

**COMMISSION OF ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW
STAFF REPORT
February 23, 2016, Meeting**

11. **CAR No. 16-030** (M. Jarreau)

**722-724 North 23rd Street
Union Hill Old and Historic District**

Project Description: **Modify previously approved plans for the construction of a new mixed-use development to include changes to the fenestration**

Staff Contact: **M. Pitts**

The applicant requests approval to modify plans for a previously approved mixed use project on vacant parcels at the convergence of North 23rd and Jessamine streets in the Union Hill Old and Historic District. On January 27, 2015, the Commission approved the construction of a three-story mixed-use building that houses a ground-floor commercial space with four residential apartments above and a two-story single-family residence to the north of the larger building. The applicant has submitted building permit plans for the three story building that were not consistent with the approved plans which necessitated the application currently before the Commission.

The proposed changes to the previously approved plans are as follows:

- On the east elevation, the double storefront doors which were centered in the recessed opening have been changed to a single door and a larger area storefront glazing.
- On the south elevation, the approved plans included two sets of paired windows on the second and third floors. The applicant is now proposing four individual ranked windows on the second and third floors.
- On the west elevation, the approved plans included storefront glazing for all three stories of the recessed center bay. The applicant is proposing to replace the glazing on the second and third floors with brick and a single window on each floor. Also, the approved plans include evenly spaced ranked windows on the second and third floors of the brick portions of this elevation. The applicant is proposing to relocate the three bays of windows on the northern end of this elevation to result in ranked windows which are no longer evenly spaced. Additionally, the applicant has added one window to the first floor.

Staff recommends partial approval of the project with conditions.

West Elevation

As the proposed change to the entrance on the west elevation is minor and maintains the appearance of the approved entry, staff believes the proposed modification is in substantial compliance with the Certificate of Appropriateness issued on January 27, 2015.

South Elevation

The *Richmond Old and Historic Districts Handbook and Design Review Guidelines* state that the spacing patterns of window openings on free standing, new construction should be compatible with patterns established within the district (pg. 46, Doors and Windows #3). The proposed changes to the window spacing reflect the vertical orientation of the window spacing seen throughout the district. Staff recommends approval of this proposed change as the new alignment is consistent with the patterns established within the district.

West Elevation

The *Guidelines* note that when designing a new construction project with wide massing, bays should be employed as an organizational device (pg. 51, Height, Width, Proportion, & Massing #2). The approved plans utilized a bay of storefront to help break up the massing on the west elevation. Though the applicant proposes to recess this center bay, the effectiveness of breaking up the building massing is reduced by maintaining the brick on the upper floors across the entire elevation. Staff recommends denial of the proposed change to this center bay as the storefront on all three levels was an integral portion of the approved design which helped create massing that is appropriate for the district and the residential character of the properties across Jessamine Street.

For the northern three window bays on west elevation, the approved plans reflected an even spacing pattern which is consistent with patterns established in the district. As the new uneven spacing does not reflect the patterns on primary facades of structures in the district, staff recommends denial of the proposed window relocation on the upper two floors. For the first floor, staff recommends approval of the installation of an additional window with the condition that all first floor windows be evenly spaced.

It is the assessment of staff that the application, with the condition noted above, is partially consistent with the Standards for New Construction outlined in Sections 30-930.7(c) of the City Code, as well as with the *Richmond Old and Historic Districts Handbook and Design Review Guidelines*, specifically the page cited above, adopted by the Commission for review of Certificates of Appropriateness under the same section of the code.