

13. COA-044099-2018

PUBLIC HEARING DATE

November 27, 2018

PROPERTY ADDRESS

813 N 28th St

DISTRICT

Church Hill North

Commission of Architectural Review

STAFF REPORT



APPLICANT

City of Richmond – Capital Projects

STAFF CONTACT

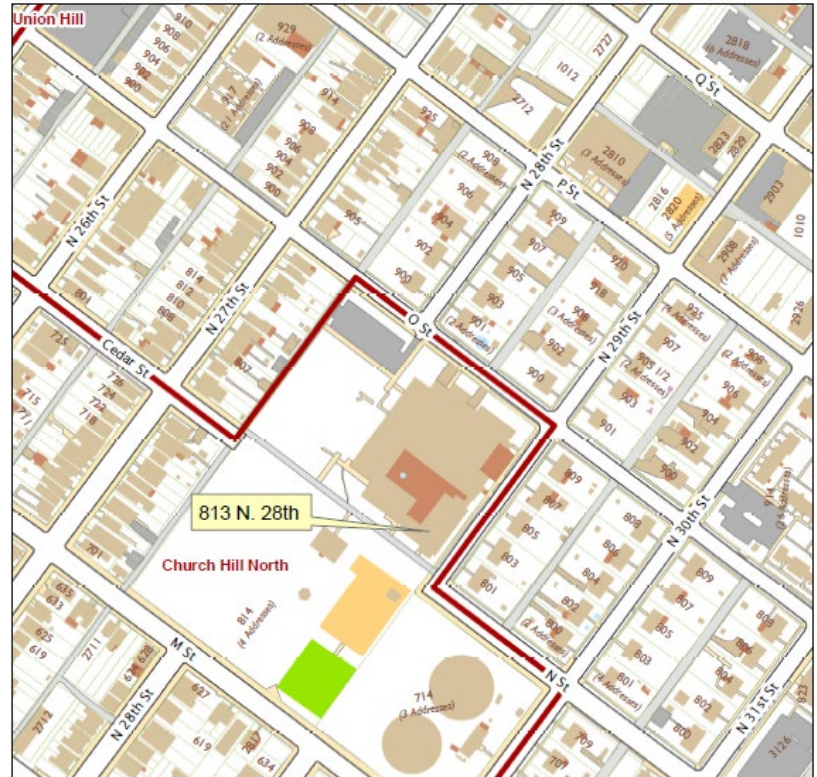
Carey L. Jones

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Construct new 750 student school, site improvements, and new playground facilities.

PROJECT DETAILS

- The applicant proposes construction of a 750 student school and playground facilities on a large parcel with an existing school building.
- The parcel is within the boundaries of the Church Hill North City and Old Historic District, but outside the National Register of Historic Places historic district boundary.
- The school will be located close to M Street with the main entrance from M Street at 28th Street.
- The majority of the school will be one-story in height, with the gym, upper cafeteria, and some classroom spaces on the second floor.
- The building will have a hipped roof, brick exterior, and concrete details.



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CONCEPTUAL REVIEW

PREVIOUS REVIEWS

None.

Surrounding Context: The school will be constructed on a lot that is currently developed with an existing school building and related facilities. The existing George Mason School was constructed over a number of building campaigns. The original section of the building dates to 1887, with additions in 1922, 1936, and 1951. Also on the lot is the Ethel Bailey Furman Memorial Park. Immediately to south is a large water tower. The majority of the surrounding area is a mix of one and two-story residences.

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. The Guidelines do not specifically provide direction for construction of new institutional buildings. However, Commission staff found that the guidance presented in “Standards for New Construction: Commercial” on pages 52-54, 56 of the Richmond

Old and Historic District Handbook and Design Review Guidelines provides direction for the construction of new, larger scale buildings. The specific Guidelines are presented below.

STAFF ANALYSIS

Standards for New Construction: Commercial, Siting, pg. 52, #3, 5	3. <i>New commercial buildings should face the most prominent street bordering the site.</i>	The main entrance to the school building will be on M Street which serves as a thoroughfare in the neighborhood.
	5. <i>For large-scale commercial parking, parking within the building is strongly encouraged. If a building includes parking within it, vehicle entry doors should be located on non-primary elevations.</i>	Parking for the new school will be located at corner of M Street and N. 29 th Street, near the existing water towers and near the backyards of the houses facing N. 27 th Street. The bus turn-around will be at the terminus of Cedar Street. Staff finds that these are appropriate locations for parking and turn around locations.
Standards for New Construction: Commercial, Form, pg. 52, #3, 5	2. <i>New commercial construction should maintain the existing human scale of nearby historic commercial buildings in the district.</i>	Staff finds the proposed building maintains the human scale of the nearby properties. While it might be taller than some of the surrounding residential buildings it will be comparable in height to the existing school building. Further, due to the setback and distribution of massing on the lot, staff finds that it will not visually overwhelm the surrounding properties.
	3. <i>New commercial construction should incorporate human-scale elements at the pedestrian level.</i>	Staff finds the project incorporates human-scale elements, such as columns at the main entrance.
Standards for New Construction, Height, Width, Proportion & Massing, pg. 53, #s1 & 2	1. <i>New commercial construction should respect the typical height of surrounding buildings, both residential and commercial.</i>	The proposed school building will be two-and-one-half-stories in height, taller than the existing school and residential houses in the area. However, the majority of the building is one story in height, and the taller sections of the building will be near 29 th Street and the existing water towers.
	2. <i>New commercial construction should respect the vertical orientation typical of commercial buildings in Richmond's historic districts. New designs that call for wide massing should look to the project's local district for precedent. When designing new commercial buildings that occupy more than one third of a block face, the design should still employ bays as an organizational device, but the new building should read as a single piece of architecture</i>	The proposed school building uses features found in the district, such as a central entrance, vertically and horizontally aligned windows, and repeating bays.
Standards for New Construction, Height,	2. <i>Materials used in new construction should be visually compatible with original materials used throughout the surrounding neighborhood.</i>	The primary exterior material for the school building will be brick with a standing seam metal roof, and concrete elements. These materials are similar to those found on the

Materials &
Colors, pg. 53,
#s2, 4

existing school and on nearby Chimborazo Elementary School. Staff finds the proposed materials are compatible with materials found in the district.

New
Construction:
Corner
Properties –
Commercial, pg.
54

1. Secondary elevations of corner properties should reference massing similar to other corner locations in the historic district.
2. The material used in the primary elevation should be continued along the second, corner elevation.
3. Particular attention should be paid to the height of foundations to create an appropriately scaled appearance that relates to neighboring structures and is consistent with neighboring properties. Heights should be kept to a level that will enhance, not detract from, the pedestrian experience. Foundation materials should be selected that are compatible with historic materials and consistent with properties within the district.
4. Windows and doors on the secondary, corner elevation should be organized following the principals of the primary elevation: windows should be proportioned appropriately, aligned vertically, and arranged as though designing a primary elevation.

Staff finds the proposed elevations use a consistent pattern of architectural details and materials. Consistent architectural details include vertically aligned bays and horizontal courses.

New
Construction,
Doors and
Windows, pg.
56, #s2,5

2. The size, proportion, and spacing patterns of door and window openings on free standing new construction should be compatible with patterns established within the district.
5. 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.

Staff finds that the vertical and horizontal fenestration patterns from the primary elevation are continued on the secondary elevations and create an architecturally cohesive building.

IMAGES

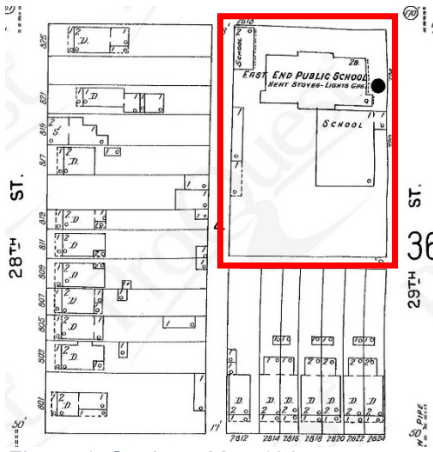


Figure 1. Sanborn Map 1905.

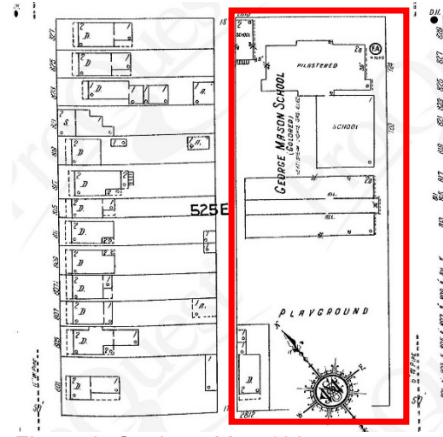


Figure 2. Sanborn Map 1925

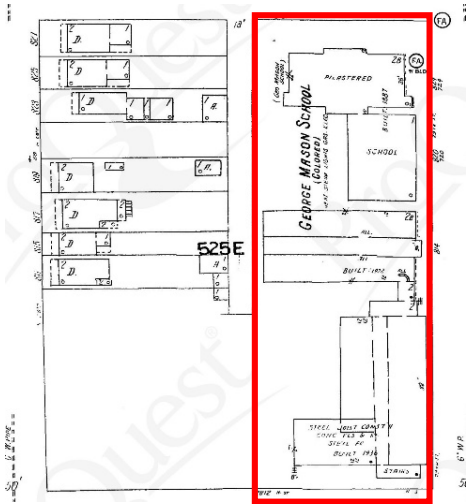


Figure 3. Sanborn Map 1950



Figure 4. George Mason Elementary, ca. 1991.



Figure 5. Existing Building, Addition.



Figure 6. Location of proposed school, view from 28th Street where the main entrance is proposed.



Figure 7. View north from N Street to proposed location of new school building.



Figure 8. View east from M Street to location of proposed school building.