



Staff Report
City of Richmond, Virginia



Commission of Architectural Review

12. COA-164402-2025	Conceptual Review	Meeting Date: 4/22/2025
Applicant/Petitioner	Will Gillette	
Project Description	Construct two single-family attached dwellings	
Project Location		
Address: 3021 & 3023 E Franklin St, Richmond, VA 23223		
Historic District: St. John's Church		
<p>High-Level Details:</p> <p>The applicant proposes the construction of two three-story single-family attached dwellings on a subdivided lot that currently contains a multifamily structure at 3025 E Franklin Street, and the vacant portion at 3021 E Franklin Street (noting that the 3025 E Franklin lot has been split, which created the parcel known as 3023 E Franklin).</p> <p>The surrounding context features a combination of early 20th-century rowhomes, recent infill development, and several vacant parcels. The proposal seeks to infill one of these vacant portions with townhome-style dwellings that respond to the district's narrow unique topography and urban character. The project includes cementitious lap siding, front porches, and a mansard-style roof.</p>		
Staff Recommendation		
Staff Contact	Yara Iwaz, Yara.Iwaz@RVA.gov, (804)646-6031	
Previous Reviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Commission approved the construction of the building on 3025 E Franklin St. in 1968 • In 2022, the Commission approved the renovation of the building on 3025 E Franklin St. 	

Staff Recommendations	<p>Staff finds that the proposed new construction is generally compatible with the Design Review Guidelines for the district. However, the following items should be addressed in the final submission:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider revising the front porch design to include a continuous roof element, aligning with typical neighborhood porch configurations • Provide full context elevations and a streetscape view in future submissions • Clarify any site grading and step-down conditions due to the topography of the lots and submit color selections for the cementitious siding material • The cornice not be visually tied directly to the window grouping. Staff suggests two possible approaches: Replace the grouped window with three separate windows spaced equidistantly, reflecting traditional rhythm and proportion, or introduce a plain frieze board in place of the framed cornice feature
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Staff Analysis

Surrounding Context		
<p>The project site is located on the south side of East Franklin Street near its intersection with North 31st Street, at the lower end of a steep slope within the St. John's Church Old and Historic District.</p> <p>The surrounding context includes one contributing two-story historic structure on the north side of the street, which appears to have influenced the scale and form of nearby new construction. The rest of the block contains several vacant lots and recently built three-story residential dwellings that reference historic massing and materials. Directly southeast of the subject parcels is a two-story multifamily building, and immediately to the west is a large mid-20th-century apartment complex at 3005 E Franklin Street, which has undergone recent renovation.</p>		
Guideline Reference	Reference Text	Analysis
New Construction: Siting, p.46	2. New residential infill construction should respect the prevailing front and side yard setback patterns of the surrounding block.	The 20' setback aligns with adjacent historic buildings and appears appropriate within the block context (Figure 1).
New Construction: Form, p.46	<i>1. New construction should use a building form compatible with that found elsewhere in the historic district. Building form refers to the specific combination of massing, size, symmetry, proportions, projections and roof shapes that lend identity to a building. Form is greatly influenced by the architectural style of a given structure.</i>	<p>The building form is compatible overall; however, the split porch roof does not match the continuous porch precedent found on nearby residential buildings in and around the neighborhood (Figure 2). Additionally, the two buildings have a continuous seamless roof, as shown in the elevation.</p> <p><u>Staff recommends revising the porch design to incorporate a single continuous roof spanning both units</u>, in keeping with local precedent, which would better reflect the district character and be consistent with the proposed roof form.</p>
Standards For New Construction: Doors and Windows, p.56	<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>Proposed windows are vertically proportioned and appropriately aligned (Figure 3). Additionally, while not common in historic structures, twin windows can be found in the surrounding new additions.</p> <p>Staff recommends submitting additional context images and project precedents, and that a more detailed drawing be provided to illustrate the framing and cornice detail.</p> <p>Additionally, the proposed design features a double window next to a single window on the main facades,</p>

		<p>which deviates from traditional symmetrical window spacing typically found in historic townhomes. While this window arrangement can be found in newer infill developments within the district and is generally acceptable, the alignment of the cornice detail directly above the grouped windows causes the window and upper trim to read as a single, merged design element, which is not typical of the St. John's Church district.</p> <p><u>Staff recommends that the cornice not be visually tied directly to the window grouping, and suggests two possible approaches:</u></p> <p><u>Replace the grouped window with three separate windows spaced equidistantly, reflecting traditional rhythm and proportion, or</u></p> <p><u>Introduce a plain frieze board in place of the framed cornice feature.</u></p>
Standards for New Construction: Height, Width, Proportion & Massing, p. 47	<i>1. New residential construction should respect the typical height of surrounding residential buildings</i>	The proposed building height appears compatible with the neighborhood; <u>staff recommends additional drawings that show the heights of existing and proposed structures</u> , which can include a site plan that further illustrate the planned approach to topography and siting.
Standards for New Construction: Materials & Colors, p. 47	<i>2. Materials used in new residential construction should be visually compatible with original materials used throughout the district.</i>	The fiber cement siding material appears to be uniform across all facades, and is an appropriate choice in the context of the district. <u>Staff recommends specifying material colors in future submissions.</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

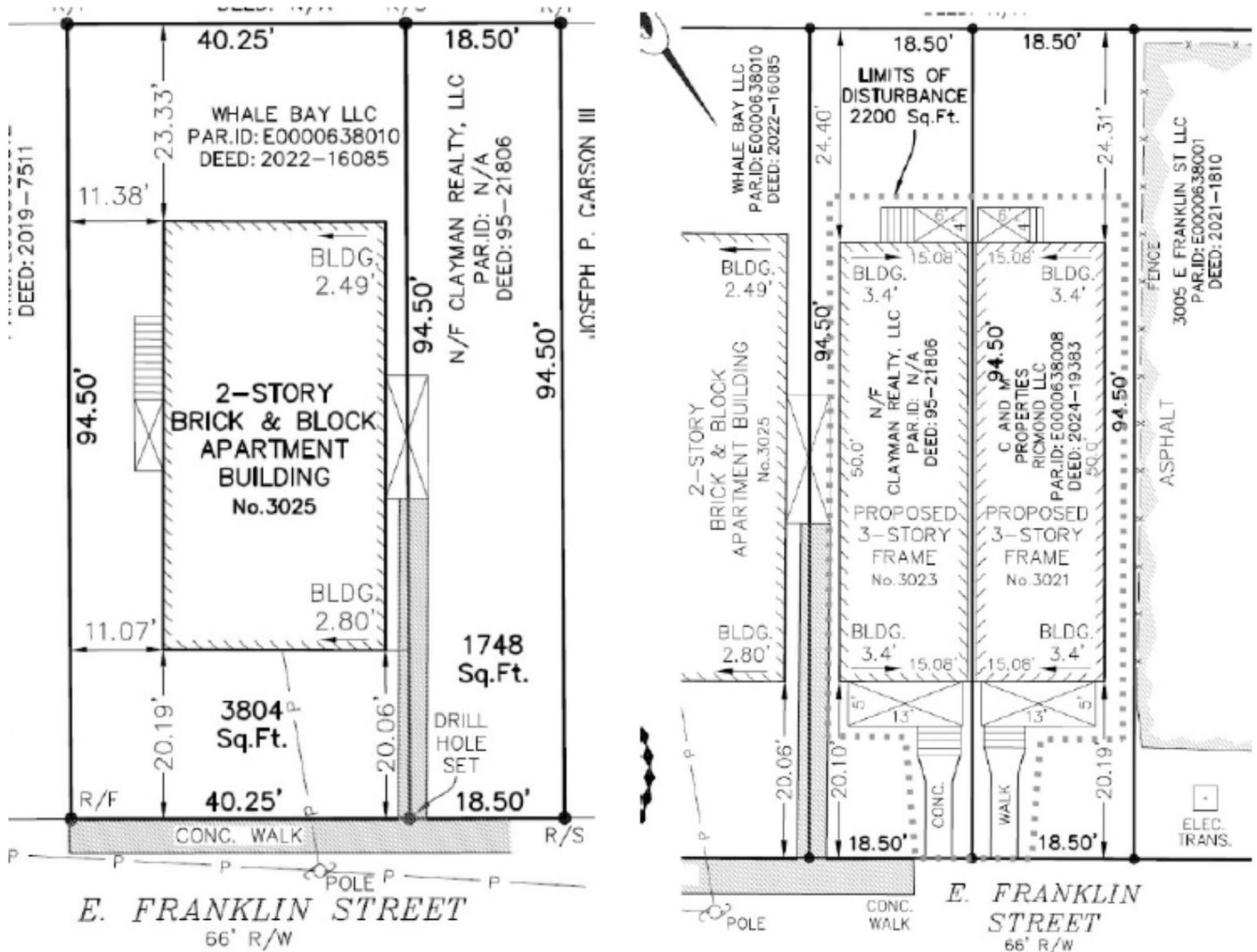


Figure 1



Figure 2



LEFT ELEVATION

Figure 3



PROPOSED RIGHT ELEVATION

Figure 4

