




Staff Report
City of Richmond, Virginia



Commission of Architectural Review

6. COA-115904-2022	Final Review Meeting Date: 10/25/2022
Applicant/Petitioner	Katie Harrigan, 3North
Project Description	Rehabilitate an existing one-story commercial building, and construct a new four story, mixed-use building.
Project Location	
Address: 912 Tulip Street	
Historic District: Union Hill	
<p>High-Level Details:</p> <p>The applicant requests conceptual review of a proposal to construct a new, 3-story, multi-family building and to rehabilitate a one-story masonry commercial building circa 1940's.</p> <p>The new multi-family building will be "L" shaped, and will wrap the north side and rear of the commercial building.</p> <p>The primary façade of the multifamily building will be clad in brick and feature front balconies.</p> <p>The existing commercial buildings will be rehabilitated including the repair of the existing slate mansard roof, parapet walls, and windows. The non-original, frame gable roof will be removed. A set-back rooftop patio and pergola will be added to the top of the existing buildings.</p>	
Staff Recommendation	Approval, with Conditions
Staff Contact	Alex Dandridge, alex.dandridge@rva.gov , (804) 646-6569
Previous Reviews	<p>The Commission conceptually reviewed this application at their August 2022 meeting. The Commission had concern over the proposed height of the building, feeling that it was too tall, and not in-keeping with historic height precedent. The suggestion was made to remove the fourth floor, and place it on top of the existing commercial building. While the existing buildings are historic, the Commission felt that the buildings were being made out to be more significant than they are. Preserving the front facades of the commercial buildings seemed to be more important than not building on top.</p> <p>Additional comments were made regarding the articulation of a more historically accurate cornice feature. The Commission also had concerns about the visibility of the proposed roof-top</p>

	pergola and the use of vertical cladding on the upper floors of the building.
Staff Recommendations	<p>Multi-Family Building:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Final materials including railings and screening be submitted for administrative approval. • The location of all exterior mechanical equipment be submitted for administrative approval. • Staff recommends that new sidewalks on the site be a material that is compatible with the district. <p>Commercial Building:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The new store front windows on the existing commercial buildings match the configuration seen in the historic photograph as closely as possible. • The gable roof be removed in a way that doesn't cause any damage to any existing historic material, the new storefront windows and brick pilasters diving them match the historic photo provided by staff as closely as possible, and that the four southern facade steel windows be restored and retained.

Staff Analysis

Guideline Reference	Reference Text	Analysis
Siting, pg. 46, #2-3	<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 subject block has lost much of its historic fabric, with the exception of a small masonry service station at the corner of Tulip & Venable Street and a one-story commercial building.</p> <p>The primary façade of the new multi-family building will be setback from the sidewalk further than the neighboring commercial building, which has a zero setback, while the front porch and balconies of the new multi-family building will be aligned with the commercial building, abutting the sidewalk.</p> <p>Staff finds that the proposed setback gives deference to the neighboring commercial building, and is generally in-keeping with setback patterns established in the district.</p>

<p>Form, pg. 46, #1-3</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <i>1. New construction should use a building form compatible with that found elsewhere in the historic district.</i> <i>2. New residential construction should maintain the existing human scale of nearby historic residential construction in the district</i> <i>3. New residential construction and additions should incorporate human-scale elements such as cornices, porches and front steps into their design.</i> 	<p>In the immediate area, there are 2 larger historic buildings, a 3-story masonry colonial revival building built in 1923 located at 2230 Venable street, and a 4-5 story masonry, industrial building built between 1890-1915 located at 2401-2413 Venable Street.</p> <p>More recently, new 3&4 story multi-family housing was reviewed and approved by the CAR in 2017 along Jessamine Street, which is located at the rear of the subject property.</p> <p>The proposed new construction will be a maximum of 3 stories, which is taller than most residential and commercial buildings in the district.</p> <p>During the conceptual review, it was asked that the front porch include a sidewalk level stair and entrance. The applicant has revised the plans to include this request.</p> <p>The applicant proposes to rehabilitate the existing commercial building.</p> <p>Currently, the commercial building features windows that are smaller than the original storefront windows. Photographic documentation demonstrates that the building historically featured large store front windows. Staff notes that the configuration did include the glass block window located on the south bay of the front façade. The applicant proposes to remove this window.</p> <p>Staff does not find the glass block window to be a character defining feature and feels that increasing the amount of transparency between the store and street creates a more successful pedestrian realm. <u>Staff recommends that the new store front windows on the existing commercial buildings match the configuration seen in the historic photograph as closely as possible.</u></p>
<p>Height, Width, Proportion, & Massing, pg. 47, #1-3</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <i>1. New residential construction should respect the typical height of surrounding residential buildings.</i> <i>2. New residential construction should respect the vertical orientation typical of other residential properties in the surrounding historic districts.</i> 	<p>The new construction is taller than a majority of the surrounding historic residential buildings, but is compatible in height to the newer construction in the immediate area.</p> <p>Staff notes that many buildings within the Union Hill City Old and Historic District are modest in design and feature limited cornice elements and materials.</p>

	<i>3. The cornice height should be compatible with that of adjacent historic buildings.</i>	
New Construction, Doors and Windows, pg.49 #3	<i>3. The size, proportion, and spacing patterns of doors and window openings on free standing, new construction should be compatible with patterns established in the district.</i>	<p>The new construction will feature single and paired windows that are generally vertically aligned. Staff finds that this configuration is appropriate for the district.</p> <p>The applicant has revised the plans so that that the portion of the new construction behind and overtop of the existing commercial building features vertically aligned recessed balconies and windows.</p> <p>The rear of the building will not be visible from Tulip Street and there is no rear alley.</p> <p>Windows are proposed to be aluminum clad wood, 1/1. Staff finds this material to be appropriate for new construction.</p>
New Construction, Materials & Colors, pg. 53	<p><i>2. Materials used in new construction should be visually compatible with original materials used throughout the surrounding neighborhood.</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 applicant is proposing to use a variety of materials on the new building including brick veneer and fiber cement. The applicant has revised the plans from the conceptual submission to remove board and batten from the design as recommended by the commission.</p> <p>The front porch and balconies will feature steel railings, and the rear parking area will be screened by a metal screen wall.</p> <p>Overall the material selection has been reduced to better reflect the modest design and limited material selection of historic buildings in the district.</p> <p><u>Staff recommends that all final materials including railings and screening be submitted for administrative approval.</u></p>
Mechanical Equipment, pg. 68	<i>The visual impact of new mechanical equipment should be minimized to protect the historic character of the district.</i>	<u>Staff recommends that the location of all exterior mechanical equipment be submitted for administrative approval.</u>
Site Improvements, Sidewalks & Curbs, #7, pg. 76	<i>Sidewalks and curbs should be built of common building materials found throughout the District. Generally, simple paving designs are more compatible with the diverse building styles and better unify the various elements found on streets</i>	<u>Staff recommends that new sidewalks on the site be a material that is compatible with the district.</u> Sidewalks in Union Hill are mostly constructed of either brick or concrete.

Site Improvements, Parking Lots, #1, pg. 77	<i>Parking lots should be broken up as much as possible with interior landscaped islands and should be well screened from the public right-of-way and adjacent properties.</i>	<p>A rear parking lot will be provided underneath the second story. The parking lot will be screened from view, and will be minimally visible from Tulip Street due to the absence of a rear alley.</p>
Standards for Rehabilitation, #9, pg. 5	<p><i>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></p>	<p>The applicant proposes to rehabilitate an existing commercial building located on the subject property which was built in two sections, the first being in 1941, and the second being in 1946.</p> <p>The commercial building currently features a non-original frame gable roof which may have been added sometime in the 1980's. The building is painted white and features non-original windows on the front facade, and original steel windows on the southern façade.</p> <p>The applicant proposes to remove the non-original gable roof form, to repaint the building white, remove the non-original front façade windows and install storefront windows to match the historic configuration, and to repot and repair brick as needed. No information was given on the four southern façade original windows.</p> <p><u>Staff recommends that the gable roof be removed in a way that doesn't cause any damage to any existing historic material, that the new storefront windows and brick pilasters diving them match the historic photo provided by staff as closely as possible, and that the four southern facade steel windows be restored and retained.</u></p> <p>The plans have been revised to include the small four-pane window on the north façade of the commercial building.</p>

Figures



Figure 1. Existing Steel windows on commercial building



Figure 2. Existing conditions. Subject Block



Figure 3. Service station at Tulip Street and Venable Street. Subject property located behind.



Figure 4. Existing commercial building looking southwest from Tulip Street.



Figure 5. Historic Image, approx. 1956

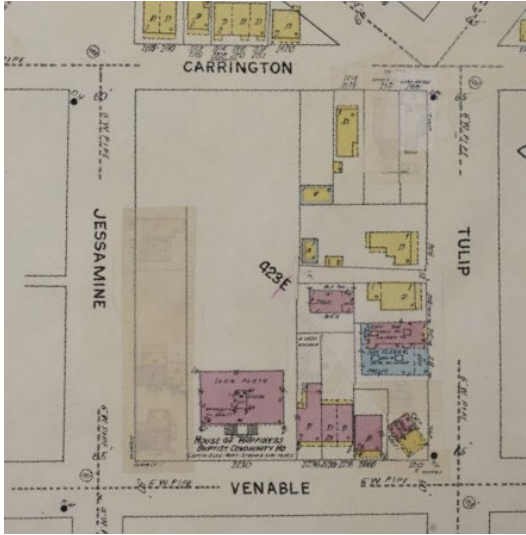


Figure 6. Sanborn Map 1950



Figure 7. 4-pane window on north elevation of commercial building.