

**COMMISSION OF ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW  
STAFF REPORT  
August 26, 2014 Meeting**

2. **CAR No. 14-078** (L. and V. Heindl) **2107 Jefferson Avenue  
Church Hill North Old and Historic District**

**Project Description:** **Construct fence, planters and pergola**

**Staff Contact:** **J. Hill**

The applicant requests permission to improve an existing parking lot at a former filling station located on a prominent corner in the Church Hill North Old and Historic District. The applicant proposes constructing a pergola across the three street-facing elevations, a fence along portions of the parcel edge and enclosing a forecourt to be used as a play area, and a series of raised planters to screen the remainder of the paved area that will continue to serve as a pick-up and drop-off arrival area. The proposed planters and wooden fence replace a perimeter chain-link fence.

**Staff recommends approval of the project with a condition.** The existing parking area occupies a significant portion of this prominent corner lot. The Standards for Site Improvements outlined in the *Richmond Old and Historic Districts Handbook and Design Review Guidelines* notes that parking lots should be designed and screened in a way that minimizes the impact of the lot on surrounding buildings (pg. 67). The *Guidelines* states that fences, walls, and/or vegetation may be used to screen parking lots, and that if vegetation is chosen as the method of screening, the type and number of shrubs and trees should be selected to create a “high density screen between parking lot and street” (page 67, Item No. 1).

While the filling station building is older than fifty years, its form is not in character with the adjacent historic residences. The construction of the pergola, generally reserved for rear-yard and garden areas, serves to soften the presence of the building that is out of step with the period and area of significance of the Church Hill North Old and Historic District. As noted on page 68 of the *Guidelines*, fences in Old and Historic Districts located along main thoroughfares shall be painted or opaquely stained a color complementary to the main structure. The applicant has indicated a mid-value gray, Benjamin Moore Herbal Escape as the color for the building on the site. If the Commission directs that the pergola, planters and fence shall be painted, staff could administratively approve the colors if they are drawn from the approved palette. Additionally, the applicant should supply the staff with additional information about the style and material of the proposed fence. Staff can approve the design provided it meets the Commission’s criteria for administrative approval of fences. In all cases, height restrictions are governed by the zoning ordinance.

It is the assessment of staff that, with the conditions noted above (submission of additional information on fence design and paint color), the application is consistent with the Standards for Site Improvements outlined 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 pages 67-68 cited above, adopted by the Commission for review of Certificates of Appropriateness under the same section of the code.