City of Richmond, Virginia
Department of Planning and Development Review
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To: Planning Commission
From: Urban Design Committee
Date: February 16, 2021
Plan#: UDC-071352-2020
RE: **Conceptual location, character and extent review of a new Fire Station #12; 2223 W. Cary Street; UDC 2021-03**

I. APPLICANTS
Louis Goode, City of Richmond Department of Public Works

II. LOCATION
Fire Station #12, 2223 W. Cary Street

Property Owner:
City of Richmond Department of Public Works

III. PURPOSE
The application is for conceptual location, character, and extent review of a new Fire Station #12.

IV. SUMMARY & RECOMMENDATION
The City of Richmond's Department of Public Works has engaged Moseley Architects to design a new Fire Station #12 which will replace the existing Fire Station #12, a two-story masonry Italianate building in need of significant upgrades in order to continue to serve the surrounding community and the fire personnel that use the space. The City of Richmond Department of Public Works proposes to demolish the existing building and replace it with a new fire station.

Mosely Architects has proposed two prelimanry designs, both are three-story, masonry construction, though one is a more traditional design and the other is a more contemporary design.

The new building will allow for more space for fire engines and emergency vehicles, as well as common and living space for fire personnel. In addition to the new building, the applicant also proposes new concrete sidewalks, lighting, and site furnishings.

The Urban Design Committee recommends that the Planning Commission grant conceptual approval to the applicant, with the following considerations and conditions:

- Undergrounding of any existing overhead utilities as part of the final plan
- A landscape plan be submitted that shows the location of any trees that are being removed, planted, or maintained be submitted for final review.
- A contemporary roof form be considered for the projecting corner bay of the building
- The lite configuration of the building's windows be consistent and relate to the style of the final building design

- Additional tree wells be added to the new sidewalk that utilize structured soil, rooting, or stormwater runoff curb cuts for irrigation, along with new street tree plantings to replace any trees that are removed during construction.
- A set of floor plans and elevations, as detailed as possible be submitted for final review
- The location of all lighting units (this should be noted on a site plan), including wall-mounted, as well as other site details, such as benches, trash containers, and bike racks be submitted for final review. Include specification sheets for each item.
- The location of all HVAC equipment, generators, and dumpsters, including specifications on screening, be submitted for final review.
- A product specification sheet for all proposed exterior building materials, including but not limited to brick, mortar, roofing material, siding, glass, paint and stain colors be submitted for final review\
- The sidewalk in the front of the building be improved with planting and/or seating
- More openings at balconies, stairs, and public room be provided; specifically on the eastern elevation of the proposed building
- Explore maximizing connection between interior and exterior of the proposed building with transparent glass in the windows

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V. FINDINGS OF FACT

a. Site Description and Surrounding Context

The existing Fire Station #12 building, a two-story masonry Italianate building, is located at the southeast corner of W. Cary Street and Addison Street. The main entrance to the building and the two bays for firetrucks face W. Cary Street, with additional entrances on S. Addison Street and the alley behind the building. West Cary Street in this location is a one-way eastbound street with two travel lanes and street parking on both the north and south side of the street. The intersection of Addison Street and W. Cary Street is signalized, and is triggered to stop traffic when fire trucks are entering and exiting the fire station. This block consists of an auto repair shop; two--story masonry Italianate row homes with single story front porches, and three-story mixed use new construction.

b. Scope of Review

The project is subject to location, character, and extent review under Section 17.07 of the City Charter as a “park or other public way, ground, open space, public building or structure”.

c. UDC Review History

The Urban Design Committee has not previously reviewed projects at this location.

d. Project Description

The applicant requests conceptual review of the preliminary design of a replacement Fire Station #12.The scope of this project includes the demolition of the existing fire station, which is a two-story, masonry, Italianate building with two entry bays for firetrucks on the front façade. Demolition will also include the removal of the concrete sidewalk, curb, light poles, and utility connections and trees.

The proposed improvements to the site include the construction of a new three-story fire station with two apparatus bays for firetrucks and a single apparatus bay for a support vehicle. The entrance to W. Cary Street from the concrete apron will remain and no expansion is anticipated. Dumpster and generator pads are proposed to be located behind the building and will be accessible from the alley. ADA-complaint sidewalks are proposed around the fire station where existing sidewalk will be removed due to construction and demolition. Telecommunications and power will be provided through existing overhead lines in the area.

The proposed fire station will be 14,670 gross square feet, including a mezzanine between the first and second story. Two apparatus bays will be located on Cary Street for the fire engines, and the Battalion Commander will have vehicular access to the rear of the building via the alley, Stones Way. No dedicated parking will be provided on the property – fire station staff will utilize street parking, as they do now. The building will have two roof areas, the higher portion of which will cover the elevator overrun, and access to the roof via a shipladder. Including the parapet height, the building shall be 46’ above grade, and the higher roof area will be 50’ above grade. The building will have a low-slope single-ply fully-adhered membrane roof with parapets approximately 3’ higher than the roof deck.

Exterior walls are anticipated to be constructed of a CMU masonry core with a brick veneer. Exterior windows shall be an aluminum storefront framing system with tempered one-inch insulating glazing. The proposed windows will have steel lintels supporting brick headers. Exterior doors to storage spaces, mechanical spaces, vehicle bays, and the bay support spaces shall be painted flush steel doors in steel frames. All other exterior access doors will be aluminum entrance doors with tempered one-inch insulating glazing mounted in aluminum storefront frames. Bi-folding apparatus bay doors will be constructed of prefinished metal panels and with glass lites.

A large existing tree along the rear of the building is proposed for removal as it has been a nuisance in the past, both for fire apparatus and the existing utility/sidewalk infrastructure. Discussions regarding removal of this tree are ongoing, in conjunction with professional arborist services. Should the tree be removed, it is likely that it will be replaced offsite, but within reasonable proximity to the property. For the remainder of the parcel, given the building footprint fills the majority of the site, and the critical use of the facility, limited landscaping elsewhere is anticipated. Minimal greenspace will be provided in the rear around the dumpster and generator pads.

Both a traditional and a contemporary design are proposed for the building. The final exterior design will be selected with input from local community members. A virtual community meeting is scheduled for January 26th, 2021. Moseley Architects has prepared two options as detailed below, both of which locate the main building entrance at the corner of West Cary Street & South Addison Street

TRADTIONAL

Prominent exterior materials include red brick, black panels, and red aluminum window frames. Black brick will be strategically placed to highlight openings and

provide contrast. Mural artistry is also proposed to identify the station number and create painted artwork which relates to firefighting. Mural proposals will be discussed with the appropriate City department as the project progresses.

CONTEMPORARY
Prominent exterior materials include gray and black brick, red panels, and black aluminum storefront. A mural may also be included in this option, potentially behind the storefront at the main entry, running the full height of the elevator shaft across multiple lobby walls.

e. Master Plan

The Richmond 300 Master Plan notes that Fire Station #12 is situated within a micro node, which is defined as a notable place within a neighborhood that generally provides goods and services to the immediate residents but may attract visitors. The Richmond 300 Plan also states that it is necessary to "co-locate, consolidate, and modernize community-serving public facilities, and locate them in or near Nodes (pg.87)." This project proposes to modernize a public-serving facility so that it can better meet the needs of fire staff and the surrounding community.

f. Urban Design Guidelines

Regarding the construction of new public facilities, the Urban Design Guidelines state the following:

"A new building should have the same or similar setback as existing buildings on the same street. There will be situations, however, where a different setback would be appropriate for the type of building and the desired environment. Examples would include larger public buildings, such as schools and recreation centers, located within urban residential areas. In certain cases, a new building should be constructed with a minimal setback to reinforce the traditional street wall (pg.14)." The new fire station will have a 15 foot setback from the curb on West Cary Street, matching that of the existing fire station and a majority of the other buildings on the south side West Cary Street. The rear of the new fire station will built out over the entire parcel, unlike the existing fire station, which does not fill the entire lot.

"Facilities required for the ongoing operation of the building, such as loading docks, maintenance sheds, or HVAC equipment, should be to the rear of the site and screened from view (pg.14)". The trash receptacles and generators associated with the new construction will be located at the rear of the building and will be accessible from the alley. The applicant has confirmed that there will be screening installed around these units, but a design and material has yet to be determined. Staff would recommend that the final specifications be submitted for the final review.

"Public buildings, such as hospitals, schools, libraries and community centers, may require larger proportions than adjacent buildings. To minimize the visual impact on a neighborhood with smaller scaled structures, the public building should incorporate design techniques which strengthen its design relationship to adjacent buildings (pg. 15)". Staff finds that the proposed fire station is larger in

scale than the adjacent structures; however, both the traditional and contemporary designs utilize similar materials and a similar fenestration pattern to the adjacent structures. Staff noticed on a site visit that there are several examples of three-story new construction on the north side of West Cary Street, setting the precedent for three-story new construction on this block. Staff finds that the height of the building is appropriate due to its location on a corner lot, and the presence of other three-story new construction buildings in the immediate area.

"A corner building may use its roof form to define an entry point location to the block. Larger scaled buildings should have varied roof forms and roof lines in order to minimize monolithic visual impacts. Roof materials and colors should blend with building materials and colors (pg. 16)." Both the traditional and contemporary designs of the building utilize a projecting corner bay to address the corner of Addison Street and W. Cary Street. The Traditional design proposes a flat roof form on the projecting bay with a simple brick cornice line and dentil detailing, while the contemporary design utilizes a modern shed roof design. Staff finds that the shed roof form on the corner projecting bay better addresses the corner, and breaks up the roof form, deviating from that of the larger portion of the building. Staff recommends that a contemporary roof form be utilized on the corner projecting bay.

"New building materials should be compatible with and complement adjacent buildings. The selection and use of colors should be coordinated and compatible with each other and with adjacent buildings (pg. 17)." Staff finds that the brick veneer being proposed is compatible with the subject block, as brick is present on many of the existing buildings.

"The number, size, style and type of windows should be appropriate for the architecture of the building. The rhythm, patterns, and ratio of walls to windows should be proportional and be compatible with adjacent buildings. Too many different window variations on a building can lead to visual confusion and should be avoided. Window design is also influenced by and should be compatible with details such as sills, sashes, lintels, depth of reveal, decorative caps and shutters (pg. 18)." The front façade of both the traditional and contemporary designs proposes aluminum windows with a contemporary, decorative pane configuration, whereas the side elevation proposes one-over-one aluminum windows. Brick sills and lintels are proposed as well. Staff recommends that the building have a consistent window design with a pane configuration that is compatible with the block, as well as the ultimate design of the building. Staff notes that the third floor front balcony contains window openings without window sashes, creating an open air design, which is not a common architectural characteristic of the surrounding block.

"New development should provide sidewalks along streets where there are currently no sidewalks or sidewalks in disrepair (pg. 4)." and *"significant healthy trees should be preserved and maintained. Trees on public and private property should be appropriately trimmed around utility lines. Hazardous dead or dying trees on City-owned property should be removed and replaced (pg. 10)."* The existing sidewalks contain tree wells and have been uplifted by tree roots in certain locations. New sidewalks are being proposed within the scope of this

project. One tree is proposed for removal along Addison Street. Staff would recommend that the applicant consider adding tree wells to the new sidewalk that utilize structured soil, rooting, or curb cuts for irrigation through storm water runoff, along with new street tree plantings to replace any trees that are removed during construction.

VII. ATTACHMENTS

a. **Vicinity Map**
b. **Application**
c. **Plans**