COMMISSION OF ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW STAFF REPORT September 26, 2017 Meeting

13. COA-0022633-2017 (St. John's United Church) 1131 & 1137 West Grace Street
West Grace Street Old and Historic District

Project Description: Construct a new multifamily building.

Staff Contact: M. Pitts

The applicant requests conceptual review and comment on the construction of multifamily structure at the corner of North Lombardy and West Grace Streets in the West Grace Street Old and Historic District. The applicant is requesting the Commission to provide comments on the siting, form, height, width, proportion, and massing of the proposed structure and has not provided details related to the materials or the articulation of the structure.

The subject parcels are currently developed with a parking lot which serves the adjacent church. To the west on West Grace Street, the lots are developed with two to three story brick row houses. The structures to the east on West Grace Street are three story brick apartment buildings and two story brick row houses. The structures at the corner of Monument Avenue and Lombardy Street have considerable more height and massing than the structures along West Grace Street. These structures include the eleven story William Bottomley designed Stuart Court Apartments at the northwest corner, a six story mixed use building at the southeast corner, and two churches on the remaining corners.

The applicant is proposing a six story residential structure. Parking will be provided underground and on the first floor. The mass of the building will have an H-shape configuration oriented to West Grace Street with front and rear courtyards. The first floor will not be recessed along West Grace Street, and therefore the front courtyard does not extend to the ground plane. The sixth story will also be setback from the alley.

The applicant is seeking **Conceptual Review** for this project. Conceptual review is covered under Sec. 30-930.6(d) of the City Code: The Commission shall review and discuss the proposal with the applicant and make any necessary recommendations. Such Conceptual Review shall be advisory only.

Commission staff reviewed the proposed construction through the lens of the "Standards for New Construction: Commercial" on pages 52-56 of the Richmond Old and Historic District Handbook and Design Review Guidelines utilizing the checklist below.

S=satisfie		atisfies	D=does not satisfy	NA=not applicable	
		NA :tures repropert	New infill construction should respect the side yard setback patterns in the surround espect the prevailing setbacks as the setback.	ding district	
The	nron	⊠ erty io a	Where the adjoining buildings have d setback for the new building should be be pattern for the block	•	
	prope	=1 ty 15 a	a corner lot with one adjacent structure.		
	Ш		New buildings should face the most pronthe site	ninent street bordering	
As the details of the building are not illustrated, staff is unable to determine how well the property addresses West Grace and North Lombardy Street. Staff encourages the applicant to address West Grace Street, North Lombardy Street, and the corner of the West Grace and North Lombardy Streets with entrances, glazing, porches, and other articulation to add interest to these primary elevations and prominent corner.					
			Parking within the building is strongly enentry doors located on non-primary elevations		
The	propo	osed pa	arking will be primarily within the building and a	accessible from the alley.	
New construction should use a building form compatible with that found elsewhere in the district. Form refers to the combination of massing, size, symmetry, proportions, projections and roof shapes that lend identity to a building. While staff finds the proposed H-shape is appropriate and appreciates how the design breaks up the building massing, staff has concerns with the treatment of the first story along West Grace Street. The presence of a first story with a terrace above and recessed upper stories for the width of the subject lot is not a building form found in the district. Staff encourages the applicant to consider a true front courtyard which extends to the ground floor plane as is found on the adjacent property at 1125 West Grace Street.					
□ Deta	□ ails ha	□ ave not	New construction should incorporate hu the pedestrian level. Street level eleva- expanses of blank walls been provided.		
			New storefronts should be compatible w within the district. Storefronts are traditio		

piers, large storefront windows, a cornice, a signboard and attached signage and awnings Details have not been provided.					
	New construction should respect the typical height of				
surrounding buildings Though the structure is taller than the structures on West Grace Street, the West Grace Street and adjacent Monument Avenue Old and Historic Districts are characterized by a diversity in heights with taller buildings often found on prominent corners. Staff finds the proposed building height provides an appropriate transition from the taller institutional and multifamily buildings on Monument Avenue and smaller scale row houses and apartment buildings on West Grace Street.					
	New construction should respect the typical width, organization of bays, vertical alignment and symmetry of surrounding buildings. For larger buildings, bays should be employed as an organizational device but the building should read as a single piece of architecture				
The H-shape configuration breaks up the massing in a three part configuration which is consistent with numerous apartment buildings on West Grace Street. Staff recommends the center courtyard be brought down the ground floor plane to create a true courtyard at the ground level.					
	The size, proportion, and spacing patterns of doors and window openings should be compatible with patterns established in the district.				
Details have not been provided.					
	Porch and cornice heights should be compatible with adjacent buildings				
Details have not been provided. Staff encourages the applicant to incorporate substantial multi-story porch structures in the design as is characteristic of the district rather than projecting balconies.					
	Materials used in new construction should be visually compatible with original materials used throughout the district. Vinyl, asphalt, and aluminum siding are not permitted.				

Details have not been provided. As the district is characterized by brick construction, staff encourages the applicant to propose a brick structure.