



Project Name & Address: 916-918 Williamson Street

Application Type(s): Certificate of Appropriateness for an alteration to a structure in a historic district

Legistar File ID # [83622](#)

Prepared By: Heather Bailey, Preservation Planner, Planning Division

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Summary

Project Applicant/Contact: Emily & Andrew Hutchison, Madison Sourdough

Requested Action: The Applicant is requesting that the Landmarks Commission approve a Certificate of Appropriateness for an alteration to a structure in the Third Lake Ridge Historic District

Background Information

Parcel Location/Information: The subject property is in the Third Lake Ridge historic district.

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.

41.25 STANDARDS FOR ALTERATIONS.

- (1) General
 - (a) Alterations are defined as any change to any portion of the exterior of a building or site that replaces existing materials or changes its appearance. This section provides standards for building alterations.
 - (b) Materials and Features
 - 1. Alterations shall be in keeping with the original design and character of the building.
 - 3. The introduction of conjectural architectural features without historic precedent on the building is prohibited.
- (6) Entrances, Porches, Balconies and Decks
 - (b) Porch Elements
 - 1. Where physical evidence of the overall historic form and detailing are not evident, porch elements shall be of a simple design found on similar historic resources within the district.

Analysis and Conclusion

The applicant would like to install new wall signage and replace the existing fabric awnings with metal architectural canopies. The existing one-story commercial structure was constructed in 1948. We do not have historic photos of this building that show what it looked like originally. The applicant compiled research on similar structures from a similar time period to make a case that while the style of architectural canopy and signage is not typical of historic resources in the district (Third Lake Ridge's period of significance is 1850-1929), what they are proposing does have precedent on their style of building.

The proposed architectural canopies are of a simple design, but do have illumination under them more in line with a marquee found on a theater. However, the proposed lighting is less visually intrusive than wall-mounted exterior lighting and is of a simple and not overly decorative design. The proposed signage will replicate the appearance of vintage neon signs as documented across the city from the approximate time period of this building. In the absence of documentation of what used to be on this building, the proposed rehabilitation has built a case that these alterations are not introducing out of character architectural features and are drawing on a simple interpretation of precedents set on similar structures both in the district and elsewhere in the city.

A discussion of relevant standards 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) This simple building form does not have a dedicated wall-signage band like older structures, but the proposed location for the signage is integrated into the façade design and compatible with the structure;
 - (b) The new sign appears to be consistent with the traditional signage pattern locations on this type of structure and feature materials and style of illumination typical of the period of significance for this property and structures of similar vintage in the 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.

41.25 STANDARDS FOR ALTERATIONS.

- (1) General
 - (a) Alterations are defined as any change to any portion of the exterior of a building or site that replaces existing materials or changes its appearance. This section provides standards for building alterations.
 - (b) Materials and Features
 - 1. The proposed alterations appear to be in keeping with the original design and character of the building.
 - 3. While the proposed style of signage and architectural canopies on this building do not have documentation of having been previously on this structure, the simple style of both of the architectural canopy and the signage meet the specific standards for those elements so as not to introduce conjectural architectural features that would change the character of this structure.
- (6) Entrances, Porches, Balconies and Decks
 - (b) Porch Elements
 - 1. There is no photographic evidence of what was historically on this building. The proposal draws upon architectural references of similar structures with a simple interpretation of the architectural canopy.

Recommendation

Staff believes that the standards for granting a Certificate of Appropriateness are met and recommends that the Landmarks Commission approve the project as proposed.