

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

17. **CAR No. 16-083** (M. Jareau)

**2416 Jefferson Avenue
Union Hill Old and Historic District**

Project Description: **Demolish a single story commercial structure**

Staff Contact: **K. Chen**

The applicant requests approval to demolish a single story commercial structure in the Union Hill Old and Historic District. The parcel and much of the block will be redeveloped with a 3-story mixed use project to be presented for conceptual review, Agenda item 25, Application No. 16-082.

The building was listed as noncontributing in the inventory of the National Register Nomination for the Union Hill Historic District. This decision was based on the fact that the building had been heavily altered and no longer conveyed its original use as an auto repair building associated with a ca. 1920 service station. Two buildings fronting M Street – a repair shop and service station – and three gas pumps appear on the 1924 Sanborn Map. By 1950, the service station, to the east, had been removed and an addition made to the repair shop with two gas pumps directly in front. It was still listed as an ESSO station in the 1960 City Directories. The conversion to an office and cladding with perma-stone occurred well after the end of the 1940 period of significance for the district.

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 building contributes little to the historic or architectural value of the Union Hill Old and Historic District.

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.