

### 13. COA-084207-2020

PUBLIC HEARING DATE

January 26, 2021

PROPERTY ADDRESS

1518 West Main Street

DISTRICT

Stonewall Jackson School

APPLICANT

1520 West Main Street, LLC

STAFF CONTACT

C. Jones

# Commission of Architectural Review

## STAFF REPORT

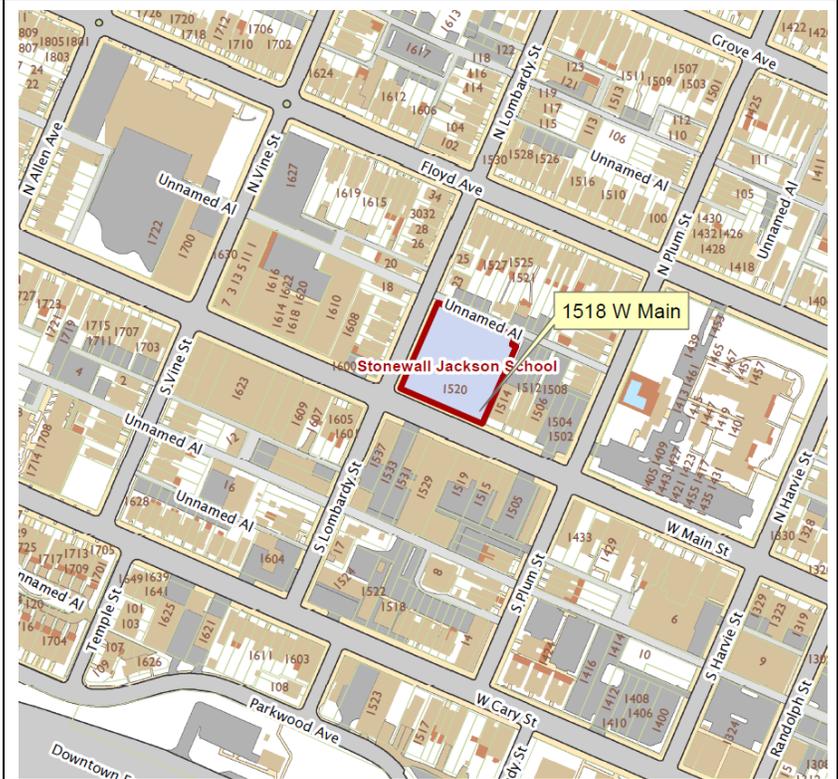


### PROJECT DESCRIPTION

**Construct a three-story mixed-use building on an existing parking lot.**

### PROJECT DETAILS

- The applicant proposes to construct a three-story mixed-use building on an existing parking lot.
- The building will be contemporary in design with three bays, a simplified cornice line, two-over-two windows, and clad in brick veneer.
- The front façade will feature two ground level storefronts and a center entry door.
- Fabric awnings on aluminum frames are proposed over each entrance.
- The side elevations of the building will have five-foot recessed bays for mechanical equipment which will be screened by a four-foot fence.
- A short iron fence is proposed along the front of the property to match the existing iron fence.



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## 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

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 COMMENTS**

Staff recommends that the applicant:

- consider incorporating minimal storefront details such as simple piers.
- submit a full materials list for final review
- consider a simplified window pattern to reflect the new construction

**STAFF ANALYSIS**

Siting, pg. 46, #s2-3	<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>	According to the site plan submitted by the applicant, the proposed new construction will be sited with a deeper setback than the adjacent building. Staff finds that this is will help to transition between the existing commercial building and the historic school building.
	<i>3. New buildings should face the most prominent street bordering the site.</i>	The proposed building faces West Main Street, the most prominent street bordering the site.
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 three-bay, three-story building with a flat façade. Staff finds that this is generally in keeping with the forms found in the surrounding area.
	<i>2. New residential construction should maintain the existing human scale of nearby historic residential construction in the district.</i>	The applicant proposes a three-story building. Staff notes that this is taller than the surrounding mixed-use buildings. However, staff finds that this height provides a transition between the existing two-story buildings and the taller, historic school building.
New Construction, Storefront Facades, pg. 55	<i>1. Historically, storefronts were defined by simple piers, large storefront windows, a cornice, and a signboard and/or attached signage.</i> <i>2. 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>	The applicant proposes large plate glass windows for the commercial spaces. Staff notes that the majority of the commercial spaces in the surrounding area have traditional storefront elements. Staff recommends that <u>the applicant consider incorporating minimal storefront details such as simple piers.</u>
Height, Width, Proportion, & Massing, pg. 47, #s1-3	<i>1. New residential construction should respect the typical height of surrounding residential buildings.</i>	The proposed building is 36 feet at its highest point. Staff finds this to be in keeping with the surrounding area.
	<i>2. New residential construction should respect the vertical orientation typical of other residential properties in surrounding historic districts.</i>	The applicant proposes a vertically aligned fenestration pattern on the façade and side elevations.
	<i>3. The cornice height should be compatible with that of adjacent historic buildings.</i>	Staff finds the proposed cornice line to be compatible with the surrounding area.
Materials and Colors, pg. 47, #s2-4	<i>2. Materials used in new residential construction should be visually compatible with original materials used throughout the district.</i>	The applicant proposes a standard size brick on all four elevations with fiber cement siding on the insets. The applicant also proposes pre-cast stone headers on the façade. Staff finds that this is in keeping with the materials found in the surrounding area. <u>Staff recommends that the applicant submit a full materials list for</u>

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*3. Paint colors used should be similar to the historically appropriate colors already found in the district.*

final review.

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

*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.*

The applicant proposes a central entrance door for the residential units and entrance doors for the commercial spaces on the façade. Staff finds that this is generally in keeping with patterns found in the surrounding area, though staff notes that the adjacent properties have evenly spaced and sized window and door openings.

On the rear elevation, the applicant proposes a four-bay configuration with a central entrance door.

Staff also notes that the applicant proposes a two-over-two window and recommends that the applicant consider a simplified window pattern to reflect the new construction.

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Mechanical Equipment, pg. 68

*The visual impact of new mechanical equipment should be minimized to protect the historic character of the district.*

The applicant proposes recessed sections on the east and west elevations to locate the HVAC units. The applicant also proposes a four-foot fence to screen the mechanical units.

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Awnings, pg.72

*2. The size and placement of awnings should not interfere with existing signs, distinctive architectural features of the building or with street trees or other elements along the street.*

The applicant proposes awnings above all of the windows on the façade. Staff finds that there are awnings above the entrance doors on the adjacent buildings, but not over the window openings.

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**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*