

4. COA-089993-2021

PUBLIC HEARING DATE

April 27, 2021

PROPERTY ADDRESS

1518 West Main Street

DISTRICT

Stonewall Jackson School

APPLICANT

1520 W Main Street, LLC

STAFF CONTACT

C. Jones

Commission of Architectural Review

STAFF REPORT

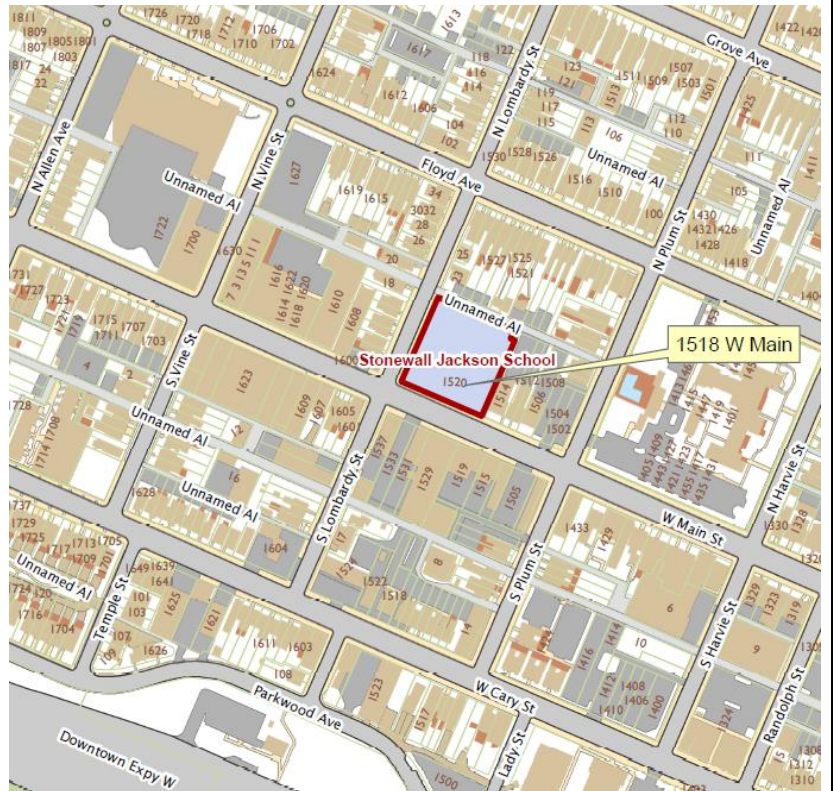


PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Construct a new three- and four-story mixed-use building.

PROJECT DETAILS

- The applicant proposes to construct a three- and four-story mixed-use building on an existing parking lot.
- The building will be two masses with a glass stair tower on the rear (north) elevation.
- The front portion of the building will be three bays wide and three stories in height, clad in brick, with a simplified cornice line and one-over-one windows with projecting sills and headers.
- The side and rear section will be four stories, approximately 42'-8" in height, and six bays wide with the same architectural features including one-over-one windows and a simplified cornice line.
- A hardscaped courtyard will be located between the historic school building and the new construction in both the front and rear yards.
- Proposed materials include brick veneer on the exterior walls, cast stone lintels and sills, PVC or hardi panels for the cornice line, and aluminum clad insulated windows.



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The applicant has applied for a Special Use Permit to waive the height and parking requirements. The applicant has also applied for historic rehabilitation tax credits through the Virginia Department of Historic Resources.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

APPROVE WITH CONDITIONS

PREVIOUS REVIEWS

The Commission previously reviewed this application at the January 2021 meeting. During the conceptual review, the Commission discussed the overall form and massing of the proposed building. The Commission expressed concern about the overall width of the building, especially as compared with the previous building on the property. The Commission also expressed concern that the form and mass of the building would crowd the historic building and block views to the west and north (rear) elevation of the historic building, especially as the building has four prominent elevations. To avoid this, the Commission suggested that there be greater separation between the historic and the new building. In terms of the fenestration, the Commissioners suggested some refinements to the window alignments and materials.

The Commission also discussed the overall site plan and layout and suggested relocating the condenser units. The Commission also discussed the number of parking spots available and questioned if more space could be used for the building footprint. The Commission also remarked on the presence of a bike storage structure and Ms. Jones stated that the bike structure is probably a requirement of the Special Use Permit, and that such structures range from sheds to simple canopies.

At the March 2021 meeting the applicant returned to the Commission for conceptual review. For the March 2021 meeting the applicant presented an application that responded to staff and Commission feedback by reworking the massing to create a courtyard between the front west elevation and the historic building and maintain views of the rear elevation. The applicant also changed the fenestration pattern and the exterior material palette.

During the second conceptual review, the Commission expressed appreciation for the redesign and the front courtyard space created by the setback. The Commission suggested moving the curved stair tower to the rear to relate to the curved section on the rear of the historic school. The Commission noted this would also allow the applicant to rework the massing of the section nearest the historic school building to allow more space between the historic school building and the new construction as the proposed six-foot reveal might not be sufficient. The Commission expressed support for a public comment that suggest moving the massing forward to allow more views of the rear of the building. In terms of the height, a suggestion was made to have the height be below the historic cornice line to maintain the prominence of the historic building.

On April 8th, 2021, the applicant met with Commission staff and a member of DHR's rehabilitation tax credit group. The applicants have responded to feedback from staff, DHR, the Commission, and the surrounding neighbors. They have relocated the front stair tower to the rear, reduced the height next to the historic building, and reworked the massing by moving the four-story section forward to reveal more of the rear and east elevation from the alley. The applicants have also added a rear plaza.

SURROUNDING CONTEXT

The surrounding area is primarily mixed-use. The majority of the buildings that face onto West Main Street are two-story, attached, masonry buildings with ground floor commercial spaces. The buildings are set back a consistent distance, some with small landscaped areas in front. Common architectural features include stone headers and sills, consistent fenestration, and decorative cornice lines. On the same lot is the former Stonewall Jackson School, a two-story brick Italianate school building constructed in 1886-1887.

STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS:

- the final material specifications be submitted with the permit applications
- the applicant work with staff regarding the location and possible screening of the HVAC units during the review of the special use permit
- any changes or additional conditions imposed by the Virginia Department of Historic Resources be submitted to staff for review and approval

STAFF ANALYSIS

Siting, pg. 46, #2	<i>2. New residential infill construction should respect the prevailing front and side yard setback patterns of the surrounding block. The minimum setbacks evident in most districts reinforce the traditional street wall.</i>	The applicant has responded to feedback and has brought the four-story section towards W. Main Street. Staff finds that this still maintains this front setback pattern.
Form, pg. 46 #s1-3	<i>1. New construction should use a building form compatible with that found elsewhere in the historic district.</i>	The applicant proposes a modified L-shaped building with a three-bay three-story mass with a flat façade, and a rear four-story mass in a similar design. The applicant has responded to feedback and has reduced the depth of the rear

		<p>section to allow for additional views of the corner and east elevation of the historic school building.</p> <p>In addition, the applicant has relocated the glass stair, as suggested by the Commission, to the north (rear) elevation. Staff finds this references stairs found on the rear elevation of the historic school and provides visual permeability to the historic school building.</p>
New Construction, Storefront Facades, pg. 55	<p>1. <i>Historically, storefronts were defined by simple piers, large storefront windows, a cornice, and a signboard and/or attached signage.</i></p> <p>2. <i>Street-level commercial facades should not have blank walls. Commercial activity at the ground-floor level enhances the streetscape by providing visual interest to passersby.</i></p>	<p>Because the stair tower is now relocated to the rear, the applicant has updated the front façades of both sections of the building. Both facades now have a balanced fenestration with single door openings with awnings.</p>
Height, Width, Proportion, & Massing, pg. 47, #s1-3	<p>1. <i>New residential construction should respect the typical height of surrounding residential buildings.</i></p>	<p>Staff finds that the three-story mass provides a transition between the historic school building and the adjacent buildings, while the four-story section is comparable to the height of the historic school building.</p>
	<p>2. <i>New residential construction should respect the vertical orientation typical of other residential properties in surrounding historic districts.</i></p>	<p>The applicant proposes a vertically aligned fenestration pattern on the façade and side elevations.</p>
	<p>3. <i>The cornice height should be compatible with that of adjacent historic buildings.</i></p>	<p>The applicant has reduced the height of the proposed four-story section. The proposed height is 42'-8" which is approximately eight inches below the eaves of the historic school building.</p>
Materials and Colors, pg. 47, #s2-4	<p>2. <i>Materials used in new residential construction should be visually compatible with original materials used throughout the district.</i></p> <p>3. <i>Paint colors used should be similar to the historically appropriate colors already found in the district.</i></p>	<p>The applicant proposes to use brick on the front three-story mass and a mix of materials on the recessed four-story section. Staff finds that the materials proposed by the applicant generally meet the Commission guidelines, and recommends <u>the final material specifications be submitted with the permit applications.</u></p>
New Construction, Doors and Windows, pg. 56, #5	<p>5. <i>With larger buildings, applicants are encouraged to develop multiple entry points (doors), in keeping with historic precedent for the building type in question. Single entry points - such as a single garage entrance accompanied by single pedestrian entrances are not in keeping with historic precedent, which demonstrates that most large buildings had multiple pedestrian entry points.</i></p>	<p>The applicant proposes multiple entry points, including two doors facing West Main Street, one for each commercial spaces, and the rear entry via the stair tower.</p>

Mechanical
Equipment, pg.
68, #2

Rooftop mechanical equipment should be located as discretely as possible to limit visibility. In addition, appropriate screening should be provided to conceal equipment from view.

The applicant has updated the plans and indicates that the HVAC units will be on the roof near West Main Street. Staff recommends the applicant work with staff regarding the location and possible screening of the HVAC units during the review of the special use permit.

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. 1518 West Main Street



Figure 2. West Main Street, even side, looking east



Figure 3. West Main Street, odd side, looking southeast



Figure 4. West Main Street, odd side looking west



Figure 5. 1520 West Main Street, rear elevation and project site.