



Project Name & Address: U.S. Post Office and Federal Courthouse/Madison Municipal Building (MMB)
215 Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard

Application Type(s): Certificate of Appropriateness for land division of landmark site
(PUBLIC HEARING)

Legistar File ID # [45681](#)

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Date Prepared: January 23, 2017

Background Information

Project Applicant/Contact: Natalie Erdman, Department of Planning and Community and Economic Development

Parcel Location/Information: The landmark site is located on Martin Luther King Jr Blvd and is bounded by E Doty, S Pinckney and E Wilson Streets. The entirety of Block 88 was designated a landmark site in 2002.

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.
- (4) Land Divisions and Combinations. The commission shall approve a certificate of appropriateness for land divisions, combinations, and subdivision plats of landmark sites and properties in historic districts, unless it finds that the proposed lot sizes adversely impact the historic character or significance of a landmark, are incompatible with adjacent lot sizes, or fail to maintain the general lot size pattern of the historic district.

Analysis and Conclusion

Previous requests related to the division of this property came before the Landmarks Commission in 2015. At that time, the Landmarks Commission was asked to refer the action on the land division recommendation based on the status of the previous development proposal. The Historic Preservation Ordinance was revised in July of 2015 and these revisions gave the Landmarks Commission the authority to approve a Certificate of Appropriateness for any land division, subdivision or combination of landmark sites or properties in historic districts.

The current proposal requests a Certificate of Appropriateness for the land division of the landmark site. The proposal would add a property line 25 feet behind the existing Municipal Building and create two lots. This land division would allow a new building to be constructed on the eastern portion. The City would construct a parking structure at the lower levels (mostly below grade) with a private developer constructing the upper levels as retail space and residential units. The Municipal Building would remain on the western portion.

The property (the entirety of Block 88) was designated a landmark site on October 15, 2002 based on the architectural significance of the Municipal Building as a civic/institutional building in the Neo-Classical Revival

style. The property is also listed on the National Register and the City is currently preparing State Historic Preservation Office compliance review documents. The local landmark nomination document describes the existing features of the site and that a parking lot and loading dock annex are located on the eastern half of the block. The nomination document does not attribute any historic significance specifically to the parking lot on the east side, although it was presumably used by mail trucks and potentially as parking for judges and other officers of the court at the time the building was constructed as the U.S. Post Office and Federal Courthouse. The east elevation of the building adjacent to the parking lot is treated as the back where materials and architectural details are simplified compared to the high style treatment of the front and side elevations.

The nomination document discusses the historic significance of the building related to its architectural style. The historic character of the building form or the building materials and treatment are not being affected by the land division. The

Staff believes the proposed lot sizes will not adversely impact the historic character or significance of the landmark because the proposed property line parallels the back (east) side of the landmark building and the gracious green setback on the front and sides will continue to provide an appropriate setting for the architectural/historic significance. In addition, the placement of the lot line at a distance of 25 feet from the back of the Municipal Building allows the architectural detail that wraps onto the east elevation at the corners to be visible given the proposed construction on the eastern lot.

Recommendation

Staff believes that the standards for granting a Certificate of Appropriateness for the land division are met and recommends that the Landmarks Commission approve the Certificate of Appropriateness.