

**COMMISSION OF ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW
STAFF REPORT
June 23, 2015 Meeting**

9. **CAR No. 15-077** (535 W Broad LLC) **535 West Broad Street
Broad Street Old and Historic District**

Project Description: **Demolish existing gas station kiosk and canopy**

Staff Contact: **M. Pitts**

The applicant requests approval to demolish a modern gas station kiosk and canopy within the Broad Street Old and Historic District. The applicant is proposing to patch the paved surfaces and to keep the existing shrubbery and lighting. The applicant has not proposed an alternative use for the property and will surround the property with a chain link construction fence in order to keep it secured.

Staff recommends approval of the project. Under the provisions of Section 114.930.7 (d) of the Historic Preservation Ordinance, the Commission shall approve requests for demolition when there are no feasible alternatives to the proposed demolition; the building is deemed not to be a contributing part of the historic character of the Old and Historic District; or the building has deteriorated beyond the point of feasible rehabilitation. The gas station is a contemporary addition to the Old and Historic District. The Broad Street Old and Historic District was designated a district because it represents the finest and best-preserved collection of turn of the century commercial buildings in the state, and there has been minimal intrusion by modern development. Staff finds that this 20th century structure represents the intrusion of modern development at an important intersection within the District and is not a contributing part of the historic character of the Old and Historic District as it was not constructed during the period of significance for the structures in the District and is not of the architectural style of the historic structures in the district. Based on this finding, staff recommends that this structure may be demolished.

The *Richmond Old and Historic Districts Handbook and Design Review Guidelines* also state that when reviewing a proposed demolition, the Commission should consider the type and quality of the project that will replace the demolished building and that approval of a demolition request to accommodate the installation of an open parking lot with little or no screening would not be appropriate (pg. 79). At this time, the applicant has not presented a project to replace the gas station. The applicant's goal is to remove a structure which has been partially demolished to create a safe open lot. The applicant has proposed retaining the existing shrubbery to maintain a vegetative screening. Though the *Guidelines* state that chain link fences are not appropriate in any City Old and Historic District (pg. 74, #6), the applicant has stated that this fence will be temporary until the property is redeveloped. The Commission may wish to consider if it may be appropriate to require an alternative type of fencing as the

applicant is unable at this time to indicate the length of time that the fencing will be kept in place.

It is the assessment of staff that the application is consistent with the Standards for Demolition in Section 114-930.7(d) and the Standards for Site Improvements in Section 114-930.7(e) 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.