



January 21, 2025

**City of Detroit – Planning Development Department
Historic District Commission**

2 Woodward Avenue, Suite 808
Detroit, Michigan 48226

Virginia Park Townes LLC

Description of the Work and Detail Scope of Work

808 and 816 Virginia Park Ave. New Multiple Family Buildings

Historic District: New Center Historic District

Description of the Project

Create a contemporary style multi-family building design that has the look of three-story townhouses. Each three-story vertical segment (townhouse) is three residential units. The Virginia Park Ave. building consist of five vertical segments or 15 residential units and the Third Ave. building consist of two vertical segments or 6 residential units.

The basis of the proposed design was taken from the Rosa Parks-Clairmount Neighborhood Revitalization Framework completed by the City of Detroit. The city’s design was for the vacant lot across the street from the proposed development parcel. The city’s design used a combination of townhomes facing Virginia Park Ave. and multiple family structure on the corner and along Third Ave. Design elements that were used are the three story townhouse, raised stoop, taller than wide windows, the expression of brick and the front yard setback.

See attached of the full page from the Design Study



CONCEPTUAL VIEW OF ROWHOUSES ON VIRGINIA PARK AVE.



CONCEPTUAL PLAN OF DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL ON VIRGINIA PARK AVE.

Existing Site Conditions

The existing vacant lot located on a street corner with an alley to the rear. There is an existing adjacent three story brick single family residence to the west. The lot is covered with grass and no pavement. Refer to the Civil Survey Sheet and Architectural Existing Site Plan for additional photos of the site and demolition notes.



Detailed Scope of Work

Site

- Construction of a new 6-unit multiple family structure, 7,140 gsf
- Construction of a new 15-unit multiple family structure 17,850 gsf
- New vehicular drive and entry off third avenue
- New car port for 4 cars (14 cars in attached garages)
- New dumpster enclosure and site landscaping

Building

- Wood framed three story structures, total 21-units including 1-barrier free unit
- Membrane roof pitch to rear to gutters and downspouts

- Roof parapets on three sides of building to screen view of AC units
- Front entry concrete entry stoop with brick wing walls / stone cap and metal guard and handrail
- Metal suspended canopy with tension rods over each entry stoop
- Attached 7-two car garages, each with a 16' wide garage doors
- Partial brick façade with concave mortar joints
- Partial fiber cement panels, painted with metal trim
- Aluminum clad wood windows
- Metal front entry and sectional overhead garage doors.
- Metal suspended balcony with tension rods at rear bedrooms second and third floor

Review of Elements of Design

1. **Height:** Six of the adjoining structures on the same face shall be used to determine an average height. With the height of the two adjoining houses shall be added into the total twice. Any new building must have a height of the main roof of at least 80 percent of the resulting average; in no case shall a new building be taller than the tallest roof height.

Average height of 6 Virginia Park homes

830 42.66' x2

850 29.37 x2

866 39.37'

874 36.09

888 39.37'

918 32.81'

291.7 subtotal divided by 8 = 36.46' resulting average roof height.

The resulting average minimum roof height 36.46' < 34.16' proposed roof height OK

The maximum roof height is 42.66' > 34.16' proposed roof height OK

2. Proportion of the buildings' front facades: "..... row house buildings are wider than tall; apartment buildings appear taller than wide although some are wider than tall due to projecting and receding wall surface that emphasize the vertical." The proposed building design has bays that create that create a projecting and receding façade. The façade has a vertical expression with the following elements; bays extending past the roof parapet, brick wall and vertical windows.
3. Proportion of openings within the facades: "Areas of voids generally constitute between 15 percent and 35 percent of the front façade, excluding the roof" The proposed design front elevation has 28 percentage, within the range required. The windows are generally taller than wide, but are frequently grouped into combination wider than tall.

4. Rhythm of solids to voids in front facades: The proposed facades arrangement of openings are balanced composition and symmetrical.
5. Rhythm of spacing of building on streets: The building facing Virginia Park Ave. takes up most of the frontage, but still leaves side yard setbacks. Including able separation of the existing single residential home to the west. The rhythm of the buildings facing Third Street is adequate to have a vehicular drive between the buildings and spacing with the existing townhouse to the north.
6. Rhythm of entrance and/or porch projections: The front stoop at each entry creates a rhythm in the façade and leads to a consistency of the streetscape.
7. Relationship of materials: There is a combination of brick and siding on the front and side elevations. The rear is all siding. Stone is used at sills of windows when brick is present. Stone is also used for a brick wall cap at the stoop.
8. Relationship of textures: The brick is a smooth brick with concave mortar joints that contrast nicely with the smooth painted fiber cement board.
9. Relationship of colors: The brick has natural brick colors similar to homes on the block. Natural limestone is used. The smooth beige panel siding is contrasted with the gray window frame and metal trim that divides the panel siding. The front door, canopies and balconies are also in a gray color.
10. Relationship of architectural details: The contemporary design has little architectural details. The design has a rhythm sided bay and brick walls. Smooth clean lines and colors.
11. Relationship of roof shapes: The flat roof is less complex than other homes and is appropriate to the contemporary style of the building.
12. Walls of continuity: The front yard setback on Virginia Park Ave. does set forward of the adjacent home. But does have the approximate front yard setback of the city's design for the townhouses across the street. The front yard setback on Third Ave. matches the townhouses to the north across the alley. We are keeping the existing trees and adding additional trees to maintain the minor wall of continuity.
13. Relationship of significant landscaping features and surface treatments: The development is retaining all the existing street trees and adding additional trees where there are none. There will be additional trees along Virginia Park Ave. sidewalk in the

front yard setback. Hedges and shrubs will also be planted in the front yard closer to the building, each creating a linear planting.

14. Relationship of open space to structures: Currently there is a large open space across the street on Virginia Park Ave. The vacant lot formerly had the Detroit Hope Hospital on it.
15. Scale of facades and façade elements: The apartment buildings have a moderate scale facades with small scaled elements.
16. Directional expression of front elevations: The Virginia Park Ave. building directional expressed as wider than tall, but has a vertical expression with its design elements. The Third Ave. building directional expression is certainly taller than wide.
17. Rhythm of building setbacks: See item 12.
18. Relationship of lot coverage: The proposed buildings have a lot coverage of 50%, is on the low end of the 50 -90% for the district's multi-family apartment buildings.
19. Degree of complexity within the façade: The front facades are simple and less complex in keeping to the contemporary design style.
20. Orientation, vistas, overviews: The buildings are oriented to the south and to the east. The garages and exterior parking spaces are oriented away from the street view. The units take advantage of the dramatic view of the Fisher building, especially the units facing south.
21. Symmetric or asymmetric appearance: The front facades are symmetrical.
22. General environmental character: The character is strengthening by developing this vacant lot with urban, moderate density housing.

Attached Documents

HDC project review request and building permit application

Rosa Park-Clairmount Neighborhood Revitalization Frame Work + Land Stewardship Plan

Drawings:

- Cover Sheet and Site Plan
- Parcel Civil Survey
- Existing Site Plan Conditions
- Proposed Floor Plans
- Proposed Exterior Elevations
- Proposed Site / Building Section

Exterior Building Materials and Colors

Exterior Color Renderings: Will be submitted within a week.

Respectfully Submitted

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Steven Flum', written in a cursive style.

Steven Flum RA

President Steven C. Flum, Inc.