COMMISSION OF ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW STAFF REPORT January 24, 2017 Meeting

10. CAR No. 16-177 (J. Romano)

2112 East Clay Street Union Hill Old and Historic District

Project Description: Construct two attached single family dwellings.

Staff Contact: M. Pitts

The applicant requests approval to construct two attached single family dwellings in the Union Hill Old and Historic District. The proposed structure will be located on a vacant corner lot at the intersection of North 22nd Street and East Clay Street. The proposed new construction will be a two-story, frame, Late Victorian-inspired structure with a full façade front porch and a false mansard primary roof clad in composite shingles. The façade of each dwelling has a two-story, three-sided projecting bay with a conical roof and an additional bay with 2nd story window aligned above the half-light front door.

The Commission reviewed this project on December 13, 2016. At that meeting, the Commission deferred the application to allow the applicant the opportunity to revise the plans to deepen the front bays; to alter the North 22nd Street elevation to include elements of a corner elevation as encouraged by the Commission's *Guidelines*; to include dimensions for all elements; to examine ways to mitigate for the loss of the large tree which was removed by the previous owner as a condition of the transfer, and to include a context site plan.

In response to the Commission's and staff's comments, the applicant has revised the plans as follows:

- Increased the depth of the front bays from 1'-4" to 2'.
- Incorporated two first floor projecting bays on the south, corner elevation.
- Provided details on the proposed siding colors which are Naval (navy blue) and Retreat (grey green).
- Provided the height from grade to the porch floor which is 44" and noted the foundation will be clad in Pine Hall "Ashton Court" Brick.

Staff recommends approval of the application as submitted with the noted conditions. Staff believes the proposed new construction is consistent with the Commission's *Guidelines*. The proposed building incorporates the building form found on the subject block and utilizes materials compatible with the district. The applicant has responded to the Commission's concerns regarding the depth of the front bays and the treatment of the corner elevation. The Guidelines encourage architectural elements that are typical of corner properties in the district, such as projecting bays as is proposed, should be included in new construction (pg. 46, #5). The Commission's *Guidelines* for Corner Properties

note that particular attention should be paid to the height of foundations to create an appropriately scaled appearance that relates to neighboring structures and is consistent with neighboring properties and that heights should be kept to a level that will enhance, not detract, from the pedestrian experience (pg. 46, #3). The proposed 3'-8" brick foundation will align with the adjacent porch and will not detract from the pedestrian experience on North 22nd Street.

The applicant has not responded to the Commission's concerns regarding the removal of the American Elm which was located on the northeast corner of the property and was removed by the previous owner as the applicant's request. On page 73, the Guidelines state that: "Mature trees contribute to the character of Old and Historic districts, provide visual interest, reduce the negative impacts of parking areas and ease the effects of temperature and wind conditions. Every effort should be made to maintain and preserve them." In April 2016, CAR staff spoke with the City Arborist, Luke McCall, who noted while the tree was "an outstanding specimen that [had] existed in that location for quite a long time," it would be extremely detrimental to the tree if construction were to take place underneath its canopy. Staff recommends the applicant provide a landscape plan for staff to review and approve to include trees to mitigate the effects of the tree removal.

Staff recommends the following additional conditions of approval:

- The siding be smooth and unbeaded.
- A railing detail be provided for administrative review and approval.

It is the assessment of staff that the application, with the noted conditions, is consistent with the Standards for New Construction outlined in Section 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 pages cited above, adopted by the Commission for review of Certificates of Appropriateness under the same section of code.