



Project Name/Address: 929 Williamson
Application Type: PUBLIC HEARING
Demolition in the Third Lake Ridge Historic District
Legistar File ID # [47356](#)
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Summary

Project Applicant/Contact: Caden Howell
Requested Action: The Applicant is requesting a Certificate of Appropriateness for the demolition of the existing structure in the Third Lake Ridge Historic District.

Background Information

Parcel Location: The subject site is located on Williamson Street in the Third Lake Ridge Historic District

Relevant Landmarks 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.
- (2) Demolition or Removal. In determining whether to approve a certificate of appropriateness for any demolition or removal of any landmark or structure within a historic district, the Landmarks Commission shall consider all of the following, and may give decisive weight to any or all of the following:
 - (a) Whether the structure is of such architectural or historic significance that its demolition or removal would be detrimental to the public interest and contrary to the general welfare of the people of the City and the State.
 - (b) Whether a landmark’s designation has been rescinded.
 - (c) Whether the structure, although not itself a landmark structure, contributes to the distinctive architectural or historic character of the historic district as a whole and therefore should be preserved for the benefit of the people of the City and the State.
 - (d) Whether demolition or removal of the subject property would be contrary to the policy and purpose of this ordinance and/or to the objectives of the historic preservation plan for the applicable historic district as duly adopted by the Common Council.
 - (e) Whether the structure is 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.
 - (f) Whether retention of the 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.
 - (g) The condition of the property, provided that any deterioration of the property which is self-created or which is the result of a failure to maintain the property as required by

this chapter cannot qualify as a basis for the issuance of a certificate of appropriateness for demolition or removal.

- (h) Whether any new structure proposed to be constructed or change in use proposed to be made is compatible with the historic resources of the historic district in which the subject property is located, or if outside a historic district, compatible with the mass and scale of buildings within two hundred (200) feet of the boundary of the landmark site.

Analysis and Conclusion

The property was purchased by Caden Howell in 2016 from the receivership company overseeing the liquidation of Ray Peterson's properties. There are numerous code violations on the property and the building was posted with a "No Occupancy" notice by Building Inspection in 2015. Ms Howell is requesting a Certificate of Appropriateness for the demolition of the existing structure instead of making repairs to the existing structure because it is in poor condition and because it is a hazard to the neighborhood.

A discussion of the demolition standards of 41.18(2) follows:

- (a) The existing structure is not of such architectural or historic significance that it meets the standards for landmark designation as the language of this standard suggests. Instead, with other vernacular structures in the district, this structure represents vernacular working class housing along Williamson Street that establishes the historic character and significance of the historic district.
- (b) N/A This property is not a landmark.
- (c) This vernacular building form contributes to the distinctive architectural and historic character of the historic district; however, the integrity of this specific structure affects its ability to contribute to the historic character of the historic district.
- (d) The Landmarks Commission is charged with protecting and enhancing the perpetuation of historic districts and the City's cultural heritage. The demolition of any period appropriate structure would be contrary to the purpose and intent of this Ordinance and the objectives of the preservation plan for the district. The Third Lake Ridge Historic District Plan states, "The Third Lake Ridge is a study in diversity, an agglomeration of many themes: ethnic settlement, railroad development, urbanization, civic improvement. Its architecture reflects this diversity of development and change." The integrity of the existing structure affects its ability to contribute to the historic character of the historic district.
- (e) The structure was originally constructed in 1879. The existing structure is in very poor condition. It is unknown if the existing building conveys a traditional method of construction as this standard suggests. It is also unclear if the existing structure retains original fabric from its original construction or if the structure had been modified over time. The structure could be reproduced using standard construction materials.
- (f) The building does not meet the intent of this standard. However, the general welfare of the public is promoted by the retention of the City's cultural resources and historic identity.
- (g) The existing building is in very poor condition. Ms Howell purchased the property in poor condition so the condition is not self-created or the result of her failure to maintain the property. The poor condition is the result of failure to maintain the property over time by previous owner(s).
- (h) A replacement structure is not being proposed at this time. The narrow lot will be an empty lot/green space that would create a condition that is similar to the wider side yards at 923 and 933 Williamson. Any new development on this site will require Landmarks Commission review. The Landmarks Commission shall discuss this change in use and if it is compatible with the historic resources of the historic district.

Recommendation

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