

# Historic Preservation Considerations

## Presentation to WRAPS Working Group

October 7, 2014

## • Purposes of Presentation:

1. Historic Preservation 101 – Understand the basics.
2. Examine the significant architectural and historical elements of the Wilson School and Queens Court Apartments.
3. Consider the feasibility of incorporating architectural elements of the Wilson School building (as per the charge).
4. Consider the applicable Historic Resources Inventory (HRI) policies as related to Queens Court Apartments.



*Wilson School*



*Queens Court Apartments*

- Code of Virginia § 15.2-2306
- Types of historic designation:
  - Local historic districts
    - Protected via zoning overlay and design review process with HALRB
    - See §11.3 and 15.8 of ACZO
    - Arlington currently has 35 local districts
  - Listings in National Register of Historic Places
    - Honorific list without protections
    - Maintained by National Park Service
    - Rehabilitation tax credits available
    - Arlington currently has 70+ listings in National Register

- Who is involved in Historic Preservation planning & decisions?
  - Property owners
  - HALRB
  - Planning Commission
  - County Board

## What are the significant elements?

- Original school block is the most historically significant portion.
  - Built 1910 as Fort Myer Heights School
  - Designed by noted Richmond architect Charles Robinson
  - Renamed in 1925 to honor former President Woodrow Wilson
- Prominent location fronting Wilson Blvd.
- Architectural features:
  - Concrete water table
  - Fenestration spacing
  - Scrolled modillion cornice
  - Hipped roof
  - Stamped tin ceilings on interior



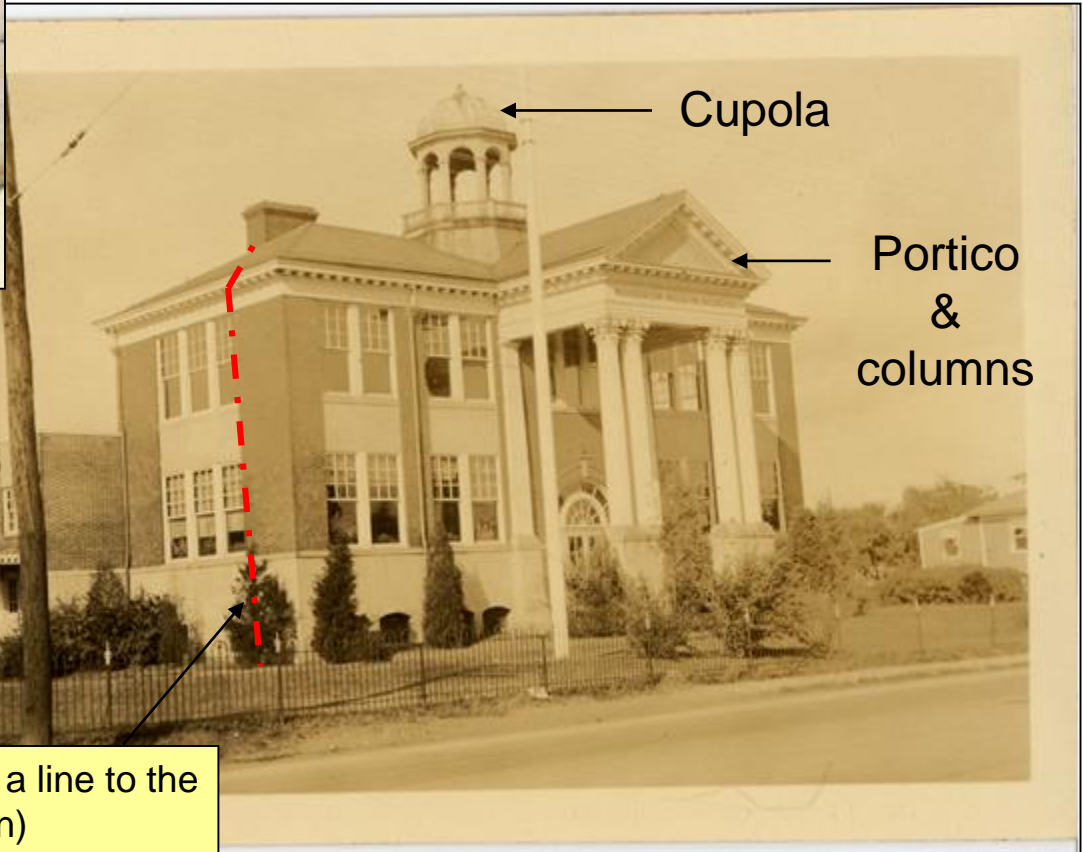
- Charge states: *“Consider the feasibility of incorporating architectural elements of the Wilson School building in the overall development.”*
- What are the options to achieve this?
  1. Reconstruction of a portion of the historic building;
  2. Re-use of historic building materials; and
  3. Memorialization of the historic building.



# Option 1: Reconstruct Front Facade



*Fort Myer Heights School, ca. 1910, images courtesy of Center for Local History*



- Option 1: Reconstruction
  - Limited to reconstruction of historic front facade (original 1910 design facing Wilson Blvd.), to include columns, portico, and cupola, plus stylistic windows and main door
  - More study needed to determine:
    - Deconstruct historic materials vs reconstruct using new materials?
    - Keep in place vs move elsewhere on site?
    - Use facade on another building on site vs as a stand-alone, separate landscape feature?



# Option 1: Examples



*Underwood Building in Clarendon;  
top photo shows a historic facade to be saved (at right)  
and bottom photo shows it reconstructed*



*Penzance project in Clarendon,  
with two historic facades preserved at lower left*

- Option 2: Reuse of historic building materials
  - Select items only (brick, cornice, tin ceilings) from 1910 building
  - More study needed to determine:
    - Store items on-site vs off-site?
    - How/where to reuse materials?
    - Use on-site as part of new development vs donated for use off-site?
    - Reuse on exterior and/or interior?

# Option 2: Examples



*Original ceiling tiles from 1910 section of Wilson School*



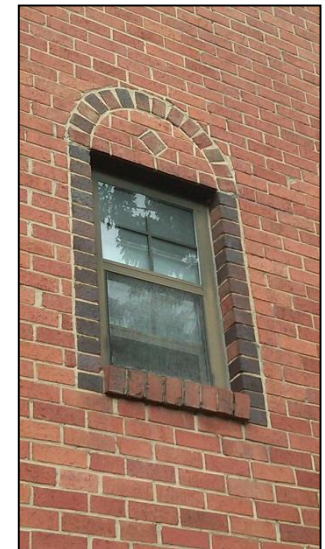
*Historic concrete blocks salvaged and reused throughout County*

- Option 3: Memorialization
  - A. Historic marker(s)
  - B. Other interpretation
    - Construct publicly accessible room within study area and incorporate historic elements (ceilings, photographs, etc.)
    - Other ideas?
  - C. Naming of new school facility
    - Return to original name of Fort Myer Heights School
    - Keep historic name of Wilson School



## What are the significant elements?

- Known history:
  - Built 1941
  - Architect was Joseph O. Blair
  - Builder was Edward T. Lindner
- Eligible for National Register of Historic Places
- Ranked as Important in HRI
- Significant features:
  - Garden apartment design and layout
  - Decorative window and brick details
  - Entrance canopies
  - Mature trees, open courtyard, and green spaces



*Architectural details of Queens Court*

## What are the HRI Goals/Policies for the Important Category?

- The County will:
  - Strive to **protect and promote the reuse** of those properties listed as Important.
  - Collaborate with owners of Important properties to **preserve the buildings' historical and material integrity** to the maximum extent possible.
  - Require that **new development proposals** affecting Important properties **be reviewed by the Historical Affairs and Landmark Review Board (HALRB)**.
  - Encourage owners of Important properties to **take advantage of available financial incentives** (rehab tax credits, preservation easements) **and zoning tools** (site plans, use permits, TDR, local historic district designation).
  - Require that Important **buildings proposed to be demolished** in whole or in part through the site plan or use permit process **will be documented by HABS-level photographs**.

### *In addition regarding sustainability...*

- The County will:
  - encourage that existing **historic buildings be retained and reused** rather than demolished.
  - encourage that existing **building materials be retained and reused**, either on site or made available to other sites in the immediate community or in the greater County.
  - encourage the **salvage of usable building materials** and architectural or stylistic elements/details.
  - promote **new architectural design that respects** the prominent historic architecture of the immediate neighborhood in terms of **massing, materials, and architectural style**.
  - promote that **historic buildings and materials be replaced with those that are compatible with neighborhood character**.



## Total preservation of all historic buildings



*Gates of Ballston at Buckingham Village,  
with new bump-out additions*



*Courthouse Manor and Wakefield Manor,  
image courtesy of MTFA Architecture*

## Partial preservation of historic buildings



*Pierce Queen Apartments,  
image courtesy of Davis Carter Scott, 2014*

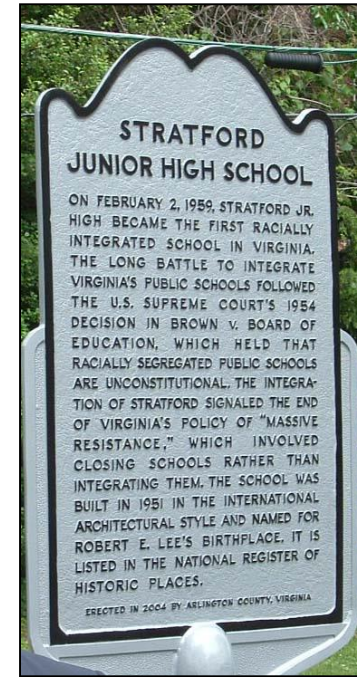




## Historic markers



Image courtesy of The Washington Post



- If preserved, is there a specific use for the building(s)?
- Cost / benefit
  - Is such development cost effective?
- How does preservation comport with other study area goals?
  - New school and associated facilities
  - Affordable housing
  - Mixed-use development that supports public facility development