


COUNCIL COMMUNICATION

	Number:	22-161	Meeting:	April 4, 2022
	Agenda Item:	41	Roll Call:	[]
	Submitted by:	Erin Olson-Douglas, Development Services Department Director		

AGENDA HEADING:

Consideration of a request from Rueter Farms Inc. to demolish the Independent Order of Odd Fellows (IOOF) Hall 576 (a/k/a, Fairground Hardware) building located at 2951 East Walnut Street pursuant to Section 58-70 of the Historic Preservation Ordinance.

SYNOPSIS:

The applicant is proposing to demolish the IOOF Hall 576 (a/k/a, Fairground Hardware) building. This building meets the criteria for landmark designation set forth in Section 58-58 of the Historic Preservation Ordinance. Section 58-70 of the code requires the City Council to determine if the proposed demolition of a landmark eligible property should be referred to the Landmark Review Board (LRB) for future study. Staff recommends that the City Council not refer the item to the LRB due to the condition of the building.

FISCAL IMPACT: NONE

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

- This 2-story commercial building was constructed circa 1896 by the IOOF, who occupied the building until 1998. The main floor of the building has been occupied by a variety of business tenants. The last tenant was the Fairground Hardware store, which operated from 1943 to 2018. The building consists of masonry loadbearing wall construction and elements of the original storefront appear to remain. Additional tenants that have occupied the building included: the A.R. Corning's Cash Grocery and Feed Store, Fairground Grocery, Hawkeye Bakery and Lunch, Curtis Pharmacy, and The American Federation of Hosiery Workers. Newspaper clippings suggest that the basement was used as a locker room for semi-professional football teams who played games at the fairgrounds in the 1920's and 1930's.
- City staff believes that the building meets several of the City Landmark designation criterion as listed below.
Sec. 58-58 Designation Criteria
(a) For purpose of this article, a landmark or landmark site designation may be placed on any site, natural or improved, including any building, improvement or structure located thereon that possesses integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association and that:
(1) Is significant in American history, architecture, archaeology and culture;

- (2) *Is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history;*
- (3) *Is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past;*
- (4) *Embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; or*
- (5) *Has yielded or may be likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.*

- The City Council is charged with determining if the request should be referred to the LRB for further study or if no additional evaluation is necessary. The LRB is made up of the members of the Historic Preservation Commission and the Urban Design Review Board. Section 58-70(d) of the City Codes states that “the City Council will consider oral and written comments from all interested parties and determine whether or not to refer the application for proposed demolition or related plumbing work to the LRB for further study and review.”
- If the application is not referred to the LRB, the owner will be required to document and photograph the exterior and interior of the building and provide the City with a copy in coordination with Development Services Department staff. The owner is also required to salvage for re-use as many fixtures and as much material as possible from the building. Provided that the owner has conducted the documentation and salvage processes to the satisfaction of the Development Services Director, then issuance of a demolition permit in accordance with Section 26-303 and related plumbing permit in accordance with the Plumbing Code shall be authorized.
- If the application is referred to the LRB, the board shall hold a meeting and work with the owner to determine, within 90 days, whether any alternatives to demolition are feasible. Such alternatives to be considered may include, but are not limited to, the following:
 - 1) The building or structure can be considered for landmark designation.
 - 2) Rehabilitation of the building or structure with the assistance of federal or state tax incentives or other private financial assistance.
 - 3) Adapting the building or structure to a viable new use.
 - 4) Finding a new owner who is interested in purchasing, preserving and rehabilitating the building or structure.
 - 5) Incorporating the building or structure into the owner’s plans for redevelopment of the site.
 - 6) Assisting the owner in finding an alternative site for its proposed redevelopment.
 - 7) Moving the building or structure to an alternative site.
- If the Board and the owner do not reach an agreement on a feasible alternative to demolition, the owner will be required to document and photograph the exterior and interior of the building and provide the City with a copy in coordination with Development Services Department staff. The owner is also required to salvage for re-use as many fixtures and as much material as possible from the building. Provided that the owner has conducted the documentation and salvage processes to the satisfaction of the Development Services Director, then issuance of a demolition permit in accordance with Section 26-303 and related plumbing permit in accordance with the Plumbing Code shall be authorized.

- Staff recommends that the City Council not refer the item to the LRB due to the condition of the building, which makes it an unlikely candidate for renovation. A portion of the east wall collapsed in 2018. The previous owner reconstructed the collapsed portion of the wall. During this process, the structural engineer hired by the previous owner (Tometich Engineering) noted to City staff that the building would need additional repairs soon as no maintenance to the structural brickwork has been conducted over the years. The engineer noted that the west brick wall was in a similar condition to the east wall and would need to be addressed soon. In 2021, staff received calls from concerned neighbors that had noticed changes in the west wall of the building. Staff visited the site and observed a bulge in the wall. Additionally, the front wall of the building has developed more significant cracks at the top of the wall and is becoming an additional concern. The building either needs to be demolished or shoring of the building needs to take place.
- Staff has received comments expressing desire to save the building. Staff knows the costs to restore the building are substantial based upon past emergency repairs. No formal plans with financial backing have been presented to date.

PREVIOUS COUNCIL ACTION(S):

Date: March 7, 2022

Roll Call Number: [22-0350](#)

Action: Abatement of public nuisances as follows:

(C) [2951](#) E. Walnut Street. Moved by Gatto to adopt. Second by Boesen. Motion Carried 7-0.

BOARD/COMMISSION ACTION(S): NONE**ANTICIPATED ACTIONS AND FUTURE COMMITMENTS: NONE**

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