

1. COA-072896-2020

PUBLIC HEARING DATE

May 26, 2020

PROPERTY ADDRESS

2400 Venable Street

DISTRICT

Union Hill

Commission of Architectural Review

STAFF REPORT



APPLICANT

K. Thomas

STAFF CONTACT

C. Jeffries

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Rehabilitate an existing mixed-use building including partial demolition and construction of a front and rear addition.

PROJECT DETAILS

- The applicant proposes to rehabilitate a two-story brick mixed-use building on the corner of Venable and Pink Streets.
- The John P. Harwood house was built as a single-family home ca. 1856. The building was converted to a store in the 1920s. According to Sanborn maps of the property it has existed in its current footprint since at least 1925.
- The applicant is proposing a number of changes to the building including:
 - Demolish the front addition
 - Build new front and rear additions
 - Construct a new second-story rear deck
 - Construct a new inset side porch
 - Recreate an infilled window on the east elevation
 - Return a window to a door on the second story of the façade
- Proposed materials include brick, wood lap siding, wood windows, and metal porch railings.
- Zoning staff has indicated that the proposed new construction does not meet zoning setback requirements.



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STAFF RECOMMENDATION

APPROVE WITH CONDITIONS

PREVIOUS REVIEWS

The Commission conceptually reviewed this application at the April 2020 meeting. The Commission was generally supportive of the project and offered comments on the proposed partial demolition, materials, and building form of the additions. The Commission expressed concern with losing existing historic fabric on a significant building in the Union Hill Historic District. The Commission discussed the proposed storefront reconstruction and offered suggestions for proposed materials.

STAFF RECOMMENDED CONDITIONS

- The plans be revised to accurately show the fenestration pattern and design prior to the issuance of a building permit.
- The new first story front door fit within the existing masonry opening, utilizing sidelights and a transom if necessary, and specifications for the proposed door be submitted for administrative approval.
- The storefront design be further revised to be consistent with historic patterns, such as by extending the columns to the ground and constructing the bulkhead of wood panels rather than brick.
- The historic roof form and the exterior portion of the rear chimney on the north elevation be retained.
- The rear balcony be painted or stained a neutral color and the depth be reduced to six feet to be more consistent with historic patterns found in the district.
- The front balcony railing be wood, and painted a color complementary to the main building.
- Specifications for the proposed ramp and handrail to the front entrance be submitted for administrative approval.
- If the applicant determines that window replacement may be required, a full window survey be submitted for review and approval prior to the removal of any windows.
- The reconstructed window on the west elevation be a 6/6 wood or aluminum clad wood window with simulated divided lights with interior and exterior muntins and a spacer bar between the glass, be aligned with the window above, and the wood sill be recreated, to match the other first story window openings.
- Final window specifications be submitted for administrative approval.
- Any repointing be done in accordance with the Commission's Maintenance and Repair guide for masonry and the National Park Service's Preservation Brief #2.
- If the masonry requires repainting, any damaged or deteriorated paint be removed by hand to the next sound level of paint prior to repainting.
- The new second story front door fit the historic opening and be of a contemporary design.
- Paint colors be submitted for administrative approval.

STAFF ANALYSIS

Standards for Rehabilitation, commercial construction #2, pg. 58

Retain all original building elements and repair as needed; replace in-kind only if necessary.

The applicant is proposing to retain or rebuild in-kind the rear masonry section which was previously proposed to be demolished. Staff notes that the elevations do not accurately reflect the fenestration pattern on the north elevation, as the existing window is centered on this wall. Staff recommends the plans be revised to accurately show the fenestration pattern prior to the issuance of a building permit.

Standards for Rehabilitation #1, pg. 59

Retain original features and materials that define the building style, including but not limited to wood siding, shingles, stucco and masonry.

Standards for New Construction, siting #1, pg. 52

Additions should be subordinate in size to their main buildings and as inconspicuous as possible. Locating additions at the rear or on the least visible side of a building is preferred.

The proposed additions are subordinate in size to the main building. Though the front addition will be removed, it has been highly modified and the applicant has stated that it was not constructed to code. As the new front addition matches the historic footprint and attempts to reconstruct some historic elements, staff is supportive of the proposed front addition.

Standards for New Construction, materials and

Additions should not obscure or destroy original architectural elements.

The proposed additions will be constructed in a manner that does not obscure or destroy existing architectural elements, with the exception of the rear roof.

colors #1, pg.
47

Porches,
Entrances and
Doors #9, pg.
71

Existing entrances or porches should not be removed when an historic structure has been reoriented to accommodate a new use.

The plans indicate that a glass door will be installed in the front entrance. The plans do not appear to reflect the existing masonry opening, which has been infilled with wood paneling to accommodate a standard door. Staff recommends the new door fit within the existing masonry opening, utilizing sidelights and a transom if necessary, and specifications for the proposed door be submitted for administrative approval.

New
Construction,
Storefront
Facades #1, pg.
55

Historically, storefronts were defined by simple piers, large storefront windows, a cornice, and a signboard and/or attached signage

The applicant has revised the proposed storefront design to be more compatible with historic patterns found throughout the district. However, staff recommends that the design be further revised to be consistent with historic patterns, such as by extending the columns to the ground and constructing the bulkhead of wood panels rather than brick.

Standards for
new
construction,
Form #1, pg. 52

New commercial construction should use a building form compatible with that found elsewhere in the immediate area. Building form refers to the specific combination of massing, size, symmetry, proportions, projections and roof shapes that lend identity to a building. Building form is greatly influenced by the architectural style of a given structure.

The applicant proposes a new addition on the rear of the building. The plans indicate that the existing shed roof and a chimney will be demolished and the new roof form will slope down toward the rear of the building and will include cantilevers over the rear elevations. Staff finds that the proposed roof form is not consistent with historic patterns found throughout the district and recommends the historic roof form and rear chimney be retained.

Standards for
Rehabilitation,
#4 pg. 59

Retain original roof shape, size, materials and related elements including cupolas, chimneys and weather vanes; if replacement is necessary, consideration for use of slate, wood and metal, with respect to color and patterns, should be given.

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A 10' deep second story balcony is proposed at the rear of the building. Staff finds that the proposed deck is not consistent with historic rear porch designs, which tend to be much shallower. Staff finds that the deck is not in keeping with the small-scale modest development that characterizes the Union Hill Historic District. The proposed balcony will also be very visible as the building is on a corner lot. Staff recommends the rear balcony be painted or stained a neutral color and the depth be reduced to six feet to be more consistent with historic patterns found in the district.

New Construction, porches and porch details #2, pg. 49	When designing a new railing for a new infill building, or for an existing building which has lost its railing and for which no documentary or physical evidence survives, the balusters in the traditional Richmond rail are generally rectangular in section (with the narrow dimension facing the street) or square.	Staff finds that the proposed railings on the front and rear balconies are consistent with railings found throughout the district. As photographic documentation is not clear enough to indicate the design of the historic railing, staff is supportive of the installation of Richmond rail. <u>Staff recommends the front balcony railing be wood, and painted a color complementary to the main building. Staff also recommends that specifications for the proposed ramp and handrail to the front entrance be submitted for administrative approval.</u>
New Construction, porches and porch details #3, pg. 49	New porch railing designs, compatible with the overall design of the building, will also be considered.	
New Construction, doors and windows #5, pg. 49	Original door and window surroundings should be retained.	The applicant is proposing to retain and repair existing historic windows. However, all of the windows on the building are currently boarded. Staff also notes that the current plans do not reflect the lite configuration of the historic windows. <u>Staff recommends the elevations be revised to reflect the existing window pattern prior to the issuance of a building permit. If the applicant determines that window replacement may be required, a full window survey must be submitted for review and approval prior to the removal of any windows.</u>
Windows #4, pg. 69	Boarded windows should be uncovered and repaired.	
Standards for Rehabilitation #5, pg. 59	Retain original windows including both functional and decorative elements such as frames, sash, muntins, glazing, sills, hood molds, paneled or decorated jambs and moldings, shutters and exterior blinds.	
Windows #7, pg. 69	Windows should only be replaced when they are missing or beyond repair. Any reconstruction should be based on physical evidence or photo documentation.	The plans indicate an infilled window will be reconstructed on the west elevation. Photographic documentation and physical evidence indicates that there was a window in this location. <u>Staff recommends the new window be a 6/6 wood or aluminum clad wood window with simulated divided lights with interior and exterior muntins and a spacer bar between the glass, be aligned with the window above, and the wood sill be recreated, to match the other first story window openings. Staff also recommends that final window specifications be submitted for administrative approval.</u>
Maintenance and Repair, Masonry, pg. 89.	If a masonry building has already been painted and the decision has been made to repaint the building, do not remove all paint completely from the masonry. If previously painted masonry is to be re-painted, it should start with the removal by hand of damaged or deteriorated paint only to the next sound level of paint. Primer and paints specially made for masonry should be used	The existing masonry appears to require repair in some areas. <u>Staff recommends any repointing be done in accordance with the Commission's Maintenance and Repair guide for masonry and the National Park Service's Preservation Brief #2. In addition, if the masonry requires repainting, staff recommends that any damaged or deteriorated paint be removed by hand to the next sound level of</u>

	Do not repoint with mortar that is stronger than the original mortar or the existing brick.	<u>paint prior to repainting.</u>
Standards for Rehabilitation, #4 pg. 59	Retain original roof shape, size, materials and related elements including cupolas, chimneys and weather vanes; if replacement is necessary, consideration for use of slate, wood and metal, with respect to color and patterns, should be given.	The plans indicate that a rear chimney will be removed. <u>Staff recommends the exterior portion of the rear chimney on the north elevation be retained.</u>
Standards for Rehabilitation, #10 pg. 59	While it is acceptable to use salvaged materials as in-kind replacement, adding features or salvaged architectural elements that suggest an inaccurate or undocumented sequence of construction should be avoided because this confuses our understanding of the evolution of Richmond's historic built environment.	The plans indicate an opening on the second story of the façade will be converted back to a door opening, to access the second story balcony. Physical evidence and photographic documentation indicates that this opening was once a door. Staff is supportive of the reconstruction of this feature; however, <u>staff recommends the new door fit the historic opening and be of a contemporary design, as no evidence exists of the historic design of the door.</u>
Paint, #2, pg. 63	It is important that color selections blend with and complement the overall color schemes on the street.	The plans do not indicate any proposed paint colors. <u>Staff recommends paint colors be submitted for administrative approval.</u>

It is the assessment of staff that, with the conditions above, the application is consistent with the Standards for Rehabilitation and New Construction outlined in Section 30-930.7 (b) and (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 the code

FIGURES

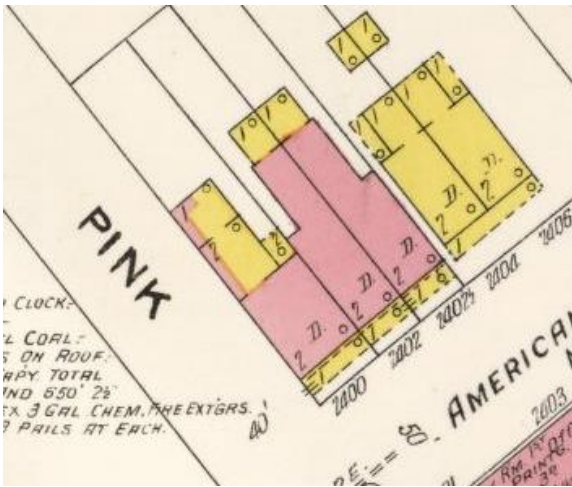


Figure 1. 1905 Sanborn map



Figure 2. 1925 Sanborn map



Figure 3. 2400 Venable Street façade, existing conditions



Figure 4. Rear elevations, existing conditions



Figure 5. Existing front entrance



Figure 6. Detail of damaged brick