

PLANNING DIVISION STAFF REPORT

September 15, 2025

PREPARED FOR THE LANDMARKS COMMISSION



Project Name & Address: 9 E Wilson Street (District 4)
Application Type(s): Certificate of Approval for new signage
Legistar File ID # [89900](#)
Prepared By: Heather Bailey, Preservation Planner, Planning Division
Date Prepared: September 12, 2025

Summary

Project Applicant/Contact: Stephen Franklin, Able Sign
Requested Action: The Applicant is requesting that the Landmarks Commission approve a Certificate of Approval for removal of existing signage and installation of new signage

Background Information

Parcel Location/Information: The subject property is a designated landmark (Madison Catholic Association Clubhouse, addressed as 15 E Wilson)

Relevant Ordinance Sections:

41.18 STANDARDS FOR GRANTING A CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL.

A Certificate of Approval 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 Approval 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 Approval 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 Approval 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 remove the existing Hilton signage on the property and replace it with a new ground sign and new canopy sign. None of the existing signage is on the historic building and none of the proposed new signage will be located on the historic building. Instead the signage is located next to the historic building and on the architectural canopy for the nonhistoric Hilton hotel located behind the historic building. The modifications to the existing signage will not impact the historic character of the historic resource on this property.

A discussion of relevant standards follows:

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A Certificate of Approval shall be granted only if the proposed project complies with this chapter, including all of the following standards that apply.

- (3) Signs. The Commission shall approve a Certificate of Approval for signs if it finds that the following are true:
 - (a) Both the ground sign and the canopy sign meet Zoning requirements for areas set aside for signage.
 - (b) The new signage feature materials and style of illumination that is compatible with the adjacent historic resource, but none of it is on the historic resource itself;
 - (c) Signs shall comply with Chapter 31, MGO;

(d) N/A.

Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation

1. This part of the property will still be used for parking and this alteration will not change the distinctive materials, features, spaces, and spatial relationships of the property.
2. The historic character of the property will be retained.
3. This alteration will not create a false sense of history.
4. The existing signage has not achieved significance in its own right.
5. N/A
6. N/A
7. N/A
8. N/A
9. The new signage is compatible with the character of the site and its larger downtown setting.
10. The signage does not impact the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment.

Recommendation

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