



Project Name & Address: 2222 E Washington Avenue
Application Type(s): Certificate of Appropriateness for alterations
Legistar File ID # [82210](#)
Prepared By: Heather Bailey, Preservation Planner, Planning Division
Date Prepared: March 12, 2024

Summary

Project Applicant/Contact: Mary Beth Growney Selene, Ryan Signs, Inc.
Requested Action: The Applicant is requesting that the Landmarks Commission approve a Certificate of Appropriateness for new signage.

Background Information

Parcel Location/Information: The subject property is a designated landmark, East High School.

Relevant 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.

- (1) New Construction or Exterior Alteration. The Landmarks Commission shall approve a certificate of appropriateness for exterior alteration or construction only if:
 - (a) In the case of exterior alteration to a designated landmark, the proposed work would meet the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation.
 - (b) In the case of exterior alteration or construction of a structure on a landmark site, the proposed work would meet the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation.
 - (c) In the case of exterior alteration or construction on any property located in a historic district, the proposed exterior alteration or construction meets the adopted standards and guidelines for that district.
 - (d) In the case of any exterior alteration or construction for which a certificate of appropriateness is required, the proposed work will not frustrate the public interest expressed in this ordinance for protecting, promoting, conserving, and using the City's historic resources.
- (3) Signs. The Commission shall approve a certificate of appropriateness for signs if it finds that the following are true:
 - (a) Signs are located within the façade areas set aside for signs as part of the façade design or are integrated and compatible with the structure where the façade areas have not been set aside for signs;
 - (b) New signs shall be consistent with the traditional signage pattern locations on a structure or a property, and shall feature materials and style of illumination typical of the period of significance for the property or district;
 - (c) Signs shall comply with Chapter 31, MGO;
 - (d) Signs shall comply with specific standards and guidelines adopted for historic districts under this ordinance.

Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation

1. A property will be used as it was historically or be given a new use that requires minimal change to its distinctive materials, features, spaces and spatial relationships.
2. The historic character of a property will be retained and preserved. The removal of distinctive materials or alteration of features, spaces and spatial relationships that characterize a property will be avoided.
3. Each property will be recognized as a physical record of its time, place and use. Changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding conjectural features or elements from other historic properties, will not be undertaken.
4. Changes to a property that have acquired historic significance in their own right will be retained and preserved.
5. Distinctive materials, features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property will be preserved.
6. Deteriorated historic features will be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature will match the old in design, color, texture and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features will be substantiated by documentary and physical evidence.
7. Chemical or physical treatments, if appropriate, will be undertaken using the gentlest means possible. Treatments that cause damage to historic materials will not be used.
8. Archeological resources will be protected and preserved in place. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures will be undertaken.
9. New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction will not destroy historic materials, features, and spatial relationships that characterize the property. The new work will be differentiated from the old and will be compatible with the historic materials, features, size, scale and proportion, and massing to protect the integrity of the property and its environment.
10. New additions and adjacent or related new construction will be undertaken in such a manner that, if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.

Analysis and Conclusion

The proposed project is to complete a change of copy for the existing monument sign at the front of the property, installation of new wall signage on the recently completed addition, approval of existing signage on the back of the building that was installed without approvals, and installation of new signage above the athletics center. The subject property, East High School, is a designated landmark. Constructed in 1922 and designed by noted architect, Frank Riley, the masonry building is in the Collegiate Gothic style with Islamic Revival influences.

This project is also going to be reviewed by the Urban Design Commission because it will need variances to the sign code for the number of signs on the property, so the narrative in the letter of intent is largely focused on the UDC standards. For the Landmarks Commission's review, they are tasked with reviewing the change of copy for the monument sign, the installation of new signage on the recent addition and the athletics center, and approval of existing wall signage on the rear of the building that was installed without permits or approvals.

For the monument sign, the proposal is to change the two sign faces within the masonry base from manual changeable signage on both sides to an electronic message center. There is precedent for this transition of style of message signage with the new electronic messaging center monument sign that the Landmarks Commission approved at the Madison Masonic Center in 2021. The proposed change of copy of this monument sign will still be in keeping with the architectural character of the landmark property.

The new wall signage on the recently completed addition is largely similar to the conceptual signage that the Commission saw when they approved the plans for new construction in 2021. This entrance that fronts onto N 4th St will serve as the new accessible primary entrance to the building. The wall signage is meant to guide users to this entrance. The proposal is for individual aluminum letter that will be attached to the building at the masonry joints with stainless steel fasteners.

On the back of the building, signage was previously installed on the 1960s athletics wing. This signage has been in place for over a decade and says "Milton L. McPike Field House." It is installed on the upper masonry band on that façade and does not impact the architectural character of the building. Also on the back of the building is the newly constructed entrance to the athletics center and the proposal is to install individual letters above the entrance. This signage uses a font that is in keeping with the athletics theme of this entrance and sets it apart from the simple signage of the other areas of the building, but also emphasizes the use and purpose of this entrance. The Landmarks Commission does not review vinyl window signage as that is considered temporary and removable.

A discussion of the relevant ordinance sections follows:

41.18 STANDARDS FOR GRANTING A CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS

- (3) Signs. The Commission shall approve a certificate of appropriateness for signs if it finds that the following are true:
- (a) All of the proposed signage is located within the areas set aside for signs and are integrated and compatible with the structure.
 - (b) The proposed new signage is consistent with the traditional signage pattern location on the structure. The dark background proposed for the message board on the monument sign will allow this style of illuminated sign to not be out of character with the landmarked property and speaks to its ongoing educational use.
 - (c) Signs shall comply with Chapter 31, MGO;
 - (d) N/A.

Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation

1. There is no proposed changes of use and the new signage will involve minimal changes to its distinctive materials, features, spaces and spatial relationships.
2. No distinctive features or materials are proposed to be removed or altered.
3. None of the proposed changed will introduce conjectural details or create a false sense of history.
4. N/A.
5. N/A.
6. N/A.
7. N/A.
8. N/A.
9. The new wall signage is largely on new additions and the change of copy is within an existing monument sign, and all of the new signage is in places that do not destroy historic materials or features. It is differentiate from the old, but compatible with the overall character and use of the property.
10. The new signage can be removed in the future, so that the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.

Recommendation

Staff believes that the standards for granting a Certificate of Appropriateness are met and recommends the Landmarks Commission approve the project with the following conditions:

1. The new aluminum signage for the accessible entrance be installed in the masonry joints with stainless steel fasteners.