Landmarks Commission
October 6, 2014
Agenda Item #2, Legistar #35572

The staff report addressing the proposed demolition of a residence at 1018 Williamson found:

> "... it would require significant investment to return the structure to livable standards; however, it could be accomplished. The current property owner may find that the gutted building would be desirable to someone who has the resources and determination to rehabilitate it into their residence."

The applicant's Letter of Intent states that feasibility studies in the early 1990s indicated that it was not economically feasible to renovate 1018.

Times have changed since the early 1990s. An example of this renewed economic viability is 1030 Williamson. In 1991, 1030 sold for $70,000. In 2011, it sold for $275,000. Today its assessed value is $286,000. (1030 Williamson is about half again as large as 1018 Williamson, 1,578 versus 1,106 SF.)

The value of 1030 Williamson is not an isolated incident.

- 1105 Williamson, 936 SF, sold for $210,000 in 2013.
- 1120 Williamson, 1,095 SF, sold for $165,000 in 2009 and is currently assessed at $180,200.
- 1123 Williamson, 624 SF, sold for $169,900 in 2013.

MGO 33.19(5)(c)3. provides that the Commission shall consider, and give decisive weight, to any or all of seven standards. Subparagraph f. provides:

> "Whether the building or structure is in such a deteriorated condition that it is not structurally or economically feasible to preserve or restore it, provided that any hardship or difficulty claimed by the owner which is self-created or which is the result of any failure to maintain the property in good repair cannot qualify as a basis for the issuance of a Certificate of Appropriateness;"

The fact that Landmarks issued a COA in 1993 should not determine Landmarks' decision today. Under current MGO, Landmarks' approval is a step required in order to obtain Plan Commission approval to demolish a building. Under current MGO, a demolition permit is valid for 1 year, with a possible 24 month extension. If the MGO in effect in 1993 also had an expiration date, the applicant does not have a valid demolition permit and needs to restart the process, including obtaining Landmarks approval under the current standards.

In 1993 it was not economically feasible to restore this house, but it is now. Thus, I respectfully urge the Commission to give decisive weight to MGO 33.19(5)(c)3.f. and deny the COA.

Sincerely,

Linda Lehnertz

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