

Docket Item #9  
BAR CASE #2004-0016

BAR Meeting  
March 3, 2004

**ISSUE:** Re-approval of demolition

**APPLICANT:** Washington Real Estate Investment Trust

**LOCATION:** 712-728 Jefferson Street and 806 South Columbus Street

**ZONE:** CRMU-L/Commercial

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STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends re-approval of the application with the condition that no Demolition Permit is approved until a construction permit for the project has been issued.

NOTE: This docket item requires a roll call vote.

DISCUSSION:

Applicant's Description of the Undertaking:

“Extension of permit to demolish buildings located at 712-728 Jefferson Street and 806 South Columbus Street (Tax Map Parcels 80.04-03-01, 02 & 03).”

Issue:

The applicant is requesting re-approval of a Permit to Demolish four buildings at the corner of Jefferson and South Columbus Streets to allow the construction of a new multi-family building.

The buildings proposed to be demolished are:

712-718 Jefferson Street

The commercial property located at 712-718 Jefferson Street is a three story gable roof form brick building that was originally constructed in 19?? in a very simple Neo-Colonial design.

728 Jefferson Street

This is a one story brick building that currently houses a hair salon.

802-804 South Columbus Street

This a one story brick building that currently has an office use.

806 South Columbus Street

This is a one story brick building and is currently occupied by a dry cleaning business in the front and a furniture warehouse in the rear.

History and Analysis:

The Board originally approved the proposed demolition of these building as part of redevelopment for a new multi-family and retail complex to be constructed at this site and over the surface parking lot. That approval was granted on May 21, 2003 (BAR Case #2003-0053). However, the validity of a Permit to Demolish is twelve months. Given the current progress on this project, it is highly unlikely that a Certificate of Appropriateness and the working drawings will be completed prior to the expiration of the twelve month period. Therefore, the applicant is applying for re-approval of the Permit to Demolish well in advance of the current expiration date so that work can begin as soon as the Board approves the project and a building permit is approved.

712-718 Jefferson Street

The building was constructed in 1959 and was originally two stories in height with a flat roof with two side entrance doors flanking a wide storefront window. In 1990, the Board approved

the addition of a third floor with a gable roof (BAR Case #90-0074, 4/18/90). The Staff report in support the third floor addition characterized the building as having “insignificant historical character.”

728 Jefferson Street

This building is contemporaneous with the adjacent buildings and dates from the late 1950s.

802-804 South Columbus Street

This one story brick building was approved by the Board on March 14, 1956.

806 South Columbus Street

This one story brick building was constructed 1958 in a utilitarian retail style as a furniture warehouse. The Board approved signs for the dry cleaning business in 1993 (BAR Case #93-0194, 11/3/93).

In considering a Permit to Demolish/Capsulate, the Board must consider the following criteria set forth in the Zoning Ordinance, §10-105(B):

- (1) Is the building or structure of such architectural or historical interest that its moving, removing, capsulating or razing would be to the detriment of the public interest?
- (2) Is the building or structure of such interest that it could be made into a historic house?
- (3) Is the building or structure of such old and unusual or uncommon design, texture and material that it could not be reproduced or be reproduced only with great difficulty?
- (4) Would retention of the building or structure help preserve the memorial character of the George Washington Memorial Parkway?
- (5) Would retention of the building or structure help preserve and protect an historic place or area of historic interest in the city?
- (6) Would retention of the building or structure promote the general welfare by maintaining and increasing real estate values, generating business, creating new positions, attracting tourists, students, writers, historians, artists and artisans, attracting new residents, encouraging study and interest in American history, stimulating interest and study in architecture and design, educating citizens in American culture and heritage, and making the city a more attractive and desirable place in which to live?

In the opinion of Staff, because these are all late 20<sup>th</sup> century utilitarian structures none of the criteria are met and re-approval of the Permit to Demolish should be granted. However, Staff is recommending the same condition as attached to the approval of the previous Permit to Demolish: that the demolition permit not be issued until the applicant has obtained a construction permit to prevent the creation of vacant land in the event the project does not move forward.

In a number of similar applications during the past several years, Staff has recommended that there be extensive recording of the buildings proposed to be demolished to create an historical record. In this instance, Staff does not see the necessity of requiring such a recording effort. These are typical and ubiquitous late 20<sup>th</sup> century building types that were constructed with

building permits and working drawings which can be used as historical information in the future, if necessary.