


COUNCIL COMMUNICATION

	Number:	24-022	Meeting:	January 22, 2024
	Agenda Item:	50	Roll Call:	24-0145
	Submitted by:	Cody Christensen, Development Services Director		

AGENDA HEADING:

Consideration of a request from MT Home Services LLC, represented by Ashley Martinez, to demolish the structure at 1410 19th Street pursuant to Section 58-70 of the Historic Preservation Ordinance.

SYNOPSIS:

The applicant is proposing to demolish the Edward B. & Nettie E. Evans House, located at 1410 19th Street. This building meets the criteria for landmark designation set forth in Section 58-58 of the Historic Preservation Ordinance. Since the building meets the criteria for landmark designation, Section 58-70 of the ordinance requires the City Council to determine if the proposed demolition should be referred to the City's Landmark Review Board (LRB) for further study.

FISCAL IMPACT: NONE

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

- The Edward B. & Nettie E. Evans House is a two (2) and a half (1/2) story frame, Cross Gabled Free Classic Victorian. The house features a full-width front gable and a prominent front porch that was constructed circa 1900. The subject building has been listed on the National Register of Historic Places since 2002. According to the National Register of Historic Places nomination, the house holds local historic significance as it was built for the Edward Baker Evans family. Edward Baker Evans was a native Iowan who served as the first Secretary of the Drake College of Law, and eventually became the second Dean of Drake College from 1907 to 1918. Evans also served as the Registrar of the Government Land Office in Iowa; a position appointed to him by then President Grover Cleveland. The National Register of Historic Places nomination notes the building "is one of the best surviving examples of a Free Classic Queen Anne type residence in the City of Des Moines." The nomination also notes that the home is a transitional architectural type and points out that, "like so many of these houses, the Evans residence features [an] asymmetrical form, complex roof treatment, full width and recessed porches, and contrasting shingle patterning that are considered hallmarks of the Queen Anne style." The transition, subsequently, is into a Classical Revival architectural type, as the application notes that "the classically derived window and door trim, grouped classical porch columns, and especially the Palladian attic window on the front façade exhibit a strong Classical Revival influence."

- City Staff finds 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.
- Since its admittance on the National Register, the previous owner had been consistently working on the home with minimal progress, and eventually ceased work entirely. As a result, many of the architecturally significant features, as noted in the National Register Nomination, have been removed from the site. Additionally, in 2018, the site was declared a Public Nuisance, and a judge issued a demolition order in September 2023. In October of 2023, the owner appealed the order, and sold the property to the current owner. The new owner, after a review of their own, determined that demolition of the structure was the appropriate action, and sought, on their own accord, to remove the structure.

PREVIOUS COUNCIL ACTION(S): NONE

BOARD/COMMISSION ACTION(S): NONE

ANTICIPATED ACTIONS AND FUTURE COMMITMENTS: NONE

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