



PRELIMINARY INFORMATION FORM (PIF) for INDIVIDUAL PROPERTIES

Note: PIFs are prepared by applicants and evaluated by DHR staff and the State Review Board based on information known at the time of preparation. Recommendations concerning PIFs are subject to change if new information becomes available.

DHR No. (to be completed by DHR staff) 118-5765

1. General Property Information

Property name: White Rock Elementary School

Property address: 400 Buena Vista Street

City or Town: Lynchburg

Zip code: 24504-2014

Name of the Independent City or County where the property is located: City of Lynchburg

Category of Property (choose only one of the following):

Building X Site _____ Structure _____ Object _____

2. Physical Aspects

Acreage: approximately 1.5357 acres

Setting (choose only one of the following):

Urban X Suburban _____ Town _____ Village _____ Hamlet _____ Rural _____

Briefly describe the property’s overall location and setting, including any notable landscape features:

White Rock Elementary School is located within the White Rock neighborhood of the City of Lynchburg. Both the school and neighborhood names are after White Rock Hill, one of the “seven hills” on which the city is located. White Rock Hill is so named for the extensive amount of quartzite visible on the hillside from the James River. The neighborhood is largely residential, characterized by late 19th to mid-20th century dwellings in popular revival styles and forms, including Queen Anne, Colonial Revival, American Foursquare, and Bungalow. Churches and small-scale commercial buildings also are scattered throughout the neighborhood.

White Rock Elementary School occupies a roughly 1.5-acre, sloped parcel with a large gravel parking lot on the southeast side of the lot. The 1911 schoolhouse with 1928 addition is situated at the parcel’s crest and a 1964 multipurpose building directly adjacent to the school’s southwest side. Two sets of playground equipment are located a short distance northwest of the schoolhouse. The balance of the lot is mown grass. A formal landscape design is not present; however, there are three large trees along the parcel’s southwestern side. On the northwest side of the property, a set of concrete steps leads from the public sidewalk up to a concrete sidewalk that leads directly to the school’s original entrance.

3. Architectural Description

Architectural Style(s): Colonial Revival

If the property was designed by an architect, landscape architect, engineer, or other professional, please list here: Stanhope S. Johnson (1911 and 1928 sections); Willard C. Rhodes (1964 multipurpose building)

If the builder is known, please list here: _____

Date of construction (can be approximate): 1911 and 1928 (school), 1964 (multipurpose building)

Narrative Description (Please do not exceed one page in describing the property):

Briefly describe the property's general characteristics, such as its current use (and historic use if different), as well as the primary building or structure on the property (such as a house, store, mill, factory, depot, bridge, etc.). Include the materials and method(s) of construction, physical appearance and condition (exterior and interior), and any additions or other major alterations.

White Rock Elementary School was designed by Lynchburg-based architect Stanhope S. Johnson. Completed in 1911, the original building was a Colonial Revival-style, one-story, brick, hip-roofed edifice on a raised basement. In 1928, Johnson designed a second story for the building. The building's façade is oriented northwest toward Buena Vista Street. As the building stands today, the basement level has been painted white up to a water table composed of three courses of decorative brick arranged in alternating horizontal and vertical groups of three. The remainder of the walls are red brick laid in common bond. The primary entry retains its original, paired, paneled, ten-light wood doors, while the rear entry and basement-level entries have flush steel doors. The basement retains several examples of original wood, ten-light casement windows, while the first and second stories have replacement vinyl sash with nine-over-nine light patterns and three-light transoms. The window openings were not altered when the replacement sash were installed. The first-story windows have decorative corner blocks that are painted white. Rectangular panels of decorative brickwork are at each end of the first story on the façade and rear elevation. The first and second stories are divided by a stringcourse of soldier bricks. A molded cornice with scrolled brackets extends along all sides of the building just below the low parapets that encircle the low-pitched, hipped roof. A low, rectangular, brick chimney stack rises from the center of the northeast side of the roof.

The symmetrical façade features a two-story, projecting entry bay accessed via concrete steps with flanking brick walls and a central pipe railing. The recessed entry is within a round-arched bay surmounted by a decorative overhang with molded trim, above which is a round-arched window. The entry bay's decorative elements are a mix of Colonial Revival and Craftsman, such the colonettes that flank the round-arched window, its molded arch with a keystone, and an inset panel featuring eight turned elements with square capitals. The scrolled brackets and decorative brickwork are more evocative of the Craftsman style. The southeast (rear) elevation's center entrance, likewise, references the Craftsman style, with a hipped-roof overhang supported by knee braces and scroll-sawn exposed supports. The rear entrance is accessed via a short flight of concrete steps with painted brick cheeks. The entrance consists of paired, replacement, steel doors with small square lights. The surround consists of eight-light sidelights with decorative panels, each topped with a transom of two vertical lights, and a central transom with nine vertical lights. Centered above the entrance is a tripartite, rectangular opening with three sash, consisting of flanking, six-over-six narrow sash and a nine-over-nine light sash. Above these are transoms with vertical lights in the same pattern as the entry's transoms.

The interior of the schoolhouse has four classrooms on each floor, flanking a central corridor and staircases. The primary entrance opens to a small vestibule with a full-width flight of steps that leads up to the first-floor

central corridor. A pair of metal security doors separates the rear entrance area from the central corridor. The rear entrance area has a central set of steps up to the first-floor corridor and flanking steps down to the basement. Because of the lot's sloped character, the rear flights have fewer risers than the front steps. The stairs are flanked with railings composed of painted wood panels with square newel posts and a simple wood handrail. All of the staircases retain their original wood treads and risers. Within the entrance areas, corridor, and classrooms, linoleum covers the original wood flooring; the condition of the original flooring is not known. Each classroom retains its original half-light, three-panel, wood door; the lights of each door are currently painted over. The classrooms have an expanse of windows along the perimeter walls, beneath which are radiators with metal covers. The walls have a rough plaster-like finish, which also appears to be repeated on the ceilings. Blackboards, corkboards, and/or bulletin boards on the other three walls. The corkboards appear to have been installed over original blackboards. Low, wood bookcases and shelving extend beneath some of the blackboards/corkboards. Each classroom is lit with suspended fluorescent lighting and a large metal fan is mounted above each classroom door. Each classroom has two cloakrooms/ storage closets, many of which retain original rails with coat hooks and wood, two-panel, half-light doors; the lights are painted over. Connecting doors are in the southwest pair of classrooms and the northeast pair.

The second-story floor plan is almost identical to the first floor, with four classrooms flanking a central corridor. These four classrooms have the same layout, paneled, half-light, wood doors, expanses of windows, blackboards/corkboards, linoleum flooring, wall and ceiling finishes, suspended fluorescent lighting, and metal fans as the first-floor classrooms. Each classroom also is equipped with two cloakrooms/ closets, and the southwest and northeast classrooms are connected by interior doors. Above the front entry area, two doors flank a painted-over window. The southwest entry leads to a storage closet. The northwest entry leads to an office with an attached restroom.

The basement is a utilitarian area that includes restrooms for students, a boiler room, and several offices and storage spaces created by wood-frame walls with gypsum wallboard. The floors are covered with linoleum and suspended fluorescent fixtures provide lighting. The basement level retains several examples of original wood, eight-light casement windows, such as those in each restroom.

Immediately southwest of the schoolhouse is a one-story multipurpose building erected in 1964, designed by local architect Willard C. Rhodes. The building was designed to serve as a cafeteria, library, and assembly room. Built of concrete blocks with red brick veneer laid in common bond, the building has no style. A low parapet encircles its flat roof. The northwest façade has a centered entry approached by a set of concrete steps with pipe railings and brick veneer. The entry consists of a flush steel door with a cantilevered metal overhang. Windows with paired, one-over-one metal sash flank the entry. The northeast (side) elevation has an entry that leads to a covered walkway to the schoolhouse's basement entry. Four windows with one-over-one, metal sash and cast concrete sills are regularly spaced along the northeast end of the wall, while the southeast end has a slightly projecting bay without fenestration. The southeast (rear) elevation has two right-of-center entries, each with a flush steel door and ventilation equipment for the interior's commercial kitchen equipment. The southwest (side) elevation has six evenly spaced windows with one-over-one metal sash and cast concrete sills that light the interior's principal, open space, while two slightly smaller windows, also with one-over-one metal sash and concrete sills, light the interior of the commercial kitchen.

Much of it consists of a single large open space, with an office and a storage area at the northwest end of the space and a commercial kitchen at the southeast end. The commercial kitchen's spaces are delineated by concrete block walls, some of which are original to the building. Two small restrooms are located at the southwest corner of the space. Interior finishes include linoleum flooring, painted concrete block walls, suspended fluorescent light fixtures, and a dropped ceiling with acoustic tiles.

In a bullet list, include any outbuildings or secondary resources or major landscape features (such as barns, sheds, dam and mill pond, storage tanks, scales, railroad spurs, etc.), including their condition and their estimated construction dates.

- The property has a set of concrete steps and an entry sidewalk that lead from the public sidewalk on the property's northwest side. A security gate has been placed across the sidewalk at the top of the steps. The gate is a temporary security measure that will be in place during the proposed rehabilitation project for this property.
- A gravel parking lot is located on the southeast side of the 1911/1928 school building.
- A chain link fence encircles the entirety of the property's perimeter. The fence is a temporary security measure that will be in place during the proposed rehabilitation project for this property.

4. Property's History and Significance (Please do not exceed one page)

Briefly explain the property's historic importance, such as significant events, persons, and/or families associated with the property.

If the property is important for its architecture, engineering, landscape architecture, or other aspects of design, please include a brief explanation of this aspect.

White Rock Elementary School is locally significant under Criterion A in the area of Education and under Criterion C in the area of Architecture. The period of significance is 1911-c. 1971, beginning with the construction of the original school building and ending with the property's closure as a public elementary school. Under Criterion A, the school is associated with the first wave of consolidation of the City of Lynchburg's elementary schools for White students during the racial segregation era. Neighborhood children attended the school from kindergarten through sixth or seventh grade; the number of grades varied over time. Period school board minutes, newspaper articles, and photographs demonstrate that the school functioned as a community anchor and hosted a range of events and services for neighborhood residents, including a night school, public health screenings, civic education meetings, Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) activities, and special events. Under Criterion C, the 1911 and 1928 sections of the schoolhouse were designed by Lynchburg-based architect Stanhope S. Johnson. The schoolhouse's high integrity of location, setting, design, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association convey the building's architectural significance as an early-20th-century, consolidated school by one of central Virginia's most prolific architects. Johnson is estimated to have completed between 700-800 commissions during his decades-long career. Although modest in scale and design, the high integrity of White Rock Elementary presents a virtually untouched example of Johnson's work in his preferred Colonial Revival style, with elements of Craftsman style incorporated in the 1911 section. The 1964 multipurpose building is not attached to the 1911/1928 schoolhouse, but for a metal covered walkway that extends between the two buildings. The 1964 building was designed by local architect Willard Conrad Rhodes.

Criterion A: Education

White Rock Hill is repeatedly described as a working-class neighborhood in various media publications since 1910. The local demographics continued to be working class throughout the White Rock Elementary's history. The neighborhood included White and African American residents, with the students attending racially segregated schools. White Rock Hill's African American students attended a school located on Jackson Street; the Jacob Yoder School was erected in 1927. The White students began attending White Rock Elementary on Buena Vista Street after the 1911 building was completed.

White Rock Elementary School dates to a time when Lynchburg's public school system was in the midst of erecting its first consolidated schools for White students during the racial segregation era. A "White Rock School" is known to have been in operation prior to 1911, but very little information about it has been found, other than a 1908 article about "final exercises" at the nearby Presbyterian church. That building reportedly was closed due to unsanitary conditions.¹ In 1909, the City of Lynchburg approved a \$200,000 bond issue for construction of a new high school, an eight-classroom building for the Miller Park neighborhood, a school for Black students on Tin Bridge Hill,² and a "half school" in the White Rock neighborhood. The term "half school" likely refers to the building's original design of just four classrooms, which would have housed four grades, or half of the typical number of grades in an elementary school at that time (typically first through seventh grades, although kindergarten was becoming a standard part of some local school systems).³ The construction of White Rock Elementary was a prolonged process, with neighborhood residents repeatedly pressing for adequate construction funds to erect the new building. A 1910 meeting of "patrons" of the school was held at the Bethesda Presbyterian Church, and a newspaper article mentioned that, at that time, neighborhood students attended classes in the "Floyd Building," due to the closure of the earlier schoolhouse. Local residents were displeased with the delays in constructing the promised new elementary school for White Rock Hill. The residents appointed a committee to represent their interests at upcoming school board meetings. Of particular concern was a proposal that \$15,000 from the \$200,000 bond issue set aside for the construction of White Rock's school be diverted instead to construction costs for the high school.⁴ The committee also wrote letters to the editor of the local newspaper, *The News and Advance*, expressing their concerns.

According to a budget breakdown in *The News and Advance*, the total costs for White Rock Elementary School included \$1,500 to purchase a lot, \$10,500 for construction costs, and \$1,828 for "heating and fees." The lot for the school had already been purchased as of January 28, 1911.⁵ Due to the aforementioned budget overruns, however, debate over allocation of funds from the bond issue began, with cutbacks proposed to the designs for all four of the school construction projects approved in 1909, and a proposal to delay construction of White Rock's school altogether. Some school board members objected to use of the triangular lot along Buena Vista Street that had been purchased for White Rock School. Local residents and other school board members, however, voiced strong opinions on the need for the neighborhood school, due to the aforementioned closure of their own schoolhouse and the resultant necessity to send the local students to three different schools in other neighborhoods. Because bus transportation did not yet exist, students walked a considerable distance to the other schools. At a February 11, 1911, school board meeting, the construction project for White Rock Elementary School was approved.⁶ Upon completion, the schoolhouse had four classrooms on the first floor. The basement included a boiler room, fuel room, three "play rooms" (two for boys and one for girls), multiple-stall restrooms for boys and girls, and a "property room," likely used for storage.⁷

¹ "White Rock School," *The News and Advance* (Lynchburg, Virginia), June 14, 1908, p. 16; "Mass Meeting Tonight, Public School Patrons of White Rock Hill Will Meet," *The News and Advance* (Lynchburg, Virginia), November 3, 1910, p. 10.

² This was the site for the Jacob Yoder School that was erected in 1927 at 109 Jackson Street. See "Yoder School," Lynchburg Museum, <https://www.lyncburgphotos.org/Schools/YoderSchool/i-gfCZxcN>.

³ "Adjourned Session Appropriation to Erect New School Buildings Passed Council," *The News and Advance* (Lynchburg, Virginia), December 11, 1909, p. 10.

⁴ "Mass Meeting Tonight, Public School Patrons of White Rock Hill Will Meet," *The News and Advance* (Lynchburg, Virginia), November 3, 1910, p. 10; "Mass Meeting Tonight, Residents of White Rock Hill Appoint Committee to Go Before Board," *The News and Advance* (Lynchburg, Virginia), November 4, 1910, p. 7.

⁵ "Presented Estimates, Report of City School Board Made to the Finance Committee," *The News and Advance* (Lynchburg, Virginia), February 11, 1911, p. 6.

⁶ "Adjourned Session, White Rock Hill School Advocates Win the Council Vote," *The News and Advance* (Lynchburg, Virginia), November 3, 1910, p. 6.

⁷ McLaughlin and Johnson, Architects, Lynchburg, Va., "White Rock School Building," Architectural Drawings, July 1911, on file at Jones Memorial Library, Lynchburg.

White Rock Elementary School quickly proved to be a community asset. During the mid-1910s, the schoolhouse hosted a “night school” for adult learners. Such schools also were held at Yoder School on Jackson Street, Central High School, and Miller Park Elementary School. The classes offered included “primary” and “grammar” (or elementary) grades, Spanish, and mechanical drawing. The night school classes ended in 1917, possibly due to economic issues associated with World War I.⁸ Meetings to discuss local civic issues were held at the White Rock and Miller Park schools in 1917. Matters related to infrastructure development and taxes were to be discussed, along with speeches by local elected officials.⁹ A Community League for White Rock, Floyd, Frank Roane, and John Wyatt schools raised extra funding to purchase books, furnishings, and equipment for the four schools. The group also organized special programs of community benefit, including topics such as public health, physical education, nutrition, moral instruction, and “the sphere of Woman.”¹⁰ By the 1930s, a Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) had been organized for White Rock School. Serving the same purpose as the Community League, the school’s PTA continued to operate through at least the 1950s and likely continued until the school closed c. 1971. Nutrition programs for the students were introduced by 1926, when a “milk fund” was established through the sale of “seals” by the Lynchburg Tuberculosis Association. The working-class character of the White Rock neighborhood meant that students from low-income families were provided milk at no cost to their families.¹¹ Supplemental nutrition programs continued for White Rock students through the 1960s, primarily through a federally-supported school lunch program introduced during the Great Depression.

In 1928, Stanhope S. Johnson designed a second story to be added to the 1911 schoolhouse. The addition increased the number of classrooms from four to eight and added a second-floor office area. The basement was reconfigured to include larger multiple-stall restrooms for boys and girls. Playrooms for boys and girls were retained, with the girls’ playroom layout somewhat altered by changes made to the layout of the restrooms, and the number of boys’ playrooms decreased to one. The boiler room, fuel room, and storage room were retained. The plans also included specifications for electric lighting.¹²

By 1953, White Rock’s enrollment stood at 203 students from 149 dwellings. The PTA had 203 members, with at least one person from each of the 149 households with enrolled students.¹³ With eight classrooms, approximately 25 students per classroom were present at White Rock Elementary on a typical day.

By this time, the Civil Rights Movement was underway in Lynchburg and other places throughout Virginia. The U.S. Supreme Court issued its *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas*, decision that struck down racial segregation in public schools in 1954. Through various means, however, many Virginia localities resisted desegregation for fifteen years or more. Segregated schools continued to be built in Lynchburg into the early 1960s. A new elementary school for White Rock’s African American students was approved for construction in the Winfree Addition in 1957. The Winfree Addition is within an area of the City that was annexed from adjacent Campbell County (and known for years afterward as the “annex area”)¹⁴ The Carl B. Hutcherson

⁸ “City Night Schools,” *The News and Advance* (Lynchburg, Virginia), November 14, 1916, p. 6; “Night School Statistics,” *The News and Advance* (Lynchburg, Virginia), December 9, 1916, p. 6; “Night Schools to Close,” *The News and Advance* (Lynchburg, Virginia), May 27, 1917, p. 6.

⁹ “Talk to Voters,” *The News and Advance* (Lynchburg, Virginia), February 8, 1917, p. 6.

¹⁰ “Community League Officers Elected,” *The News and Advance* (Lynchburg, Virginia), May 14, 1925, p. 8.

¹¹ “Under-Nourished Children Receive Great Benefit from Milk Fund Raised by Sales to Tuberculosis Seals Here,” *The News and Advance* (Lynchburg, Virginia), November 28, 1926, p. 9.

¹² Stanhope S. Johnson and R. O. Brannan, Architects, Lynchburg, Va., “Alterations & Additions to White Rock School Building,” Architectural Drawings, May 1928, on file at Jones Memorial Library, Lynchburg.

¹³ “White Rock PTA Hails 100 Pct Home Sign-Up,” *The News and Advance* (Lynchburg, Virginia), February 20, 1953, p. 16.

¹⁴ “Council Approves Two School Sites,” *The News and Advance* (Lynchburg, Virginia), December 11, 1957, p. 13.

Elementary School, named in honor of the City of Lynchburg’s first African American school trustee (or school board member), was completed in 1960.¹⁵

At White Rock School, a separate multipurpose building to house a cafeteria, library, and assembly space was erected adjacent to the 1911/1928 schoolhouse in 1964. Local architect Willard Conrad Rhodes designed the building. The relatively late construction of such a space is unusual for a school for White students in a town or urban setting in Virginia.¹⁶

A review of the Lynchburg Public Schools system’s school board minutes identified no significant discussions of the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision, subsequent guidance issued by then-Attorney General Lindsay Almond to local school boards, the Massive Resistance legislative package approved by the General Assembly in 1956, or the “school choice” plans that were introduced as part of Massive Resistance.¹⁷ The minutes demonstrate that the Lynchburg school system utilized a school choice plan during the 1960s. Under the plan, although a small number of Black students were admitted to previously all-White schools, the vast majority of the city’s students continued to attend racially segregated schools. In 1970, Lynchburg’s last segregated high school classes graduated, and this date is considered to mark the end of school segregation in the city.¹⁸ White Rock Elementary School closed following desegregation. A proposal to adapt the school for use as a “Head Start” center by the local Community Action Group was approved in 1971. Head Start is a federally-funded early childhood education program introduced during the 1960s to improve educational outcomes for students from low-income backgrounds. The White Rock School building continued to serve an educational function until recently. Although now vacant, it is proposed for adaptive reuse as a community center.

Criterion C: Architecture

White Rock Elementary School is a locally significant example of the work of Lynchburg architect Stanhope S. Johnson (1882-1973) in the Colonial Revival style and as applied to an educational building. As noted architectural historian Richard Guy Wilson wrote, “The Colonial Revival embodied the story and myth of America, of the colonists who created a new land, of a heroic generation of great leaders who created a new nation out of a wilderness. It symbolized and taught values to the young, to the immigrants, and to the citizens of all colors.” In *Architecture of the United States*, architectural historian Dell Upton described the Colonial Revival as “an evocation of a mythicized, preindustrial past used to unify a fragmenting industrial and commercial society, a national-building strategy” Upton further explained that the Colonial Revival “sought to embellish the spirit of regions by evoking distinctive, visual qualities of their oldest buildings.”¹⁹

White Rock Elementary School has character-defining aspects of the Colonial Revival style, including use of red brick with white trim; symmetry and balance in the massing, footprint, and form, as well as fenestration and

¹⁵ “City Council Approves New Hutcherson School,” *The News and Advance* (Lynchburg, Virginia), November 26, 1958, p. 8.

¹⁶ See Lena McDonald, Ashlen Stump, and Marcus Pollard, “African American Schools in Virginia,” Multiple Property Documentation Form, approved by the Virginia Board of Historic Resources and State Review Board, June 12, 2025.

¹⁷ All of these topics are discussed at length in Lena McDonald, Ashlen Stump, and Marcus Pollard, “African American Schools in Virginia,” Multiple Property Documentation Form, approved by the Virginia Board of Historic Resources and State Review Board, June 12, 2025.

¹⁸ “LYH Welcomes You,” Lynchburg Museum, 2025, <https://lynchburgmuseum.org/hill-city-roots/>.

¹⁹ Kayla Boyer Halberg, “Hargrave Military Academy,” National Register nomination, June 14, 2019, on file at the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Richmond, <https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/historic-registers/187-5004/>, p. 15, with reference to Chris Novelli, Melina Bezirdjian, Calder Loth, and Lena Sweeten McDonald, *Classic Commonwealth: Virginia Architecture from the Colonial Era to 1940*, (Richmond, Va.: Virginia Department of Historic Resources, 2015), p. 88-90. Wilson and Upton, as quoted in Novelli et al., p. 88 and 90, respectively.

placement of entries; classically derived elements such as colonette details, molded trim, and cornice; and a prominently featured primary entrance within a round-arched bay.

Along with Colonial Revival elements, the schoolhouse has aspects of Craftsman style, too, such as the molded trim on the primary entrance doors, vertical lights in the transoms and sidelights at the primary front and rear entries, scrolled brackets on the cornice, and knee braces and scroll-sawn supports on the rear entry's canopy. Interior finishes also have a blend of Colonial Revival and Craftsman elements, such as the interior doors that have vertical panels, and the mix of tall, square baseboards and window trim alongside molded trim on the door frames. Such finishes were selected with considerations of cost, durability, and aesthetic values.

Stanhope S. Johnson (1882-1973)

Born in Lynchburg in 1882 to parents Mary Elizabeth Johnson and George Lafayette Johnson, Stanhope Spencer Johnson obtained his architectural education through a combination of formal study and apprenticeships. In 1898, Johnson began working in the office of locally well-known Lynchburg architect Edward G. Frye at the firm Frye and Chesterman as a draftsman; he worked on designs for houses, schools, and churches. In addition to his hands-on training, Johnson also studied at the Corcoran College of Art & Design in Washington, D.C. and took classes at Piedmont Business College. As many architectural students did during the early 20th century, Johnson made his way to Europe for additional study opportunities. He completed training in Paris at the DeHoultliou School of Architecture and in London with the design firm of H.C.L. Smith and embarked on a tour of Europe to view important architectural works. Johnson completed a correspondence program offered by the Scranton School of Architecture in Pennsylvania in 1906, after which he moved to the office of James T. McLaughlin, again working as a draftsman from 1907-1908. In 1909, Johnson began his independent architectural career by establishing a firm with McLaughlin and Charles Pettit. Focused primarily on residential projects, the small company had offices in both Lynchburg and Pettit's base in Danville, Virginia; however, Pettit exited the firm after just two years. Johnson and McLaughlin continued their partnership until 1916.²⁰

By the 1910s, Johnson's career was well established, and he became one of Lynchburg's and Central Virginia's busiest architects. In 1917, Johnson began a new architectural firm in Lynchburg with Ray O. Brannan as manager; two years later, the firm became a partnership. Addison Staples had joined the firm by the 1920s. Johnson married Elizabeth Bond in 1921 and the couple resided in Lynchburg. In 1930, Staples and Johnson collaborated on one of their best-known projects, the Allied Arts Building, a Lynchburg skyscraper rendered in the Art Deco style. Starting in 1931, the Johnson and Brannan Architectural Firm occupied the 17th-floor "penthouse suite," remaining there until the 1970s. Johnson and Brannan's commissions ranged as far away as Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, West Virginia, and Washington, D.C. Many of these were large-scale, multiyear projects such as hospitals and hotels. According to one analysis, approximately 33 percent of Johnson's 240 commissions between 1923-1935 were for out-of-state projects. The majority of Johnson's projects, however, were located in central Virginia. Schools, high-style dwellings, commercial projects, and ecclesiastical buildings comprised many of these commissions. During the 1920s, Johnson's multiple publicly oriented projects in the City of Lynchburg included the 1921 Beaux Arts Garland-Rodes School, the 1925 Centenary United Methodist Church in Neoclassical Revival style, the aforementioned 1929 Art Deco Allied Arts Building, and a 1932 U.S. Post Office and Courthouse, designed

²⁰ "Stanhope S. Johnson and R.O. Brannan, Architects collection," Special Collections Research Center, Appalachian State University, <https://appstate-speccoll.lyrasistechology.org/repositories/2/resources/798>; Margie Lippard, "Stanhope Spencer Johnson : Architect of the Renewed American Dream," *Central Virginia HOME Magazine*, August 29, 2019, <https://cvhomemag.com/stanhope-spencer-johnson-architect-of-the-renewed-american-dream/>.

in the Stripped Classicism style in collaboration with James A. Wetmore, the Supervising Architect of the U.S. Treasury.²¹

Johnson and Brannan dissolved their partnership in 1936. The latter half of the Great Depression and World War II drew resources away from Johnson's typical clientele. Wartime rationing of materials halted new construction projects across the country. During the war years, Johnson, at that time in his early 60s, could not serve in the military, but he was appointed as Lynchburg's deputy for defense coordination, during which time he evaluated various types of buildings for use as emergency shelters in the event of enemy attacks (no such attacks ever occurred). The immediate postwar era saw Johnson undertaking ecclesiastical and institutional design projects, including schools. From the start of his career until his retirement in 1966, Johnson is estimated to have completed a total of 700-800 projects, with approximately half of those projects located in central Virginia, including roughly 155 private dwellings. An incomplete but informative list of Johnson's major works in Virginia is in the book *The Virginia Architects: A Biographical Dictionary*, by John E. Wells and Robert E. Dalton at pages 227-230.²² Upon Johnson's death in 1975, his brother-in-law, Everett Bond, donated Johnson's drawings to the Jones Memorial Library in Lynchburg.²³

Like many formally-trained American architects trained during the late 19th to early 20th century, Johnson excelled at designing in traditional styles such as Georgian Revival, Classical Revival, Colonial Revival, and other academic and classically inspired styles. Johnson used such styles on a broad array of project types that included schools, churches, private residences, office buildings, hospitals, hotels, apartment buildings, YMCA buildings, gymnasiums, college dormitories and classroom and administrative buildings, banks, Sunday school buildings, warehouses, armories, and other types. Johnson utilized newer styles that became popular during the 1910s-1920s, such as Craftsman, Art Deco, and Art Moderne. After World War II, as Modern Movement styles, such as the International Style, were widely adopted for public buildings, such as schools, Johnson completed designs in these styles as well.²⁴

²¹ Anne Carter Lee, "Stanhope S. Johnson," SAH Archipedia, Society of Architectural Historians, 2025, <https://sah-archipedia.org/Architects/Stanhope-S-Johnson>; John E. Wells and Robert E. Dalton, *The Virginia Architects: A Biographical Dictionary* (Richmond, Va.: New South Architectural Press, 1997), p. 230; Catherine W. Bishir with contributor S. Allen Chambers, "Johnson, Stanhope S. (1882-1973), North Carolina Architects and Builders: A Biographical Dictionary, published 2015, <https://ncarchitects.lib.ncsu.edu/people/P000597>; Margie Lippard, "Stanhope Spencer Johnson : Architect of the Renewed American Dream," *Central Virginia HOME Magazine*, August 29, 2019, <https://cvhomemag.com/stanhope-spencer-johnson-architect-of-the-renewed-american-dream/>.

²² John E. Wells and Robert E. Dalton, *The Virginia Architects: A Biographical Dictionary* (Richmond, Va.: New South Architectural Press, 1997), p. 227; Leslie A. Giles and J. Daniel Pezzoni, "Ballard-Worsham House," National Register nomination, October 20, 1997, on file at the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Richmond, <https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/historic-registers/141-0014/>, p. 8/8; Ashley Neville and Adrienne Cowden, "Lynchburg Hospital," National Register nomination, October 18, 1999, on file at the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Richmond, <https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/historic-registers/118-5160/>, p. 8/10; Katie Gutshall, Kate Kronau, and Allison Blanton, "Susie G. Gibson High School," National Register nomination, June 1, 2021, on file at the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, <https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/historic-registers/141-5017/>, p. 26-27; Margie Lippard, "Stanhope Spencer Johnson : Architect of the Renewed American Dream," *Central Virginia HOME Magazine*, August 29, 2019, <https://cvhomemag.com/stanhope-spencer-johnson-architect-of-the-renewed-american-dream/>.

²³ "Stanhope S. Johnson and R.O. Brannan, Architects collection," Special Collections Research Center, Appalachian State University, <https://appstate-speccoll.lyrasistechology.org/repositories/2/resources/798>; Margie Lippard, "Stanhope Spencer Johnson : Architect of the Renewed American Dream," *Central Virginia HOME Magazine*, August 29, 2019, <https://cvhomemag.com/stanhope-spencer-johnson-architect-of-the-renewed-american-dream/>.

²⁴ John E. Wells and Robert E. Dalton, *The Virginia Architects: A Biographical Dictionary* (Richmond, Va.: New South Architectural Press, 1997), p. 227-230; Katie Gutshall, Kate Kronau, and Allison Blanton, "Susie G. Gibson High School," National Register nomination, June 1, 2021, on file at the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, <https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/historic-registers/141-5017/>, p. 26-27.

Documented Historic Schools in Lynchburg

In Lynchburg, in addition to White Rock Elementary School, according to Wells and Dalton, Johnson designed a school that stood at Cabell and Grayson streets in 1917, Fort Hill School in 1919, a school in Rivermont in 1919, and Garland-Rodes Elementary School in 1921.²⁵

According to the Virginia Cultural Resources Information System (VCRIS), the following historic-age schools have been identified in Lynchburg:

- 1910 Miller Park School (118-0302), built 1910, designed by Stanhope Johnson (recommended eligible for the VLR and NRHP in 2010 by SRB)
- E.C. Glass High School (118-5302), built 1910 (became Robert E. Lee Junior High School in 1953)
- John Wyatt School (118-5163-0024), built 1915, within Courthouse Hill/Downtown Historic District
- Armstrong Elementary School (118-5320), built 1917 and enlarged in 1954, listed in the VLR and NRHP in 2012
- Frank Roane School (118-0056-0008), built c. 1920, within Federal Hill Historic District
- Garland-Rodes Elementary School (118-0334-0426), built 1921, within Rivermont Historic District, designed by Stanhope Johnson
- Dunbar High School (118-0151), built 1923, within Diamond Hill South Historic District (Af Am)
- Robert E. Lee Junior High School (118-0225-0216), built 1925, within Diamond Hill South Historic District. Designed by Aubrey Chesterman (1874-1937), Chesterman and Heard architectural firm
- Dearington Elementary School (118-5675), built 1927
- E.C. Glass High School (118-5180), built c. 1950
- Paul Monroe Elementary School (118-5709), built 1962
- Linkhorne School (118-5505), built 1966

White Rock Elementary School had not been documented in VCRIS prior to the preparation of this Preliminary Information Form. Based on information in VCRIS, the 1911/1928 school is among a locally significant group of public schools built in Lynchburg between c. 1910-c.1928 that are associated with segregated public education and school consolidation in Lynchburg. White Rock Elementary School also is a locally significant example of the work of Stanhope S. Johnson, who also designed several other public schools in the City of Lynchburg. Of these, Miller Park School (118-0302), built in 1910, was recommended eligible for the VLR and the NRHP in 2010 by the State Review Board, and the Garland-Rodes Elementary School (118-0334-0426), built in 1921, is a contributing resource within the Rivermont Historic District (118-0334).

Due to its high level of integrity of location, setting, design, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association, White Rock Elementary School is a fine representative example of Johnson's work in the Colonial Revival style. The schoolhouse also is an intact example of an elementary school for White students that was associated with the first wave of school consolidation in the city and a period of prosperity and growth in the city as a whole. The property, therefore, is locally significant under Criterion C in the area of Architecture.

²⁵ John E. Wells and Robert E. Dalton, *The Virginia Architects: A Biographical Dictionary* (Richmond, Va.: New South Architectural Press, 1997), p. 227-230.

Please list all sources of information used to research the history of the property, such as deeds, census and tax records, and/or published articles and books. (It is not necessary to attach lengthy articles or family genealogies to this form.)

“Adjourned Session Appropriation to Erect New School Buildings Passed Council.” *The News and Advance* (Lynchburg, Virginia), December 11, 1909, p. 10.

“Adjourned Session, White Rock Hill School Advocates Win the Council Vote.” *The News and Advance* (Lynchburg, Virginia), November 3, 1910, p. 6.

Bishir, Catherine W., with contributor S. Allen Chambers. “Johnson, Stanhope S. (1882-1973).” *North Carolina Architects and Builders: A Biographical Dictionary*, published 2015, <https://ncarchitects.lib.ncsu.edu/people/P000597>.

“City Council Approves New Hutcherson School.” *The News and Advance* (Lynchburg, Virginia), November 26, 1958, p. 8.

“City Night Schools.” *The News and Advance* (Lynchburg, Virginia), November 14, 1916, p. 6.

“Community League Officers Elected.” *The News and Advance* (Lynchburg, Virginia), May 14, 1925, p. 8.

“Council Approves Two School Sites.” *The News and Advance* (Lynchburg, Virginia), December 11, 1957, p. 13.

Giles, Leslie A., and J. Daniel Pezzoni. “Ballard-Worsham House.” National Register nomination, October 20, 1997. On file at the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Richmond, <https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/historic-registers/141-0014/>.

Gutshall, Katie, Kate Kronau, and Allison Blanton. “Susie G. Gibson High School.” National Register nomination, June 1, 2021. On file at the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, <https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/historic-registers/141-5017/>.

Halberg, Kayla Boyer. “Hargrave Military Academy.” National Register nomination, June 14, 2019. On file at the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Richmond, <https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/historic-registers/187-5004/>.

Lee, Anne Carter. “Stanhope S. Johnson.” SAH Archipedia, Society of Architectural Historians, 2025, <https://sah-archipedia.org/Architects/Stanhope-S-Johnson>.

Lippard, Margie. “Stanhope Spencer Johnson : Architect of the Renewed American Dream.” *Central Virginia HOME Magazine*, August 29, 2019, <https://cvhomemag.com/stanhope-spencer-johnson-architect-of-the-renewed-american-dream/>.

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“Mass Meeting Tonight, Public School Patrons of White Rock Hill Will Meet.” *The News and Advance* (Lynchburg, Virginia), November 3, 1910, p. 10.

“Mass Meeting Tonight, Residents of White Rock Hill Appoint Committee to Go Before Board.” *The News and Advance* (Lynchburg, Virginia), November 4, 1910, p. 7.

McDonald, Lena, Ashlen Stump, and Marcus Pollard. “African American Schools in Virginia.” Multiple Property Documentation Form. Approved by the Virginia Board of Historic Resources and State Review Board, June 12, 2025.

McLaughlin and Johnson, Architects, Lynchburg, Va. “White Rock School Building.” Architectural Drawings, July 1911. On file at Jones Memorial Library, Lynchburg.

Neville, Ashley, and Adrienne Cowden. “Lynchburg Hospital.” National Register nomination, October 18, 1999. On file at the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Richmond, <https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/historic-registers/118-5160/>.

“Night School Statistics.” *The News and Advance* (Lynchburg, Virginia), December 9, 1916, p. 6.

“Night Schools to Close.” *The News and Advance* (Lynchburg, Virginia), May 27, 1917, p. 6.

Novelli, Chris, Melina Bezirdjian, Calder Loth, and Lena Sweeten McDonald. *Classic Commonwealth: Virginia Architecture from the Colonial Era to 1940*. Richmond, Va.: Virginia Department of Historic Resources, 2015.

“Presented Estimates, Report of City School Board Made to the Finance Committee.” *The News and Advance* (Lynchburg, Virginia), February 11, 1911, p. 6.

Stanhope S. Johnson and R. O. Brannan, Architects, Lynchburg, Va. “Alterations & Additions to White Rock School Building.” Architectural Drawings, May 1928. On file at Jones Memorial Library, Lynchburg.

“Stanhope S. Johnson and R.O. Brannan, Architects collection.” Special Collections Research Center, Appalachian State University, <https://appstate-speccoll.lyrasistechology.org/repositories/2/resources/798>.

“Talk to Voters.” *The News and Advance* (Lynchburg, Virginia), February 8, 1917, p. 6.

“Under-Nourished Children Receive Great Benefit from Milk Fund Raised by Sales to Tuberculosis Seals Here.” *The News and Advance* (Lynchburg, Virginia), November 28, 1926, p. 9.

Wells, John E., Robert E. Dalton. *The Virginia Architects: A Biographical Dictionary*. Richmond, Va.: New South Architectural Press, 1997.

“White Rock PTA Hails 100 Pct Home Sign-Up.” *The News and Advance* (Lynchburg, Virginia), February 20, 1953, p. 16.

“White Rock School.” *The News and Advance* (Lynchburg, Virginia), June 14, 1908, p. 16.

“Yoder School.” Lynchburg Museum, <https://www.lynchburgphotos.org/Schools/YoderSchool/i-gfCZxcN>.

5. Property Ownership (Check as many categories as apply):

Private: _____ Public\Local X Public\State _____ Public\Federal _____

Current Legal Owner(s) of the Property (If the property has more than one owner, please list each below or on an additional sheet.)

name/title: Wynter Christian Benda, City Manager

organization: City of Lynchburg City Manager's Office

street & number: 900 Church Street

city or town: Lynchburg state: VA zip code: 24504-1620

e-mail: citymanager@lycnburgva.gov telephone: 434-455-3990

Legal Owner's Signature: _____

Date: _____

• • Signature required for processing all applications. • •

In the event of corporate ownership you must provide the name and title of the appropriate contact person.

Contact person: _____

Daytime Telephone: _____

Applicant Information (Individual completing form if other than legal owner of property)

name/title: Lena McDonald and Ashlen Stump

organization: Commonwealth Preservation Group

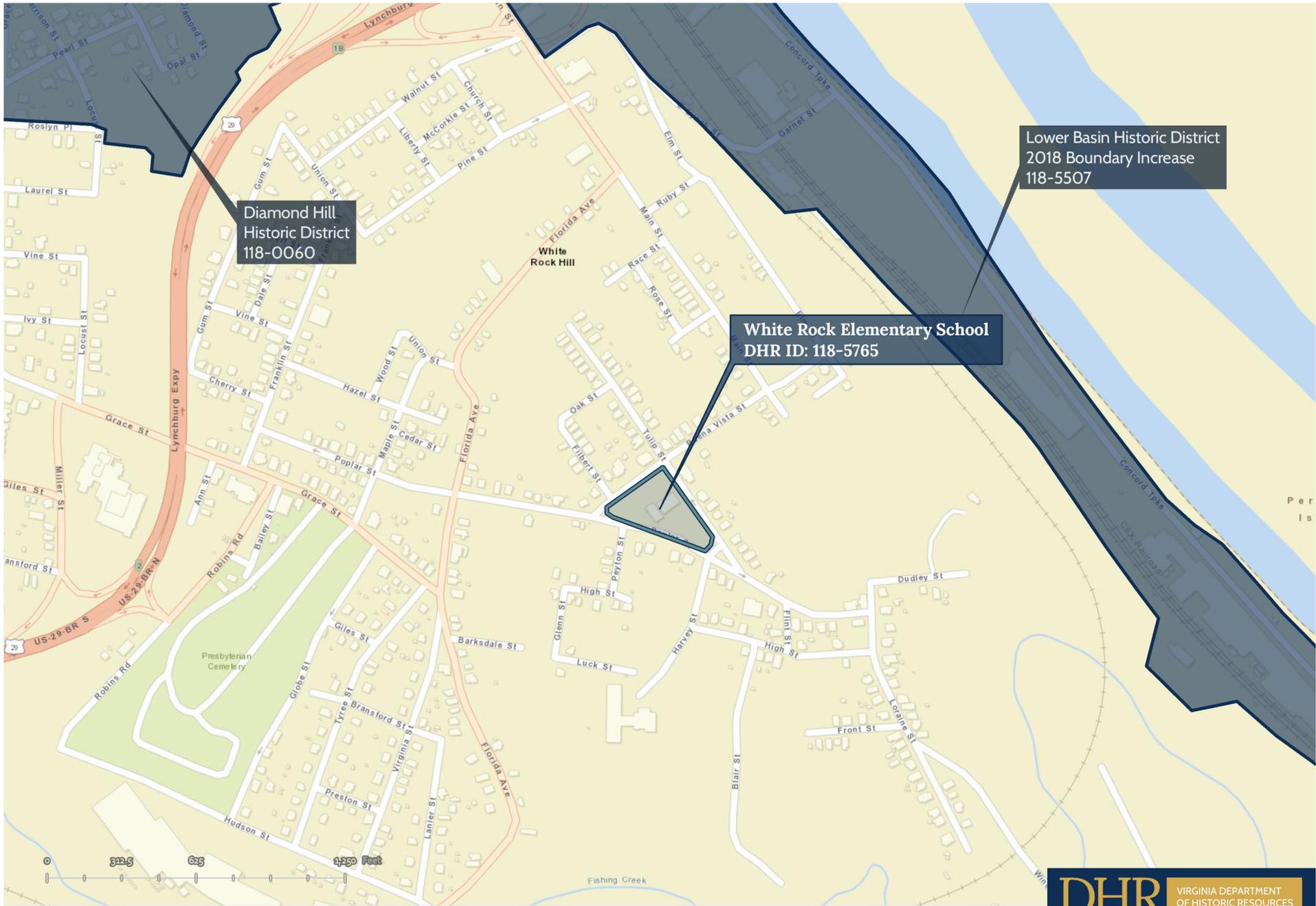
street & number: 536 W. 35th Street

city or town: Norfolk state: VA zip code: 23508

e-mail: admin@commonwealthpreservationgroup.com telephone: 757-923-1900

Date: December 2025

PLEASE DO NOT ATTACH CONTINUATION SHEETS TO THIS FORM. THANK YOU!



White Rock Elementary School
City of Lynchburg, Virginia
DHR ID: 118-5765

- 118-5765
- VLR/NRHP/NHL Listed



Created By: D. Bascone, 2/3/2026
 Sources: VDHR 2026, ESRI 2026, VDOT 2026, VGIN 2026
 Records of the Virginia Department of Historic Resources (DHR) have been gathered over many years and the representation depicted is based on the field observation date and may not reflect current ground conditions. The map is for general illustration purposes and is not intended for engineering, legal or other site-specific uses. The map may contain errors and is provided "as-is". Contact DHR for the most recent information as data is updated continually.



White Rock Elementary School
City of Lynchburg, Virginia
DHR ID: 118-5765

 118-5765



DHR VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT
OF HISTORIC RESOURCES

Created By: D. Bascone, 2/3/2026
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White Rock Elementary School Sketch Map



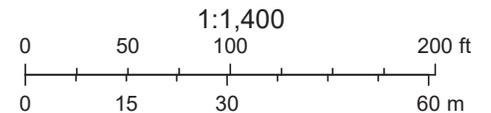
11/17/2025, 2:15:41 PM

-  Parcels
-  White Rock Elementary School Resource Boundary

White Rock Elementary School

400 Buena Vista Street
Lynchburg, Virginia
2025

DHR File No. 118-5765



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White Rock Elementary School Exterior Photo Key



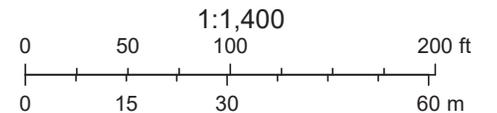
11/17/2025, 2:15:41 PM

-  Parcels
-  White Rock Elementary School Resource Boundary
-  1 Photo Number & Direction

White Rock Elementary School

400 Buena Vista Street
Lynchburg, Virginia
2025

DHR File No. 118-5765



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ALL VISITORS
MUST REPORT
TO THE
MAIN OFFICE

























WHITE ROCK
HEAD START CENTER

NO BALL
PLAYING
ON GROUNDS









