

COMMISSION OF ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW
STAFF REPORT
March 27, 2018, Meeting

20. COA-031861-2018 (B. Englander)

**530 North Boulevard
Boulevard Old and Historic District**

Project Description: **Construct a multifamily building on a vacant lot.**

Staff Contact: **M. Pitts**

Proposal: The applicant requests conceptual review and comment for the construction of a new multifamily structure on a vacant lot at the corner of Patterson Avenue and North Boulevard. The existing subject lot is developed with a parking lot. Additionally there is an existing retaining wall along North Boulevard and a small yard with a large tree.

The applicant is proposing to construct a 4-story building with ground floor parking and three levels of residential above. The primary entrance to the structure is on Patterson Avenue, and there is no entrance on the North Boulevard elevation. The structure will sit 3 feet above the North Boulevard sidewalk and a retaining wall and landscaping will be installed along North Boulevard. The applicant is proposing to relocate an existing curb cut and introduce a new additional curb cut on Patterson Avenue which will access two vehicular doors. The parking level will be clad in limestone and upper residential levels will be clad in stucco. The upper stories are proposed to be cantilevered over the parking level. The applicant has included both Juliette balconies and large recessed balconies throughout the project. Additionally, the cornice line varies on the Patterson Avenue elevation. The applicant is proposing vertically aligned doors and casement windows.

Surrounding Context: Adjacent to the proposed project to the south is a 3-story, 2-bay, Colonial Revival brick home. The remainder of the east side of the subject block is developed with a Georgian Revival Church and 2 ½ and 3-story brick homes. The west side of the 500 block of North Boulevard is developed with the Tuscan Villa Apartments. This Spanish eclectic style structure encompasses the entire block and includes front courtyards on North Boulevard and entrances onto North Boulevard, Patterson Avenue, and Kensington Avenue. At the convergence of Park and Patterson Avenues at North Boulevard is the 3-story, brick structure whose site plan reflects the triangle lot on which it sits. The west side of the 600 block of North Boulevard is developed with 3-story Colonial Revival apartment buildings and 2 ½ story brick and stucco single family homes. The east side of the 600 block of North Boulevard is developed with First Baptist Church. The Church is a tall 2-story structure with entrances on North Boulevard, Park Avenue, Mulberry Avenue, and Monument Avenue. The structure on Patterson Avenue behind the subject lot is an auto body shop.

Previous Reviews: This application has not come before the Commission. This project will require a Special Use Permit.

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=satisfies

D=does not satisfy

NA=not applicable

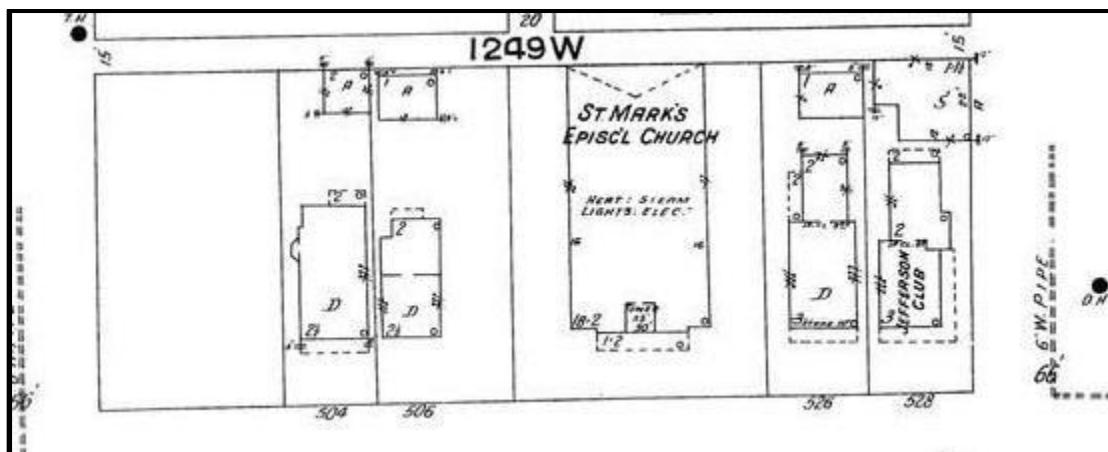
S D NA

 New infill construction should respect the prevailing front and side yard setback patterns in the surrounding district

The applicant has not provided a context site plan. The applicant is proposing to setback the south corner of the structure 8 feet from North Boulevard, and at the north corner, the building will be setback approximately 15 feet. Staff believes the structure will sit proud of the adjacent historic structure. Staff recommends the proposed front yard setback from North Boulevard should match that of the historic structure to the south.

 Where the adjoining buildings have different setbacks, the setback for the new building should be based on the historical pattern for the block

The property is a corner lot with one adjacent structure. The historic setback pattern on the block matches that of the adjacent historic structure.



1925 Sanborn Map

 New buildings should face the most prominent street bordering the site

Staff finds the most prominent street bordering the site is North Boulevard as the buildings including the corner buildings on North Boulevard address the Boulevard in some manner to include a pedestrian entrance or entrance courtyard. Staff has concerns that the building is inaccessible from the North Boulevard elevation and the elevation is treated as a secondary, not primary, elevation. Staff supports the property addressing Patterson Avenue as it is a corner lot with two primary elevations. Staff recommends the Boulevard elevation be revised to address North Boulevard with a pedestrian entrance.

- Parking within the building is strongly encouraged with vehicle entry doors located on non-primary elevations**

The proposed parking will be within the building and accessible from two vehicular doors on Patterson Avenue. Staff recommends the parking be accessed from the alley, and the applicant consider the use of tandem parking to accommodate the desire parking.

- 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.**

Staff finds the proposed massing is appropriate as the Boulevard includes structures of various heights and scales. Staff has concerns that the cantilevered upper stories are not a building form found in the district. While the applicant is proposing vertically aligned windows on the upper stories, staff has concerns the ground floor glazing does not align with the openings above. While a multistory apartment building is a building form found in the district, buildings with vehicular entrances into a primary elevation are not a building form that characterize the district. Staff recommends the applicant redesign the project to eliminate the vehicular entrances on Patterson Avenue and to provide access to the parking off the alley.

- New construction should incorporate human-scale elements at the pedestrian level. Street level elevations should not have expanses of blank walls**

While the applicant has provided entrances on the Patterson Avenue elevation, the elevation contains large expanses of blank wall. Additionally, there are no human scale elements on the structure at the street level on the Boulevard elevation. The applicant is proposing landscaping at the front of the structure though staff does not know if the existing large tree that on the property will be a part of the proposed landscaping plan.

- New storefronts should be compatible with historic storefronts within the district. Storefronts are traditionally defined by simple piers, large storefront windows, a cornice, a signboard and/or attached signage and awnings**

The applicant has incorporated storefront glazing on Patterson Avenue elevation.

- New construction should respect the typical height of surrounding buildings**

The Boulevard Old and Historic District includes structures of varying heights including 4-story apartment buildings and taller institutional structures. Though the applicant has not provided a context elevation, staff anticipates the structure will be taller than the adjacent 3-story structure but in keeping with the taller buildings found in the district.

- 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 structure reflects the typical width of structures in the district and incorporates vertically aligned and symmetrically placed windows and doors. Staff recommends this vertical alignment continue to the openings on the first story. The applicant has broken up the mass along Patterson Avenue by incorporating large recessed porches.

- The size, proportion, and spacing patterns of doors and window openings should be compatible with patterns established in the district.**

The applicant is proposing symmetrical, vertically aligned window placement on the Patterson elevation. Staff recommends this vertical alignment continue to the openings on the first story. Staff has concerns that though the upper story windows on the Boulevard elevation are vertically aligned, the façade lacks the symmetry that should be found on a primary elevation.

- Porch and cornice heights should be compatible with adjacent buildings**

A dimensioned context elevation along North Boulevard and Patterson Avenue has not been provided. The applicant has noted that the project will contain Juliette balconies. The Commission's Guidelines note that balconies without depth are discouraged (pg. 49, Porches and Porch Details #4). The Commission may wish to consider if the proposed Juliette balconies are appropriate in this case as they are a design element found in the district including the Tuscan Villa Apartments.

- Materials used in new construction should be visually compatible with original materials used throughout the district. Vinyl, asphalt, and aluminum siding are not permitted.**

The proposed stucco and limestone structure constructed of materials found on the stucco and masonry buildings in the district.

The following items will need to be included for final review (please refer to the Commission's New Construction Checklist and Required Dimensions document for additional details):

1. Dimensioned context site plan and elevation.
2. Roof Plan

3. Confirm the elevations are consistent with the floor plans as there are currently discrepancies.
4. Cornice and Railing Details
5. Statement of how the *Richmond Old and Historic District Handbook and Design Review Guidelines* informed the proposed work.