



Project Name/Address: 1917-1921 University Avenue
Application Type: PUBLIC HEARING Certificate of Appropriateness for demolition in historic district
Legistar File ID # [42150](#)
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Date Prepared: March 21, 2016

Summary

Project Applicant/Contact: Dan Seeley, Steve Brown Apartments
Requested Action: The Applicant is requesting a Certificate of Appropriateness for the demolition of an existing garage in the University Heights Historic District.

Background Information

Parcel Location: The subject site is located in the University Heights Historic District.

Relevant Historic Preservation Ordinance Sections:

- 41.18 STANDARDS FOR GRANTING A CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS.** A certificate of appropriateness shall be granted only if the proposed project complies with this chapter, including all of the following standards that apply.
- (2) Demolition or Removal. In determining whether to approve a certificate of appropriateness for any demolition or removal of any landmark or structure within a historic district, the Landmarks Commission shall consider all of the following, and may give decisive weight to any or all of the following:
 - (a) Whether the structure is of such architectural or historical significance that its demolition or removal would be detrimental to the public interest and contrary to the general welfare of the people of the City and the State.
 - (b) Whether a landmark's designation has been rescinded.
 - (c) Whether the structure, although not itself a landmark structure, contributes to the distinctive architectural or historic character of the historic district as a whole and therefore should be preserved for the benefit of the people of the City and the State.
 - (d) Whether demolition or removal of the subject property would be contrary to the policy and purpose of this ordinance and/or to the objectives of the historic preservation plan for the applicable historic district as duly adopted by the Common Council.
 - (e) Whether the structure is of such old and unusual or uncommon design, method of construction, or material that it could not be reproduced or be reproduced only with great difficulty and/or expense.
 - (f) Whether retention of the structure would promote the general welfare of the people of the City and the State by encouraging study of American history, architecture and design or by developing an understanding of American culture and heritage.
 - (g) The condition of the property, provided that any deterioration of the property which is self-created or which is the result of a failure to maintain the property as required by

this chapter cannot qualify as a basis for the issuance of a certificate of appropriateness for demolition or removal.

- (h) Whether any new structure proposed to be constructed or change in use proposed to be made is compatible with the historic resources of the historic district in which the subject property is located, or if outside a historic district, compatible with the mass and scale of buildings within two hundred (200) feet of the boundary of the landmark site.
- (i) Prior to approving a certificate of appropriateness for demolition, the Landmarks Commission may require the applicant to provide documentation of the structure. Documentation shall be in the form required by the Commission.

Analysis and Conclusion

Certificate of Appropriateness for demolition of garage

A brief discussion of 41.18(2) related to the demolition of the garage follows:

- (a) The existing garage is not of any architectural or historic significance and its demolition would not be detrimental to the public interest and not contrary to the general welfare of the people of the City and the State; however, the existing garage was likely constructed at the same time as the residence.
- (b) The property is not a designated landmark and has never been a designated landmark.
- (c) The existing garage contributed to the distinctive architectural character of the historic district as a whole. Its form and design details related to the architectural character of the historic district as an accessory structure, but not in the same manner as a landmark structure as this standard infers.
- (d) The existing garage is being proposed for demolition due to its size and location. The demolition of the garage would provide space for vehicle maneuvering. The alteration of the historic site configuration for the convenience of vehicles could be contrary to the policy and purpose of this ordinance.
- (e) While the existing garage is old and likely constructed at the same time as the residence, its design and method of construction could be reproduced using standard modern materials to achieve a similar appearance from the exterior.
- (f) The retention of the garage would not promote the general welfare of the people of the City and the State by encouraging study of American history, architecture and design or by developing an understanding of American culture and heritage.
- (g) The current property owner is not claiming that demolition is being requested due to the condition of the garage structure.
- (h) A new garage structure is not proposed to be constructed in this location, and the property is not changing use. The proposed change in site configuration will remove a historic resource and alter the historic pattern of building-garage-building-garage which will make the site less consistent with the adjacent properties in the historic district.
- (i) The structure is not of architectural significance and does not warrant being documented or recorded.

Recommendation

Staff believes that the standards for granting a Certificate of Appropriateness for the demolition of the garage may be met and recommends that the Landmarks Commission approve the request as submitted.