



Commission of Architectural Review

12. COA-187210-2026	Conceptual Review	Meeting Date: 7/28/2026
Applicant/Petitioner	Patrick McClane	
Project Description	Demolish a non-contributing one-and-a-half story building	
Project Location		
Address: 4213 Hermitage Road		
Historic District: Hermitage Road		
High-Level Details: The applicant proposes the demolition of a one-and-a-half story, three bay, Colonial Revival Style Cape Cod building circa 1955. The existing building was historically used as a single-family detached dwelling. Although it retains its residential character, it is currently used as an administrative building for the New Community School, which operates across several former residential properties along Hermitage Road. If approved, the applicant proposes constructing a new 16-classroom school building on the site.		
Staff Recommendation	Conceptual Review	
Staff Contact	Alex Dandridge, Alex.Dandridge@RVA.gov, (804)646-6569	
Previous Reviews	Review	
Staff Recommendations	- Staff finds that the existing building is not in a state of disrepair and does not significantly contribute to the character of the district. - The proposed demolition is contingent upon the Commission's additional guidance regarding Demolition Criteria #2 and #3. - Staff finds that the demolition may be appropriate, provided that the replacement building is of a type, scale, and quality that better enhances and reinforces the character of the district.	

	- Any new construction associated with the proposed demolition should respect the established development patterns of the district, including typical setbacks, massing, scale, and site relationships. - Any replacement building should also be sensitive to the views and prominence of Willowbrook (4211 Hermitage Road), ensuring that new construction does not overwhelm, compete with, or diminish the character of this significant historic resource.
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Staff Analysis

Surrounding Context		
The subject property is located within the Hermitage Road Old & Historic District, a district characterized primarily by large detached late nineteenth and early twentieth century residential buildings, predominantly of Queen Anne and Italian Renaissance styles. The site is located across Hermitage Road from the BAPS Mandir site (4204 Hermitage Road). The proposed building proposed to replace a non-contributing structure. The New Community School campus features historic residential structures such as Massey Hall, and institutional buildings of more recent construction such as Founder's Hall (2016). The proposed academic building is intended to create greater visual cohesion across the campus while addressing a programmatic need.		
Guideline Reference	Reference Text	Analysis
Standards for Demolition, pg. 82	<i>According to Sec. 114- 930.7(d) and 114-930.9 of the Historic Preservation Ordinance: The Commission shall not issue a Certificate of Appropriateness for demolition of any building or structure within an Old and Historic District unless the applicant can show that there are no feasible alternatives to demolition. The demolition of historic buildings and elements in Old and Historic Districts is strongly discouraged.</i> <i>Under the provisions or Sec. 32- 930.7., the Commission shall approve requests for demolition when:</i> <i>1) There are no feasible alternatives to the proposed demolition. "Feasible alternatives" include an appropriate new use and rehabilitation, relocation of the structure to a compatible site or re-sale of the property to an individual committed to suitable rehabilitation or relocation.</i> <i>2) A building or structure is deemed not to be a contributing part of the</i>	As part of three distinct suburban developments, the Hermitage Road Historic District clearly represents the broader patterns of community planning and residential development that characterized Richmond's Northside during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The nine country estate homes constructed between the late 1890s and 1925 illustrate the needs and preferences of Richmond's early upper-class suburban residents. The thirty dwellings constructed between 1908 and 1938 serve as excellent examples of Richmond's early upper- and middle-class suburban development and demonstrate the evolution of residential development patterns over time. The district retains a high degree of integrity and continues to convey its historic significance, with the majority of its historic fabric intact. The deep, spacious lots with generous setbacks, established landscaping, tree-lined streets, and historic street lamps illustrate early twentieth-century suburban development patterns. Although the streetcar line that once operated along Hermitage Road is no longer extant, the landscaped median extending through the center of the road remains as a physical reminder of the neighborhood's historic development around streetcar transportation. Additionally, the architecture throughout Hermitage Road remains in excellent condition, with few significant alterations, additions, or modifications.

	<i>historic character of an Old and Historic District.</i> <i>3) The Commission deems that a building or structure has deteriorated beyond the point of feasible rehabilitation.</i> <i>In addition to the above criteria, the Commission has the authority to consider four other factors in arriving at decisions involving proposed demolitions:</i> <i>1) The historic and architectural value of a building.</i> <i>2) The effect that demolition will have on the surrounding neighborhood.</i> <i>3) The type and quality of the project that will replace the demolished building.</i> <i>4) The historic preservation goals outlined in the Master Plan and Downtown Plan.</i>	The extant building is a one-and-a-half-story, three-bay Colonial Revival-style Cape Cod residence. The building has a rectangular plan with flanking side wings and is clad in six-to-one common bond brick. It features a side-gable asphalt shingle roof with paired gable dormers and two exterior end chimneys. The primary entrance is defined by a paneled center-entry door. Windows consist of 8/8 double-hung sash units with decorative shutters. Stylistic elements include a dentiled cornice and a pedimented portico supported by slender square columns and flanking pilasters. The building is situated on a deep rectangular lot with a substantial setback from the street. The extant building at 4213 Hermitage Road is listed as noncontributing within the Hermitage Road Historic District, which was designated a National Register Historic District in 2006. The district was also listed on the Virginia Landmarks Register in 2005. The district's established period of significance is 1885–1938. While City Old and Historic District designations do not make the distinction between contributing and noncontributing resources in the same manner as the National Register of Historic Places, the classification of a resource as noncontributing may relate to a building's design, character, age, or its relationship to the historic development patterns within the district boundaries and period of significance. The extant building at 4213 Hermitage Road does exhibit several characteristics that relate to the district's overall character, including its use of brick construction and its location on a large lot with a deep setback. Furthermore, the Hermitage Road Historic District represents the changing development patterns of Richmond's Northside, from early examples of large and prominent estate houses, primarily constructed during the late nineteenth century, to the transition toward more modest suburban residences constructed throughout the early twentieth century. A defining characteristic of the Hermitage Road Historic District is the development associated with the streetcar line that historically operated along Hermitage Road. During the late nineteenth century, larger estate homes were constructed on expansive lots with significant setbacks and typically featured more elaborate architectural designs. As social preferences and development patterns evolved, streetcar suburban living became increasingly desirable, resulting in additional residential development along the Hermitage Road corridor. This later development consisted of more modest infill housing with a more typical suburban lot pattern, particularly during the 1920s and 1930s. The extant building was constructed as an infill dwelling in 1955. It is modest in scale and designed in the Colonial Revival style. Staff finds that, while the building is listed as noncontributing to the district and
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		was constructed after the established period of significance, it still contributes to an understanding of the district's broader evolution from an exclusive upper-class suburban neighborhood toward a more diverse middle-class residential area. However, it is not directly associated with the neighborhood's early development patterns tied to the streetcar line or the later changes associated with the replacement of streetcar transportation by wider roadways, increased automobile use, and expanded bus service. The building represents a less prominent phase of the neighborhood's development following World War II, a period that is not addressed in the National Register documentation and occurred after the neighborhood was largely built out. The building is not considered a significant architectural resource; however, it does embody a common architectural style associated with the district: Colonial Revival. Staff finds that the removal of the building would not substantially diminish the overall character of the district. However, its preservation neither significantly contributes nor detracts from the district's historic character. While the architectural value of the building is limited, it is a single-family detached residential building that generally follows the established setback patterns, scale, and width of historic buildings within the district. If removed and not replaced or replaced with a building form that introduces unrelated setbacks, massing, or scale, the resulting change could negatively impact the character of the district. This is particularly relevant given the relationship to the adjacent property, Willowbrook (ca. 1925), located immediately to the south, which is the most prominent historic resource on this end of Hermitage Road. <u>Staff finds that the existing building is not in a state of disrepair and does not significantly contribute to the character of the district. The proposed demolition is contingent upon the Commission's additional guidance regarding Demolition Criteria #2 and #3. Staff finds that the demolition may be appropriate, provided that the replacement building is of a type, scale, and quality that better enhances and reinforces the character of the district. Any new construction associated with the proposed demolition should respect the established development patterns of the district, including typical setbacks, massing, scale, and site relationships. Any replacement building should also be sensitive to the views and prominence of Willowbrook, ensuring that new construction does not overwhelm, compete with, or diminish the character of this significant historic resource.</u>
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Figures



Figure 1. 4213 Hermitage Road, Yesterdays Archives, 1997. Accessed 7/22/2026.



Figure 2. 4213 Hermitage Road, VCU Digital Archives, CAR Slides, 1997. Accessed 7/22/2026.



Figure 3. 4213 Hermitage Road, 2024. CAR Files



Figure 4. Site Context.