

## 10. COA-089506-2021

PUBLIC HEARING DATE

April 27, 2021

PROPERTY ADDRESS

419-421 Brook Road

DISTRICT

Jackson Ward

APPLICANT

Project 421, LLC

STAFF CONTACT

C. Jones

# Commission of Architectural Review

## STAFF REPORT



### PROJECT DESCRIPTION

**Rehabilitate an existing building and build a rooftop addition.**

### PROJECT DETAILS

- The applicant proposes to rehabilitate an existing one-story ca. 1920, masonry commercial building and add a second-story residential unit to the roof.
- The building is irregular-shaped and has two openings facing Brook Road and another opening facing the adjacent alley.
- The proposed rehabilitation includes reopening the two openings facing Brook Road by removing the existing infill materials. For the alley-facing opening, the applicant proposes to extend the opening from an existing transom window to grade. The new openings will have large storefront windows and doors. New windows, in existing openings, are also proposed for the side elevation.
- On the roof, the applicant proposes a one-story residential unit. The residential unit will have a gently-sloped shed roof, the exterior will be clad in wood or fiber cement siding, and the openings will include large windows and doors on the Brook Road elevation and smaller windows on the side/alley elevation.



The City of Richmond assumes no liability either for any errors, omissions, or inaccuracies in the information provided regardless of the cause of such or for any decision made, action taken, or action not taken by the user in reliance upon any maps or information provided herein.

## CONCEPTUAL REVIEW

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 project through the lens of the "Standards for New Construction" on pages 44, and 46-56 of the Richmond Old and Historic District Handbook and Design Review Guidelines utilizing the Guidelines presented below.

### PREVIOUS REVIEWS

The Commission has not previously reviewed this application.

### SURROUNDING CONTEXT

This section of Brook Road is a narrow street with a mix of buildings located close to the sidewalk line. The majority of the buildings are two-story, mixed-use, masonry buildings with large storefront windows on the first floor, second-story windows, and simple cornice lines. Directly across the street is three-story masonry former warehouse and a one-story painted masonry building.

**STAFF COMMENTS**

- the applicant provide additional information about the proposed increase in openings on the side elevation and maintain the existing transom window
- the applicant provide a fully dimensioned elevation and final material specifications and colors

**STAFF ANALYSIS**

Building  
Elements,  
Windows, pg.  
69, #s7-8

*7. Windows should only be replaced when they are missing or beyond repair. Any reconstruction should be based on physical evidence or photo documentation.*

*8. The number, location, size or glazing pattern of windows should not be changed by cutting new openings, blocking out windows or by installing replacement sash that do not fit the original window. Changes to existing windows or the addition of new windows along a secondary elevation will be considered by the Commission on a case-by-case basis.*

The applicant proposes to remove existing windows, doors, and infill materials in the two primary openings facing Brook Road and install a storefront glazing system. Staff finds that the current fenestration and infill is not original to the building and recommends approval of removing these materials. Staff further finds that a modern window configuration clearly differentiates these as new windows and recommends that the new storefront doors and windows be sized to fit within the existing openings.

The applicant also proposes to reopen infilled openings in the side elevation. Staff notes that the applicant intends to increase the size of the opening and requests the applicant provide additional information about the proposed increase in a subsequent application and maintain the existing transom window.

Standards for  
New  
Construction,  
Siting, pg. 46,  
#1

*1. 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 applicant proposes to construct a one-story addition on top of a one-story building. The addition will be set back from the Brook Road elevation by a six-foot terrace. Staff finds the addition will be visible from the surrounding area, though visibility is limited to the immediately surrounding block. While the *Guidelines* state that additions should be at the rear or least visible side, staff finds that a vertical addition is appropriate in this location since it is compatible in height with the surrounding buildings, which include two- and three-story buildings, and visibility from the street level is limited in this area due the narrowness of Brook Road. Further, based on Sanborn map evidence, staff believes there was historically a two-story building on this site. Staff also finds the six-foot setback from Brook Road helps to differentiate the existing building and the proposed addition.

Staff notes that the height of the proposed addition is not included and requests the applicant provide a fully dimensioned elevation in a subsequent application.

Standards for New Construction, Form, pg. 46, #2	<i>2. New residential construction should maintain the existing human scale of nearby historic residential construction in the district.</i>	Staff finds large window openings help to reduce the overall appearance and maintain the human scale of the addition.
Standards for New Construction, Height, Width, Proportion, & Massing, pg. 47	<i>2. New residential construction should respect the vertical orientation typical of other residential properties in surrounding historic districts.</i>	The proposed large window openings on the addition will be vertically aligned with the reopened fenestration pattern on the first floor. Staff finds that this helps to maintain the overall vertical orientation found on the surrounding properties.
Standards for New Construction, Height, Width, Proportion, & Materials and Colors, pg. 47, #s2-3	<i>2. Materials used in new residential construction should be visually compatible with original materials used throughout the district.</i> <i>3. Paint colors for new additions should complement the historically appropriate colors used on the primary structure. Paint colors used should be similar to the historically appropriate colors already found in the district.</i>	<p>Proposed materials include unpainted wood siding or a smooth fiber cement siding, cable railings, and aluminum clad windows. Staff finds that the proposed materials are in keeping with materials found on additions in the district. <u>Staff requests final material specifications be submitted in a subsequent application.</u></p> <p>The applicant also proposes to repaint the existing painted masonry. Staff recommends approval with the condition that the final colors be submitted to staff for review and approval.</p>
New Construction, Doors and Windows, pg. 49, #1	<i>1. The size, proportion and spacing patterns of door and window openings on a new addition should follow patterns established by the original building. Windows on most commercial and residential properties throughout Old and Historic Districts have a vertical orientation.</i>	The applicant intends to vertically align the windows on the Brook Road elevation and visible side elevation. Staff finds the fenestration pattern is in keeping with the <i>Guidelines</i> .
New Construction, Porches and Porch Details, pg. 49, #3	<i>3. New porch railing designs, compatible with the overall design of the building, will also be considered.</i>	Staff finds the cable railing design appropriate for the contemporary design of the addition.



## FIGURES

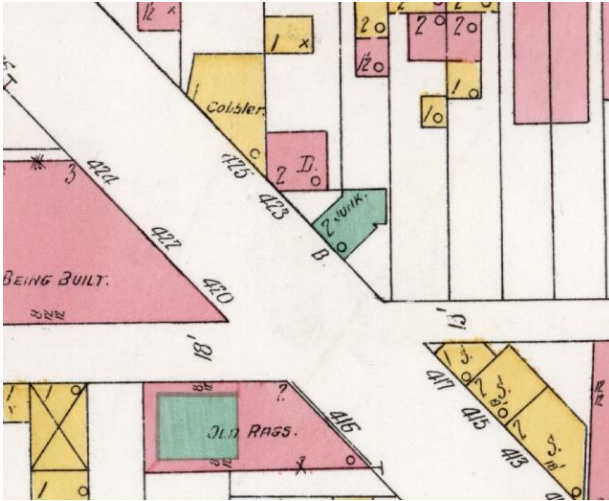


Figure 1. Sanborn Map, 1905.

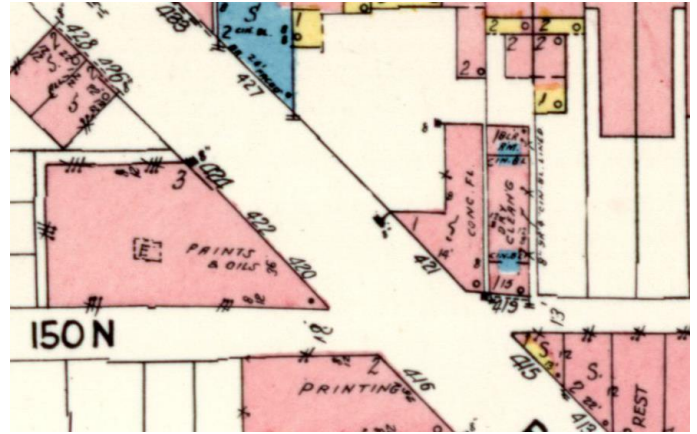


Figure 2. Sanborn Map, 1952.



Figure 3. 419-421 Brook Road.



Figure 4. View north towards 419-421 Brook Road.