

PLANNING DIVISION STAFF REPORT

March 11, 2019

PREPARED FOR THE LANDMARKS COMMISSION



Project Name & Address: 917 East Mifflin Street

Application Type(s): Certificate of Appropriateness for exterior alterations on a landmark site

Legistar File ID # [54762](#)

Prepared By: Heather Bailey, Preservation Planner, Planning Division

Date Prepared: March 7, 2019

Summary

Project Applicant/Contact: Vern Stenman – Big Top Events

Requested Action: The Applicant is requesting that the Landmarks Commission approve a Certificate of Appropriateness for construction of removable structures on a landmark site (Breese Stevens Field) located at 917 E Mifflin Street. New concrete pads will be installed to accommodate the seating.

Background Information

Parcel Location/Information: The landmark site is located at 917 East Mifflin Street.

Relevant State Statute Section:

Wisc SS 62.23(7)(em)2m. In the repair or replacement of a property that is designated as a historic landmark or included within a historic district or neighborhood conservation district under this paragraph, a city shall allow an owner to use materials that are similar in design, color, scale, architectural appearance, and other visual qualities.

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.
- (1) New construction or exterior alteration. The Landmarks Commission shall approve a certificate of appropriateness 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 appropriateness 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.

Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation

1. A property shall be used for its historic purpose or be placed in a new use that requires minimal change to the defining characteristics of the building and its site and environment.
2. The historic character of a property shall be retained and preserved. The removal of historic materials or alteration of features and spaces that characterize a property shall be avoided.
3. Each property shall 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 architectural elements from other buildings, shall not be undertaken.
4. Most properties change over time; those changes that have acquired historic significance in their own right shall be retained and preserved.
5. Distinctive features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a historic property shall be preserved.
6. Deteriorated historic features shall be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature shall match the old in design, color, texture, and other visual qualities and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features shall be substantiated by documentary, physical, or pictorial evidence.
7. Chemical or physical treatments, such as sandblasting, that cause damage to historic materials shall not be used. The surface cleaning of structures, if appropriate, shall be undertaken using the gentlest means possible.
8. Significant archeological resources affected by a project shall be protected and preserved. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures shall be undertaken.
9. New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction shall not destroy historic materials that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible with the massing, size, scale, and architectural features to protect the historic integrity of the property and its environment.
10. New additions and adjacent or related new construction shall 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 applicant is requesting a Certificate of Appropriateness to construct two 15' x 15' removable aluminum frame structures. The narrative specifies two structures, but the conceptual renderings portray two rows of multiple structures and a total of 11 structures. The structures will be placed on concrete pads on the south side of the field. The tent walls will have glass on three sides and a white vinyl covering on the roof and rear wall. The cube-shaped structures have a shed-style roof.

Breese Stevens Field was designated as a landmark for its character as a historic stadium. The character defining features, per the nomination, are the stone perimeter wall and the grandstand. The nomination also speaks to the open nature of the stadium and how this is portrayed in the roofing style of the grand stands.

41.18(a)

Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation

1. The proposed alteration to the property will not change the use of the field but the proposal is to alter the site in order to better accommodate the current sporting use.
2. The applicant is not proposing to remove any historic materials. The new structures are stepped back from the historic stone wall and will be sited upon concrete pads. The structures will also be located away from the grandstands.

3. N/A
4. N/A
5. N/A
6. N/A
7. N/A
8. N/A
9. The new structures will not destroy any historic materials. And the design is differentiated from the historic structures on the property, but, their aluminum frames, glass walls, and white vinyl roof are out of character with the historic materials of the property. They are therefore not compatible with the “massing, size, scale, and architectural features” of the property.
10. These structures are designed to be removable, so they meet this standard.

Recommendation

Staff believes that standards for granting a Certificate of Appropriateness (CoA) for removable structures at Breese Stevens Field have not been met and recommends that the Landmarks Commission deny the application. While the structures are removable, they are out of character with the landmark property. The previous alterations approved by the Landmarks Commission were either not visible from the street or unobtrusive. The nomination highlights the open nature of the grandstands and the distinctive materials. The tent structures are substantial (both individually and if there will be a total of 11) and will be highly visible from E Washington.