

**COMMISSION OF ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW  
STAFF REPORT  
August 28, 2018 Meeting**

5. COA-039284-2018 (L. Cozza)

**1600 Monument Avenue  
Monument Avenue Old and Historic District**

**Project Description:**

**Install four-foot high brick screening wall, new twenty-foot high light poles, add twenty-two parking spaces.**

**Staff Contact:**

**C. Jeffries**

The applicant requests approval to landscape and pave a parking lot on an open area located adjacent to the Stuart Court Apartments in the Monument Avenue Old and Historic District. The project area is currently grass and dirt, with a small area of pervious pavers. The proposal will require a Special Use Permit which has not yet been obtained.

The applicant proposes to install paving with a brick screening wall and landscaping at the front. The wall will be constructed atop the existing berm, set back 15 feet from the sidewalk. The area between the sidewalk and the wall will be landscaped with grass, small bushes and a tree. The asphalt parking lot will have 22 spaces and will be lit with three 20 foot high black light poles of a contemporary design. An existing 60 foot evergreen tree in the rear will be retained.

**Staff recommends approval of the project with conditions.** The proposed parking lot generally meets the standards for parking lots outlined on page 77 of the *Richmond Old and Historic Districts Handbook and Design Review Guidelines*. The *Guidelines* note that parking lots should be designed and screened in a way that minimizes the impact of the lot on surrounding buildings (pg. 77). The *Guidelines* state that fences, walls, and/or vegetation may be used to screen parking lots (pg. 77, #1). In addition, the applicant is proposing parking between two adjacent buildings (pg. 77 #4) and is retaining a mature tree (#5).

The *Guidelines* note that street-front fences or walls should be compatible with walls and fences found on the block face or block face opposite (pg. 78, #3). The applicant has submitted photographs of an existing wall at the Grace Covenant Presbyterian Church on the opposite block face. This wall is similar in design however it does include pedestrian access at several points along the property. Staff recommends the design of the wall be altered to include piers or other elements to create vertical breaks in the wall. Staff also has concerns that the wall may not properly shed water as designed and recommends that a sloped brick cap be installed on the wall to create visual interest and protect the wall from water infiltration. A brick sample should be submitted to staff for administrative review and approval.

The *Guidelines* also note that parking lot lighting should be kept to a minimum, especially in residential areas (pg. 77, #3). Though staff is supportive of the contemporary design of the proposed lighting, it is large in scale and highly visible from Monument Avenue. Staff also has concerns with the impact the lights will have on the adjacent residential structures. Staff recommends the lighting plan be revised to utilize smaller fixtures more in scale with the district. The revised plan should be submitted to staff for administrative review.

It is the assessment of staff that the application with the noted condition is consistent with the Standards for Rehabilitation and New Construction outlined in Sections 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 page cited above, adopted by the Commission for review of Certificates of Appropriateness under the same section of the code.