

8. COA-088025-2021

PUBLIC HEARING DATE

March 23, 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



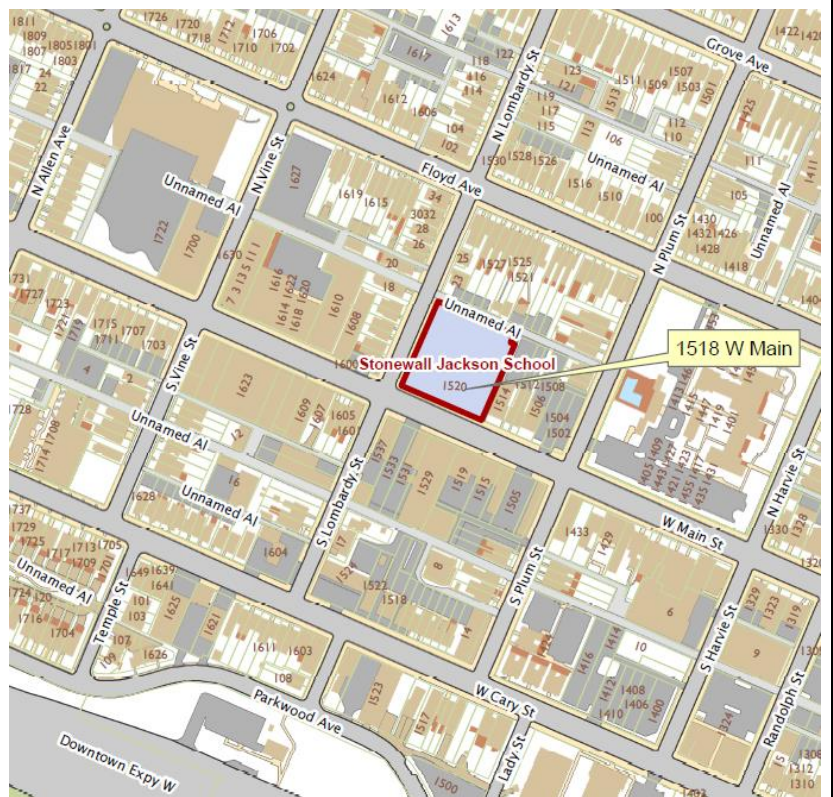
PROJECT DESCRIPTION

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 connected by a quarter-circle exterior stair tower.
- The front portion of the building will be three bays wide and three stories in height with a simplified cornice line, one-over-one with projecting sills and headers, and clad in brick.
- The rear mass will be four stories in height, 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 three-story mass. And a rooftop terrace will be provided above the third story mass.

The applicant has applied for a special use permit to waive the height and parking requirements.



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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 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.

The applicant has 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 has also changed the fenestration pattern and the exterior material palette.

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:

- a consistent material palette be used on all elevations, and requests additional details be provided in a subsequent application
- the applicant provide information about the proposed location of the HVAC units
- the applicant submit a complete application with dimensioned elevations and floor plans, and materials

STAFF ANALYSIS

Siting, pg. 46,
#s2-3

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.

The applicant has responded to staff and Commission feedback and now proposes two masses with a courtyard between the front mass and the front section of the west elevation of the historic school. Staff finds that this addresses the Commission feedback and helps to provide an open area between the historic building and the new construction.

3. New buildings should face the most prominent street bordering the site.

The proposed building faces West Main Street, the most prominent street bordering the site.

Form, pg. 46
#s1-3

1. New construction should use a building form compatible with that found elsewhere in the historic district.

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. Staff finds that while this is not a form typically found in the area, it does respond to the site constraints and maintain views of the east elevation of the historic school building.

The applicant also proposes a three-story glass quarter-circle exterior stair tower. While exterior stair towers are not typically found in the surrounding area, staff notes that this feature references the curved features on the historic

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| | | school building. Staff also notes the proposed exterior glass helps to lighten this feature and provide visual permeability to the historic school building. |
| | <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 mass sited towards West Main Street and a four-story mass towards to the rear of the lot. 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 | <p><i>1. Historically, storefronts were defined by simple piers, large storefront windows, a cornice, and a signboard and/or attached signage.</i></p> <p><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></p> | The applicant has updated the front façade to have a balanced fenestration with two large windows and a single door to the commercial space on the ground floor. |
| Height, Width, Proportion, & Massing, pg. 47, #s1-3 | <i>1. New residential construction should respect the typical height of surrounding residential buildings.</i> | Staff notes 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. |
| | <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> | The applicant has not provided a dimensioned elevation. However, staff notes the three-story mass is in keeping generally with the surrounding area while the four-story section is set back from the front lot line and is similar in height to the school building. Staff notes the cornice line of the four-story section is taller than the cornice line of the historic school building. |
| Materials and Colors, pg. 47, #s2-4 | <p><i>2. Materials used in new residential construction should be visually compatible with original materials used throughout the district.</i></p> <p><i>3. Paint colors used should be similar to the historically appropriate colors already found in the district.</i></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 recommends <u>a consistent material palette be used on all elevations and requests additional details be provided in a subsequent application.</u> |

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 has revised the fenestration pattern and proposed vertically and horizontally aligned openings on the façade and west and rear elevations. In response to Commission feedback, the applicant has updated the proposed windows to a one-over-one pattern.

Mechanical
Equipment, pg.
68

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

The applicant has not provided the location of the proposed HVAC units. Staff requests the applicant submit the proposed HVAC locations in a subsequent application.

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.