p>Because the project is proceeding through the SUP process, final siting and setback conditions may be modified.</p> <p><u>Staff recommends that any changes to siting and setbacks as a result of the SUP process be submitted as an updated set of plans, for staff review and approval.</u></p>
Standards for New Construction: Materials & Colors, page 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>Materials and colors</i></p> <p>The Marshall Street façade incorporates several pedestrian-scale elements including a porch, brick cladding, transom windows, and a defined cornice line. While the building's form is not typical of the street, these pedestrian-scale elements are consistent with historic patterns found throughout Jackson Ward and help reinforce the building's relationship with the street.</p> <p>The front elevation presents a strong street-facing composition and appropriately reflects the masonry character of the district. The choice of colors for the brick corresponds to an established built-out red color scheme on that block.</p> <p><u>Staff recommends approval of the materials as submitted.</u></p>
Standards for New Construction: Form, page 46	<p><i>3. New residential construction and additions should incorporate human-scale elements such as cornices, porches and front steps into</i></p>	<p><i>Rear Elevation</i></p> <p>The rear elevation design has been simplified in response to Commission comments. The removal of the rear cornice, inclusion of more simplified porch columns, and replacement of stone lintels with a brick course reduce the</p>

	<p><i>their design. In Richmond, porches were historically an integral part of residential design and provide much of the street-level architectural character of Richmond's historic districts.</i></p>	<p>previously submitted ornamentation and create a more appropriate hierarchy between the primary and secondary elevations that is more characteristic of typical secondary elevations in the Jackson Ward district. These revisions further improve the overall architectural clarity of the building and better reflect the rear elevation's secondary role on the alley.</p> <p>While the revised rear porch columns are improved, the posts still retain a level of ornamentation that is more typical of a primary façade. In order to further simplify the alley-facing utilitarian elevation and distinguish it from the front elevation, Staff finds that simpler square porch posts would be more appropriate for the rear elevation,</p> <p><u>Staff recommends approval of the updated rear elevation design; staff further recommends that the rear porch columns be revised to simple square posts; Final rear elevation to be submitted to staff for review and approval.</u></p>
<p>Standards for New Construction: Materials & Colors, page 47</p>	<p><i>2. Materials used in new residential construction should be visually compatible with original materials used throughout the district.</i></p>	<p><i>Side Elevations</i></p> <p>The proposed brick material at the front and rear façades is appropriate and responds well to the highly visible street-facing and alley-facing conditions of the building. Due to the height, proportions, and setbacks of the proposed structure, both the front and rear elevations will be highly prominent and visible from the public right-of-way, and substantial portions of the side elevations will also be visible from both the street and alley. As currently proposed, the transition from brick to siding on the side elevations occurs closely to these prominent façades, which will result in visible expanses of siding that diminish the overall masonry presence.</p> <p>Staff recommends extending the brick treatment by one additional bay back from the front and rear elevations on both side elevations, so that masonry remains the dominant visible material from the street and alley approaches. Recognizing the cost implications of additional brick, staff notes that this adjustment could be achieved by reallocating brick currently proposed for the center portions of the side elevations to the more visually prominent end bays. This approach would maintain the visual importance of masonry where it is most publicly visible while allowing siding to remain in less visible areas.</p> <p><u>Staff recommends revising the side elevations to extend the brick treatment by one additional bay on both side elevations; with revised elevations to be submitted to staff for review and approval.</u></p>

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

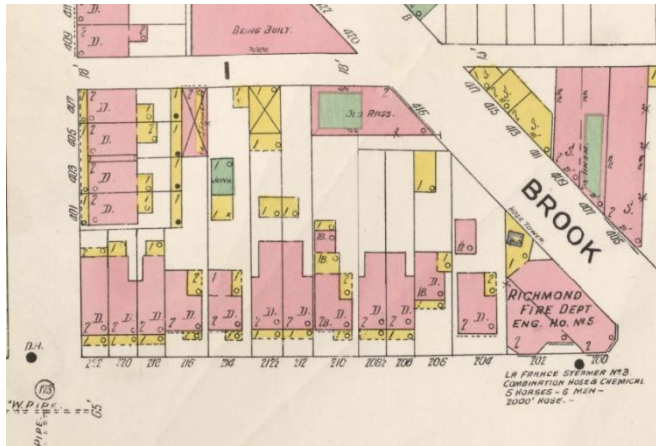


Figure 1: Sanborn map, 1905

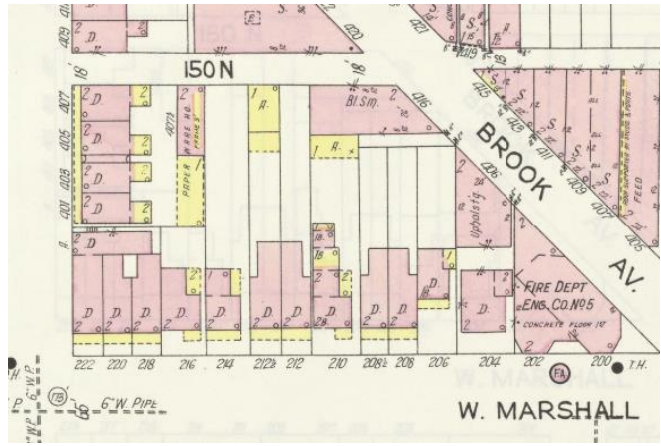


Figure 2: Sanborn map, 1925



Figure 3: street context



Figure 4: front of subject property



Figure 5: rear alley



Figure 6: rear of subject property