



Staff Report
City of Richmond, Virginia



Commission of Architectural Review

2. COA-117383-2022	Final Review Meeting Date: 11/22/2022
Applicant/Petitioner	Rick Fischl, SMBW, PLLC
Project Description	Construct a new 8-story mixed-use building on a vacant lot, and rehabilitate the façade of an existing building.
Project Location	
Address: 219 - 225 West Broad Street	
Historic District: West Broad Street	
High-Level Details: <p>The applicant requests final review of the demolition and façade rehabilitation of an existing, masonry, mixed-use building; and the construction of a new mixed-use, eight-story building on the neighboring vacant lot.</p> <p>The applicant proposes to demolish the building located at 219 W. Broad Street, with the exception of the front façade, eastern party wall, and a portion of the western exterior wall.</p> <p>The proposed eight-story building will have ground floor commercial, with dwelling units above. The front and side facades will be clad in a dark colored brick and stucco, and the building will feature below grade parking. The proposed building will completely obscure the west side and rear elevation of the existing building located at 219 W. Broad Street.</p>	
Staff Recommendation	Deferral
Previous Reviews	<p>The Commission previously reviewed this application at the September 2022 Meeting. The Commission asked for several things to be clarified in the final review. Specifically, the Commission asked for more details regarding the rehabilitation of the front façade of the existing building at 219 W. Broad street, information on the use of “thin” brick as a cladding and how that will be done successfully, and that the articulation of the podium and attic story of the proposed new building at 225 W. Broad Street be further studied and better reference existing precedent.</p> <p>The most overarching question by the Commission was the merits of removing the western and rear walls of 219 W. Broad</p>

	Street in order to construct the 225 W. Broad Street. The Commission was concerned about creating a precedent, however understood that the western and rear walls of 219 W. Broad would no longer be visible if the new construction was approved. A question was raised if this application should be considered an addition to an existing building or a demolition and a new construction request.
Staff Contact	Alex Dandridge, alex.dandridge@rva.gov , (804) 646-6569
Conditions for Approval	<p>Staff recommends deferral of the application with the following suggestions to allow the applicant to provide additional information to the Commission to review the merits of the proposed demolition prior to review of the proposed new construction.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff recommends that the applicant submit information on the other alternatives considered by the applicant that include the retention of 219 W. Broad street in order to demonstrate that removing the western and rear walls are the most feasible option and will accommodate the best use of the site. • Staff recommends that the applicant submit an engineer's report that provides a detailed description of 219 W. Broad Street's condition.

Staff Analysis

Proposed Demolition of 219 W. Broad Street

Staff notes that per the guidelines "demolition is considered an option of last resort for contributing historic properties and is only permitted under extreme circumstances" and includes the partial and full demolition of a building.

Under the provisions of Section 30-930.7(d) of the Richmond City Code, the Commission *shall approve* requests for demolition when *any* of the following are met:

- 1) There are no feasible alternatives to the proposed demolition. Feasible alternatives include an appropriate new use and rehabilitation, relocation of the structure to a compatible site or re-sale of the property to an individual committed to suitable rehabilitation or relocation.
- 2) A building or structure is deemed not be a contributing part of the historic character of an Old and Historic District.
- 3) The Commission deems that a building or structure has deteriorated beyond the point of feasible rehabilitation.

The Richmond City Code also grants the Commission the authority to adopt additional considerations for demolition. The Commission has done so and has incorporated these standards into the Guidelines. They are as follows:

- 1) The historic and architectural value of a building;
- 2) The effect that demolition will have on the surrounding neighborhood;

- 3) The type and quality of the project that will replace the demolished building; and
- 4) The historic preservation goals outlined in the Master Plan and Downtown Plan.

The analysis below draws from the standards detailed above.

219 W. Broad Street – Existing mixed-use building

Guideline Reference	Reference Text	Analysis
<p>Richmond City Code, Sec. 30-930.7(d)</p> <p>And Standards for Demolition, pg. 82</p>	<p><i>The Commission of Architectural Review shall not issue a certificate of appropriateness for demolition of any building or structure within an old and historic district, unless the applicant can show that there are no feasible alternatives to demolition. The demolition of historic buildings and elements in old and historic districts is strongly discouraged. The demolition of any building deemed by the Commission to be not a part of the historic character of an old and historic district shall be permitted. The demolition of any building that has deteriorated beyond the point of being feasibly rehabilitated is permissible, where the applicant can satisfy the Commission as to the infeasibility of rehabilitation. The Commission may adopt additional demolition standards for the review of certificates of appropriateness applications to supplement these standards.</i></p>	<p>In order to construct the new 8-story building at 225 W. Broad Street and to carry out the entire scope and programming of the site, the entirety of the existing mixed-use building at 219 W. Broad must be demolished, with the exception of the front façade, which will be rehabilitated. While the existing building's rear and west wall will be obscured from view if the new construction at 225 W. Broad is approved, staff finds the alterations to 219 W. Broad meet the definition of a demolition outline in the <i>Guidelines</i> and should be reviewed as such prior to allowing for the new construction to take place.</p> <p>Staff believes that the evidence needed to properly review the demolition of 219 W. Broad Street has not been provided.</p> <p>During the conceptual review of this application, the Commission asked that the applicant consider ways that 219 W. Broad street could be incorporated into the design of the new construction while retaining all exterior walls, limiting the project's impact on the existing building. The applicant now states in the application that other designs were considered but were not feasible. No information was provided on what other alternatives have been studied that include keeping the existing building.</p> <p>Images were provided of the interior of the existing building that indicate that there may be water damage and some disrepair; however, a structural analysis or engineering report has not been provided indicating that the building is deteriorated beyond the point of feasible rehabilitation.</p> <p>Staff believes that 219 W. Broad Street is a contributing building to the W. Broad Street City Old and Historic District.</p>

		<p><u>Staff recommends that the applicant submit information on the other alternatives considered that include the retention of the entirety of 219 W. Broad street in order to demonstrate that removing the western and rear walls are the most feasible option and will accommodate the best use of the site.</u></p> <p>In addition, <u>Staff recommends that the applicant submit an engineer's report that provides a detailed description of 219 W. Broad Street's condition.</u></p>
Secretary of The Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation, pg. 5, #10	10. New construction shall be undertaken in such a manner that if removed in the future the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.	As proposed, the entirety of the existing building at 219 W. Broad Street, except the façade and eastern party wall, will be removed to allow for the building's interior space to connect more seamlessly to the new eight story building. Staff believes that this is not in-keeping with the Secretary of the Interior Standards, and that removal of most of the existing building would be an irreversible alteration, and the form and integrity of the existing building would be impaired if the new building was removed in the future.
Secretary of the Interior Standards for Rehabilitation pg. 5, #9	<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>	As submitted, the entirety of the existing building at 219 W. Broad Street, except the façade and eastern party wall, will be removed to accommodate the new construction.

225 W. Broad Street – Proposed new eight-story building (dependent on the approval of the current demolition as proposed).

Guideline Reference	Reference Text	Analysis
Siting, pg. 46, #s 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</i>	The proposed new construction will respect the prevailing front and side yard setback patterns found within the district. The setback patterns within the W. Broad Street City Old

	<p><i>evident in most districts reinforce the traditional street wall.</i></p> <p><i>3. New buildings should face the most prominent street bordering the site.</i></p>	<p>and Historic District are generally O', which is a result of the dense, historic urban form of the district.</p> <p>The primary façade of the proposed building will face W. Broad Street, which is the most prominent street. This new construction is located on a corner parcel, and will have ground floor storefront windows which address Madison Street, the side street adjacent the parcel.</p>
Standards for New Construction, Form, pg. 46	<p><i>1. New construction should use a building form compatible with that found elsewhere in the historic district.</i></p> <p><i>2. New residential construction should maintain the existing human scale of nearby historic residential construction in the district.</i></p> <p><i>3. New residential construction and additions should incorporate human-scale elements such as cornices, porches and front steps into their design.</i></p>	<p>The proposed new construction will maintain the existing human scale of the district. The first two-floors of the building will be clad in gray stucco, the top of which will align with the cornice height of the neighboring building. This portion of the building will also feature large store front windows and a primary entrance.</p> <p>The proposed building appears wider than existing buildings in the district, however the primary, W. Broad Street façade has been designed to include a narrow, vertical, recessed band down the center of the façade that visually breaks the façade into two narrower masses. Staff finds that this feature better helps the front façade reference the width of existing buildings in the district.</p>
Standards for New Construction, height, width, proportion & Massing, pg. 47	<p><i>1. New residential construction should respect the typical height of surrounding residential buildings.</i></p> <p><i>2. New residential construction should respect the vertical orientation typical of other residential properties in surrounding historic districts.</i></p> <p><i>3. The cornice height should be compatible with that of adjacent historic buildings.</i></p>	<p>The West Broad Street City Old & Historic District is comprised of 3-5 story mixed-use buildings; however, there are examples of buildings that exceed this height, such as the Masonic Building and the Quirk Hotel, the latter being located on the subject block.</p> <p>Staff finds that there is historic precedent for taller buildings in the W. Broad Street COHD, specifically on corner parcels, and that the proposed new construction is subordinate in height and design to the existing historic buildings of similar height. Staff supports the proposed height of the building.</p> <p>While the proposed building is taller than the neighboring existing building at 219 W. Broad Street, the building will feature a second story cornice line, horizontal banding elements, and a fenestration pattern that aligns with the neighboring historic building.</p> <p>The applicant has further articulated the podium and attic story by cladding the</p>

		podium in full modular brick and adding a horizontal course of brick between the 7 th & 8 th floors
Materials and Colors, pg. 47, #2	<i>2. Materials used in new residential construction should be visually compatible with original materials used throughout the district.</i>	<p>Responding to the Commissions feedback on materials, the applicant has removed stucco from the podium of the building, and is now proposing full modular brick cladding. Above the podium the building will be clad in a “thin” brick. Windows will be vertically aligned, composite windows with stucco accents between floors.</p> <p>Brick is the primary cladding used on buildings in the W. Broad COHD. While many buildings feature red brick, some have light brick or brick that was painted prior to the designation of the district.</p> <p>The applicant is proposing to use a darker colored brick for the new building. While dark brick is not common in the district, Staff finds that the use of brick is compatible with the district and the contemporary color helps differentiate the new construction from the historic buildings, amongst other things.</p> <p><u>Staff recommends that all exterior material and design details be submitted for administrative review and approval including: garage and person doors, windows, cladding, trim and metal.</u></p>
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 within the district.</i>	<p>The proposed new construction will have vertically aligned windows and doors which is in-keeping with the district. A character defining element of buildings within the W. Broad Street COHD is the articulation of windows using decorative brick work, recessed bays, keystones, and panels. The new construction will feature windows set in vertical recessed bays, and will have simple, rectangular paneling surrounding them. Staff finds that the fenestration pattern of the proposed building is a contemporary take on the existing historic fenestration pattern found in the district.</p>
Mechanical Equipment, HVAC, #'s 1-3, pg. 68	<i>1. New units should be placed in side or rear yards so as to minimize their visual impact. Side yard units should be located as far away from the front of the building as possible.</i>	<p><u>Staff recommends that the location of all exterior HVAC equipment be submitted with the final review.</u></p>

	<p><i>2. Rooftop units should be located so that they are minimally visible from the public right-of-way, and screening should be considered.</i></p> <p><i>3. HVAC equipment on the ground should be appropriately screened with fencing or vegetation.</i></p> <p><i>4. Exhaust vents or fans should be installed where their visibility is minimized and with the least impact on historic materials.</i></p>	
<p>Preservation Brief #14 New Exterior Additions to Historic buildings</p>	<p>A densely-built neighborhood such as a downtown commercial core offers a particular opportunity to design an addition that will have a minimal impact on the historic building. Often the site for such an addition is a vacant lot where another building formerly stood. Treating the addition as a separate or infill building may be the best approach when designing an addition that will have the least impact on the historic building and the district. In these instances there may be no need for a direct visual link to the historic building.</p> <p>Height and setback from the street should generally be consistent with those of the historic building and other surrounding buildings in the district. Thus, in most urban commercial areas the addition should not be set back from the facade of the historic building. A tight urban setting may sometimes even accommodate a larger addition if the primary elevation is designed to give the appearance of being several buildings by breaking up the facade into elements that are consistent with the scale of the historic building and adjacent buildings.</p>	<p>During the conceptual review of this application, it was asked that the applicant consider ways to incorporate 219 W. Broad into the design of the project, however that has not been demonstrated. Staff now considers this to be a demolition and new construction rather than an addition to a historic building.</p> <p>The applicant has provided additional information on the connection of the front façade of 219 W. Broad and 225 W. Broad. There will be a small vertical recess differentiating the two façades.</p>

Figures



Figure 1. Subject Block



Figure 3. Existing front and rear of 219 W. Broad Street.



Figure 4. Older image of 219-225 W. Broad Street



Figure 5. Masonic Building



Figure 6. Quirk Hotel