




Staff Report
City of Richmond, Virginia
Planning Commission



UDC 2023-19	FINAL Location, Character, Extent Review	Meeting Date: 11/20/2023
Applicant/Petitioner	Martin West, Department of Public Works	
Project Description	FINAL Location, Character, and Extend Review of the Relocation of the Winfree Cottage, located at 400 E. 15th Street.	
Project Location		
Address: 400 E. 15th Street		
Property Owner: CITY OF RICHMOND RECREATION & PARKS		
High-Level Details: This project proposes to relocate the historic Winfree cottage from its current storage location to a final location at 400 E. 15 th Street. An addition will be added to the rear of the cottage for the purpose of a studio living space, intended for use by an scholar/artist-in-residence program. The project includes landscaping, site improvements, and exterior educational space.		
UDC Recommendation	Approval, with Conditions	
Staff Contact	Ray Roakes, Planner, raymond.roakes@rva.gov	
Public Outreach/ Previous Reviews	NA	
Conditions for Approval	1. The UDC recommends that final details on outdoor lighting be sensitive to light pollution or dark-skies compliant. 2. The UDC recommends inclusion of permeable hardscape materials and sustainable stormwater features, where appropriate, and as suggested by the Urban Design Guidelines. 3. The UDC recommends the applicant incorporate public art, where feasible. 4. The UDC recommends that the front yard be re-graded to eliminate the front porch railing, if possible, or to explore the use of materials that is appropriate to historic preservation standards. 5. The UDC recommends a representation of the original chimney be added to the architecture, if possible. 6. The UDC recommends explore lowering landscaping walls around the plaza to provide a place for seating.	

Findings of Fact

Site Description	The project is located at the corner of East 15 th Street and Maury Street in the Blackwell Neighborhood. The site consists of 0.2615 acres (11,389 sqft.) and is currently vacant with several well established trees.
Scope of Review	<p>The project is subject to location, character, and extent review under section 17.05 and 17.07 of the Richmond City Charter.</p> <p>Items the UDC could directly review include the General Location, such as if this use is appropriate for this location according to the Master Plan; General Character of architecture or site improvements, such as the overall architectural style and appropriateness of landscaping themes; and GENERAL Extent, such as does this project meet its stated goals or interfere with other City priorities or goals.</p> <p>Items the UDC could make recommendations on include the specific architecture and site improvements, such as materials, plantings, and site layout.</p>
Prior Approvals	NA
Project Description	<p>The Applicant states “THE WINFREE COTTAGE IS A 900 SF RENOVATION AND ADDITION PROJECT LOCATED AT 400 E 15TH ST, RICHMOND VA. THE PROJECT CONSISTS OF RENOVATING THE EXISTING COTTAGE OF THE FREED WOMAN EMILY WINFREE, AS WELL AS AN ADDITION ON THE REAR OF THE COTTAGE. THE RENOVATED EXISTING COTTAGE WILL PAY HOMAGE TO THE HISTORY OF THE BUILDING. IT INCLUDES A STUDIO/HOME OFFICE SPACE AND LIVING ROOM. THE NEW ADDITION IS A MORE MODERN AESTHETIC WHILE STAYING IN KEEPING WITH THE NEIGHBORHOOD CHARACTER AND HISTORY. THE ADDITION INCLUDES A SMALL KITCHEN, BATHROOM, AND BEDROOM. THE SITE ALSO INCLUDES FRONT AND SIDE PORCHES, REAR ENTRY RAMP, DRIVEWAY, AND OUTDOOR PATIO AREA. THE LANDSCAPE INCLUDES NEWLY PLANTED DECIDUOUS TREES, LOW BUSHES, AND FLOWERING PLANTS IN A MODEST LAYOUT.”</p> <p>This project relocates the historic Winfree cottage from its current storage location to a final location at 400 E. 15th Street. The proposed location is geographically close to where the cottage originally stood at the corner of Commerce and Porter.</p> <p>An addition will be added to the rear of the historic cottage structure for the purpose of a studio living space, intended for use by a scholar/artist-in-residence program. The architecture of the addition is designed to appropriately contrast with the historic cottage structure so that the two halves are easily identified as being constructed at different time periods.</p> <p>Existing informational signage at the current storage location will be relocated to the new site within view of the ROW.</p> <p>The project includes landscaping and site improvements and an exterior educational garden space. Existing established tree specimens will be maintained and protected through the project construction and further tree specimens will be planted. The site will be connect via pedestrian path to the adjacent public park.</p> <p>Staff recommends approval with the attached standard conditions. Staff provides the following analysis for approval:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The General Location is appropriate, as it is geographically close to the original site, will compliment an adjacent elementary school and existing park, and is designated as Residential in the Master Plan Future Land Use Section – which allows institutional and cultural uses as a secondary use. 2. The General Character of the proposal appropriately addresses the historical importance of the Winfree Cottage while creating a new compelling related use with the scholar/artist-in-residence program. The architecture of the new addition appropriately addresses the historic cottage structure, and site improvements and landscaping create a historically sensitive and high quality exterior space. 3. The General Extent of the proposal appropriately addresses the historic intent of the site and does not interfere with any other designated Master Plan goals or planned improvements.

	The Urban Design Committee Recommends Approval with Amended Conditions. The UDC discussed the appropriateness of the design for the front porch, provision of a homage to the historic chimney, improvements to seating onsite, and the use of the historic structure going forward.
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Urban Design Guidelines and Master Plan

	Text	Staff Analysis
Master Plan		
	Objective 17.2 Increase city-wide tree canopy from 42% to 60%	Construction is planned to preserve maximum level of existing tree specimens and plant several new.
Urban Design Guidelines		
	<i>(P.9) <u>Environment, Public Parks:</u> Successful public parks, both small and large, active or passive, share certain qualities, which include the ability to attract and entertain visitors, access and connectivity to surrounding areas, and safety and comfort.</i>	The proposal creates a new park space that honors an important cultural heritage of the City.
	<i>(p.10) <u>Landscaping, Design:</u> Landscaping should not only provide a sense of scale and seasonal interest, but should also be designed to minimize human impact on the environment. Designs that include conservation landscaping, strategically minimize the urban heat island effect, or decrease stormwater runoff are strongly encouraged.</i>	The proposal is designed to minimize human impact on the environment by maintaining existing tree species and using local planting practices. A majority of the site will remain pervious from the project.
	<i>(P.10) <u>Landscaping, Species Diversity:</u> Landscape plans should include a diverse palette of plant species that include evergreen trees, flowering and shade tree species, shrubs, ground cover, and annual and perennial plantings.</i>	Proposal includes limited plantings but the species proposed are native species. Construction is planned to preserve maximum level of existing tree specimens.