




Staff Report
City of Richmond, Virginia

Commission of Architectural Review

8. COA-149484-2024	Final Review	Meeting Date: 7/23/2024
Applicant/Petitioner	Christopher Franz	
Project Description	Demolition of remaining two bays of a five-bay brick garage	
Project Location		
Address: 3029 Monument Avenue		
Historic District: Monument Avenue		
High-Level Details:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The primary building is a three-story, brick, multi-family dwelling.• The main building was built in 1923.• The garage is a one-story brick building, circa 1920s• The garage is located to the rear of the building, north of the alley.• Applicant has indicated that existing bricks will be repurposed to continue a brick wall along the property line, similar and attaching to the existing wall on site.		
Staff Recommendation	Approval	
Staff Contact	Alex Dandridge, alex.dandridge@rva.gov , 804-646-6569.	
Previous Reviews	The Commission Reviewed this application at the June 2024 meeting. The application was deferred to allow the applicant time to determine if there were any feasible alternatives to demolition of the building.	
Conditions for Approval	Staff recommends: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Approval of this application as submitted.	

Staff Analysis

According to Sec. 30-930.7(d) of the Historic Preservation Ordinance: 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. The commission may adopt additional demolition standards for the review of certificates of appropriateness applications to supplement these standards.

Guideline Reference	Reference Text	Analysis
Under the provisions or Sec. 32-930.7, The Commission shall approve requests for Demolition when:		
Richmond City Code, Sec. 30-930.7(d), Standards For Demolition, page 82	<p>1) There are no feasible alternatives to the proposed demolition. "Feasible alternatives" include an appropriate new use and rehabilitation, relocation of the structure to a compatible site or re-sale of the property to an individual committed to suitable rehabilitation or relocation.</p> <p>2) A building or structure is deemed not to be a contributing part of the historic character of an Old and Historic District.</p> <p>3) The Commission deems that a building or structure has deteriorated beyond the point of feasible rehabilitation.</p>	<p>The extant brick garage has two open bays which face to the west. According to a Sanborn map from 1952, the garage originally had three additional vertical bays that faced the rear alley.</p> <p>The application does not list feasible alternatives for the demolition of this garage. The engineer's report recommends the garage be demolished. The engineer noted that settlement and weathering have caused substantial cracking in the partition wall, the southeast corner, and the south wall. The Condo association agreed that the garage is currently unsafe and demolishing the building will be most cost effective.</p> <p>City Old and Historic Districts do not distinguish between contributing and non-contributing buildings. The construction date for this garage is unknown but it was potentially built in the 1920s. The Monument Avenue National Register nomination does not mention this garage.</p> <p>Since the last meeting, the applicant has further studied the supporting facts and responses to the Commission's discussion on the June 25th meeting and determined that there are no feasible alternatives to demolition given the condition of the building, its lack of historic integrity, and relevance to the needs of the owners.</p>
In addition to the above criteria, the Commission has the authority to consider other four other factors in arriving at decisions involving proposed demolitions:		
Standards for Demolition, page 82	<p>1) <i>The historic and architectural value of a building: The Secretary of The Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation define an 'historic' building or structure as being 50 years or older... Often buildings or structures built more than 50 years ago exhibit significant architectural detailing or are associated with a building style, prominent architect, or historical event sufficient to suggest that their demolition would have an adverse effect on the historic character of the district.</i></p>	<p>The Monument Avenue City Old and Historic District is significant for its urban design and wide variety of high-style architecture that represents some of the grandest buildings within the city. Most residential buildings are two and four stories in height and feature substantial ornamentation and architectural detailing particular to certain styles.</p> <p>In the allies, it is not uncommon to find small garages and larger carriage houses. While generally not as ornate as the primary building, these garages represent auxiliary structures that once served smaller vehicles and carriages, both important to the history of development of the district.</p> <p>While it is important to retain and repair these smaller auxiliary buildings to protect the character of the district, staff finds that the garage located behind 3029 Monument Avenue has lost much of its historic integrity. It stands alone amongst an asphalt parking lot, no longer attached to the row of garages that once existed for this multi-family building. Furthermore, its original doors and bay configuration have been altered. The engineer's report shows numerous issues with the building such as</p>

		<p>severely spalling and deteriorating brick, wall separation, and a failing roof structure.</p> <p>Staff finds that the existing garage has lost much of its historic integrity and needs major repairs. Staff believe that demolition of the building would not significantly impact the integrity of the district.</p> <p>The garage at 3029 Monument Avenue has been altered and does not reflect its original appearance. The garage was likely built in the 1920s, after the construction of the primary building. It has parapet walls on the north and south sides, but no other distinguishing architectural features.</p>
Standards for Demolition, page 83	<p><i>2) The effect that demolition will have on the surrounding neighborhood: Individual buildings are significant contributing elements to the immediate area in which they are located. Removal of that building may have a positive effect on the neighborhood, but quite often demolitions have the opposite effect, producing a negative and irreversible impact on the streetscape. Since the Commission is charged with the preservation of entire Districts, and not just individual buildings and structures, adherence to these criteria is appropriate and justified.</i></p>	<p>Since this building is situated to the rear and cannot be seen from the main public-right-of ways, the demolition of this building will not have a negative effect on the Monument Avenue City Old and Historic District as seen from the main street, Monument Avenue.</p>
Standards for Demolition, page 83	<p><i>3) The type and quality of the project that will replace the demolished building: When demolition requests are made in conjunction with designs for a replacement structure, the overall quality of the new design is an appropriate factor in determining the merits of demolition. The Commission may vote to approve demolition of a non-contributing building when provided detailed plans for appropriate, compatible infill construction... In most cases, a demolition permit will not be issued until the Commission has approved the design of a replacement structure</i></p>	<p>The structural engineer and Condo owners' association have determined that the garage is in poor condition. The garage will be demolished, and residents will have additional parking spaces due to the open space. While it is typically better to not demolish a historic building and have a plan for what will go in a building's place, Staff acknowledges that the building has lost integrity, as it no longer represents its original configuration, the setting surrounding it has changed and been substantially paved, and the original materials are in poor condition or have been removed. Furthermore, the garage would be more significant if still in the original grouping of garages that once served this multi-family building; however, all garages on-site but this one have been demolished.</p>
Standards for Demolition, page 83	<p><i>4) The historic preservation goals outlined in the Master Plan and Downtown Plan.</i></p>	<p>The City's Master Plan, Richmond 300: A Guide for Growth, outlines several historic preservation goals, which includes a goal to reduce the demolition of historic buildings (Objective 3.2). Demolition of the existing historic garage would not further this goal outlined in the Master Plan.</p> <p>However, the plan also acknowledges that not all buildings that have past the standards 50-year threshold are well-built or of historical value.</p>

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

Figures

Figure 1. Façade of 3029 Monument Avenue.



Figure 2. Existing Garage



Figure 3. Deteriorating brick on garage.



Figure 4. Wall separation and improper repairs.

