



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 demolition of a part of a landmark (PUBLIC HEARING)

Certificate of Appropriateness for exterior alteration of a landmark and landmark site

Advisory recommendation for land division of a landmark site

Legistar File ID # [39466](#)

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Date Prepared: August 6, 2015

Project Applicant/Contact: Bryan Cooper, City Engineering

Background Information

Parcel Location/Information: The entirety of Block 88 was designated a landmark site on October 15, 2002.

Relevant Ordinance Sections:

The revision of the Landmarks Commission Ordinance (Chapter 33.19) and the creation of the Historic Preservation Ordinance (Chapter 41) were adopted by Common Council on July 22, 2015. The application was filed on July 27, 2015 and the new ordinance was officially published on July 30, 2015. Due to the effective dates, this application is being reviewed using the unrevised ordinance (chapter 33.19).

33.19(5)(c)3. Standards. (for Demolition)

In determining whether to issue a Certificate of Appropriateness for any demolition, the Landmarks Commission shall consider and may give decisive weight to any or all of the following:

- a. Whether the building or structure is of such architectural or historic significance that its demolition would be detrimental to the public interest and contrary to the general welfare of the people of the City and the State;
- b. Whether the building or structure, although not itself a landmark building, contributes to the distinctive architectural or historic character of the District as a whole and therefore should be preserved for the benefit of the people of the City and the State;
- c. Whether demolition of the subject property would be contrary to the purpose and intent of this chapter as set forth in Sec. 33.19 and to the objectives of the historic preservation plan for the applicable district as duly adopted by the Common Council;
- d. Whether the building or structure is of such old and unusual or uncommon design, texture and/or material that it could not be reproduced or be reproduced only with great difficulty and/or expense;
- e. Whether retention of the building or structure would promote the general welfare of the people of the City and the State by encouraging study of American history, architecture and design or by developing an understanding of American culture and heritage;
- f. 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;

- g. Whether any new structure proposed to be constructed or change in use proposed to be made is compatible with the buildings and environment of the district in which the subject property is located.

33.19(1) Purpose and Intent It is hereby declared a matter of public policy that the protection, enhancement, perpetuation and use of improvements of special character or special historical interest or value is a public necessity and is required in the interest of health, prosperity, safety and welfare of the people. The purpose of this section is to:

- (a) Effect and accomplish the protection, enhancement and perpetuation of such improvements and of districts which represent or reflect elements of the City's cultural, social, economic, political and architectural history.
- (b) Safeguard the City's historic and cultural heritage, as embodied and reflected in such landmarks and historic districts.
- (c) Stabilize and improve property values.
- (d) Foster civic pride in the beauty and noble accomplishments of the past.
- (e) Protect and enhance the City's attractions to residents, tourists and visitors, and serve as a support and stimulus to business and industry.
- (f) Strengthen the economy of the City.
- (g) Promote the use of historic districts and landmarks for the education, pleasure and welfare of the people of the City.

33.19(5)(b)4 Regulation of Construction, Reconstruction and Exterior Alteration

- a. Whether, in the case of a designated landmark or landmark site, the proposed work would detrimentally change, destroy or adversely affect any exterior architectural feature of the improvement upon which said work is to be done; and

33.19(5)(i)1. Review proposed land divisions and subdivision plats of landmark sites and properties in Historic Districts to determine whether the proposed lot sizes negatively impact the historic character of significance of a landmark or landmark site and whether the proposed lot sizes are compatible with adjacent lot sizes and maintain the general lot size pattern of the Historic District. The Landmarks Commission review shall be advisory to the Plan Commission.

Analysis and Conclusion

The property was designated a landmark based on its architectural significance as a civic/institutional building in the Neo-Classical Revival style.

The requested Certificates of Appropriateness are as follows:

- Certificate of Appropriateness for demolition of a part of a landmark
- Certificate of Appropriateness for exterior alteration of a landmark and landmark site
- Advisory recommendation for land division of a landmark site

Certificate of Appropriateness for Demolition

A brief discussion of the demolition standards 33.19(5)(c)3 follows:

- a. The annex addition does not provide any architectural or historic significance and its demolition would not be detrimental to the public interest and contrary to the general welfare of the people of the City and the State.
- b. Not applicable
- c. Not applicable

- d. The annex addition is not of such old and unusual or uncommon design, method of construction, or material that it could not be reproduced or be reproduced only with great difficulty and/or expense. The existing building does not meet the intent of this standard.
- e. The annex addition does not provide any architectural or historic significance and its demolition would not promote the general welfare of the people of the City and the State by encouraging study of American history, architecture and design or by developing an understanding of American culture and heritage.
- f. The Applicant is not claiming poor condition as the reason for demolition.
- g. The landmark is not located in a historic district. Not applicable.

Certificate of Appropriateness for exterior alteration

A brief discussion of section 33.19(5)(b)4 follows:

- a. The exterior alteration of the landmark includes the demolition of the majority of the annex addition; the repair and temporary infill of the exterior envelope where necessary; and the resulting installation of a temporary egress structure. The annex does not contribute to the architectural significance of the landmark. The removal of the annex will allow original window openings to be restored. The construction of the temporary egress structure will not detrimentally change, destroy or adversely affect the exterior of the building.

Advisory recommendation for land division

A brief discussion of section 33.19(5)(i)1 follows:

The U.S. Post Office and Federal Courthouse building was originally constructed on the western portion of the block with a small annex and parking and loading functions on the eastern portion. These functions are not described in the landmark nomination as features related to the building's architectural significance.

The proposed land division would allow the City to convey the eastern portion of the block for development. The property line would be placed 12'-3" from the rear of the MMB which will allow the formal façade treatments of the rear elevation to remain visible. The proposed lot size will not adversely impact the architectural significance of the Neo-Classical Revival style building.

Recommendation

Certificate of Appropriateness for demolition

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

Certificate of Appropriateness for exterior alteration

Staff believes that the standards for granting a Certificate of Appropriateness for the exterior alterations are met and recommends that the Landmarks Commission approve the Certificate of Appropriateness with the following conditions of approval:

1. The applicant shall work with the Preservation Planner on the review and approval of the designs of the temporary egress structure with the understanding that the Preservation Planner has the discretion to send the designs to the Commission for review and approval if necessary.
2. The applicant shall work with the Preservation Planner on the review and approval of the designs of the temporary infill of the exterior envelope where necessary with the understanding that the Preservation Planner has the discretion to send the designs to the Commission for review and approval if necessary.

Certificate of Appropriateness for land division

Staff believes the proposed lot size will not negatively impact the historic character or significance of the landmark or landmark site and recommends that the Landmarks Commission provide the Plan Commission with this advisory recommendation.