

**COMMISSION OF ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW
STAFF REPORT
May 24, 2016 Meeting**

10. **CAR No. 16-070** (S. Tuttle)

**970-972 Pink Street
Union Hill Old and Historic District**

Project Description: **Demolish two attached single family dwellings**

Staff Contact: **K. Chen**

The applicant requests approval to demolish two attached single family dwellings in the Union Hill Old and Historic District. In 2001, when the Union Hill National Register Historic district was surveyed, 3 buildings were identified on the west side of the 900 block Pink Street. There were no buildings on the east side of the block. The building at 964 Pink Street was a 1-story Italianate cottage, listed as contributing and demolished in 2004 through Code Enforcement. The second building on the block, 970-974 Pink Street, also listed as contributing, consisted of three attached, 2-story frame dwellings. The building at 974 Pink Street was demolished in 2001 through Code Enforcement. In 2008, two new dwellings were constructed at 978-980 Pink Street. The 1924 Sanborn Map suggests that both sides of Pink Street between Venable and Carrington streets were once fully developed.

The 2001 survey photographs show the buildings in a heavily altered state. T-111 siding had been installed, porches removed and reconstructed with treated material. The cornices had been removed except for a single bracket, and door and window openings altered. The window openings at 970 appear to be the original size but they contain grid-between glass vinyl sashes. The north wall of 972 was also damaged by the demolition of 974. The photographs submitted by the applicant also suggest that little historic fabric remains on the interiors. These properties have a history of citations from Code Enforcement and were scheduled for the tax sale process in 2015.

Staff recommends approval of the project. The City Code offers the following with regards to demolition:

The commission of architectural review 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. The demolition of any building deemed by the commission to not be a part of the historic character of an old and historic district shall be permitted. The demolition of any building that has deteriorated beyond the point of being feasibly

rehabilitated is permissible, where the applicant can satisfy the commission as to the infeasibility of rehabilitation.

Pages 78-79 of the *Richmond Old and Historic Districts Handbook and Design Review Guidelines* offer further guidance when considering the demolition of a building within a City Old and Historic District, including the historic and architectural value of the building and the effect that demolition will have on the surrounding neighborhood. Staff finds that the buildings possess little historic architectural fabric and only the form and massing remain which has been compromised by the demolition of 1/3 of the building. Staff also finds that the 900 block of Pink Street has lost all connection to the larger historic district through the loss of historic buildings over the years.

It is the assessment of staff that the application is consistent with the Standards for Demolition in Section 30-930.7(d) of the City Code, as well as with the *Richmond Old and Historic Districts Handbook and Design Review Guidelines*, specifically the pages cited above, adopted by the Commission for review of Certificates of Appropriateness under the same section of the code.