

PLANNING DIVISION STAFF REPORT

November 11, 2024

PREPARED FOR THE LANDMARKS COMMISSION



Project Name & Address: 825 Williamson Street

Application Type(s): Certificate of Appropriateness for new signage

Legistar File ID # [85952](#)

Prepared By: Heather Bailey, Preservation Planner, Planning Division

Date Prepared: November 6, 2024

Summary

Project Applicant/Contact: Chris Proost, La Crosse Sign Group

Requested Action: The Applicant is requesting that the Landmarks Commission approve a Certificate of Appropriateness for the installation of new signage.

Background Information

Parcel Location/Information: The subject property is located within the Third Lake Ridge local 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.

Analysis and Conclusion

The proposed project is to install a new monument sign in the front yard of the subject property. The two-story front-gabled vernacular house on the property was constructed in 1911. This residential form building has been converted to commercial use. The new sign is where we expect to see commercial signage on a historic property and the monument sign is using a similar architectural vocabulary as the building. The integrated lighting will allow for the face of the sign to be illuminated without the appearance of the lighting fixture. The Landmarks Commission previously approved this style of integrated lighting in 2021 for the new signage at Luther Memorial Church (1021 University Ave).

A discussion of relevant standards follows:

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- (3) Signs. The Commission shall approve a certificate of appropriateness for signs if it finds that the following are true:
 - (a) N/A as the application is for a monument sign, not a wall sign
 - (b) The monument sign in the front of the property is where this type of signage is typically found and the proposed style of illumination will not have a visible light fixture, allowing for nightlight illumination of the sign without the intrusion of a contemporary light fixture.
 - (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 sign uses a similar architectural vocabulary to the historic resource on the property

Recommendation

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