



YELLOWSTONE HISTORIC PRESERVATION BOARD

Tuesday, May 18, 2021

SUBJECT: Certificate of Appropriateness
Hogue-Robinson and Co. – 2910 Minnesota Avenue

REQUEST

A request to demolish the building and redevelop the space for additional parking for Community Leadership & Development Inc. (CLDI) main office. The subject property is located in the Billings Old Town Historic District. Tax ID A00006. CLDI, owner, David Goodridge, agent.

RECOMMENDATION

The Planning Division is recommending conditional approval.

DISCUSSION

This property includes the *Non-contributing* structure known as the Hogue-Robinson and Co. Building and is located in the 2900 block of Minnesota Avenue. The National Register nomination for this district states:

“The Hogue-Robinson and Co. Building is a two-story commercial building that sits mid-block on the south side of Minnesota Avenue. Hogue, Robinson and Co. built this retail grocery store in 1900 and it quickly became Robinson & Kirk, the same Kirk who later opened Kirk’s Grocery down the street. The building served as a grocery and then meat market with a sausage factory in the rear portion (built by 1912). For many years, the Billings City Mattress Works and Furniture operated out of this building.

The northern-most quarter of the building is two stories tall, has a wood frame and is covered in stucco on the main floor and metal siding on the second floor. The original lap siding is intact beneath the present cladding materials. The southern three-quarters of the building is one-story and built of brick and concrete block. The façade features a central entry that provides access to second floor apartments. To either side of the entry are wood frame storefronts both with central entries (one is recessed). The upper façade holds four one-over-one double-hung windows.

A 1999 renovation updated the building with new windows, doors and cladding materials. The renovation did not make structural changes to the building and original beveled lap siding, wood storefront openings, second floor window openings with original interior trim are all intact. However, due to the extensive covering of historic cladding materials, the Hogue-Robinson Building has lost integrity and is therefore a noncontributing building to the Billings Old Town

Historic District. However, if the replacement siding is removed, the building should be re-evaluated regarding eligibility as a contributing building to the Old Town Historic District.”

The applicant is proposing the following work (structure):

1. Demolition – The applicant is proposing to demolish the entire structure and construct a parking lot that will serve the CLDI main office.

HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER REVIEW

The Billings Old Town Historic District was listed to the National Register of Historic Places in 2010. The district was added to the Billings Local Register by Ordinance in 2012. As part of the Ordinance, there is a process for local review by the Yellowstone Historic Preservation Board for any exterior modification, rehabilitation or demolition. The Historic Preservation Officer refers to the Ordinance and the Secretary of Interior Standards (SOI) when preparing staff reports for the Certificate of Appropriateness (COA).

The last block on Minnesota Avenue between South 29th Street and South 30th Street illustrates locally-owned commercial development between the turn of the century to 1912. Two wood frame buildings are extant at the east end of the block and a one-story and two-story brick commercial building anchor the west end. Two noncontributing buildings built after 1950 are situated on this street.

The Old Town Historic District emerged in the 1880s as the primary downtown Billings commercial district developed by Peter and Christian Yegen. Comprised of 48 properties of which 39 are contributing, the district reflects Western Commercial architecture of the late 19th and early 20th century. The Yegen brothers have contributed much of the historic and economic history of downtown Billings commercial development as anyone during that time period.

When reviewing projects located within a historic district, the setting must be considered. Elements of the district setting include relationships of building to each other, setbacks, fences and patterns, views, sidewalks, vehicle access and landscaping.

It is the goal of the Ordinance to identify, preserve and retain building and landscape features in the historic district and setting. The SOI Standards for historic districts/settings recommend:

- Treatment of historic elements and resources - protect, maintain and repair contributing features.

The SOI Standards do not recommend:

- Stripping or removing elements or features;
- Removing historic buildings that are important in defining the historic character of the district or setting;
- Placing parking facilities directly adjacent to historic buildings.

In addition to the SOI Standards, the Billings City Council adopted the Minnesota Avenue Master Plan in July of 2009. This plan was initiated by the property owners, City of Billings and Downtown Billings Alliance. The plan focused on the areas building scale and mass, building importance to the context of the neighborhood, streetscape, landscaping, parking, entryway identification, land use and other land use elements. The plan identifies issues and recommendations for Minnesota Avenue and the surrounding neighborhood. Recommendation included:

- Preservation, stabilization and restoration of buildings;
- Adaptive reuse of buildings;
- Enhance the district with sensitive façade restoration;
- Public greenspace and open-space;
- Parking accommodated through existing public lots, on-street (encourage change of parking to diagonal), integrate parking into buildings and behind storefronts,

The applicant, CLDI states that it is the intent to use the space in a way to serve more South Side residents. The building is in a state of disrepair and noncontributing to the district. Attached in the attachments is a letter from Krivonen Structural Engineers that outlines the deficiencies of the building. If demolition approval is given, CLDI intends to construct a parking lot that will provide 24 additional spaces for CLDI/KMC, tenants, and the Gathering Place (an event venue located in the CLDI offices).

After review of the COA application, the Historic Preservation Officer notes the following:

- This south section of Minnesota Avenue contains 6 structures, 3 contributing and 3 noncontributing. The subject structure is noncontributing to the district and lies in between a contributing and noncontributing building;
- A 1999 renovation updated the building with new windows, doors and cladding materials. The renovation did not make structural changes to the building and original beveled lap siding, wood storefront openings, second floor window openings with original interior trim are all intact. However, due to the extensive covering of historic cladding materials, the Hogue-Robinson Building has lost integrity and is therefore a noncontributing building to the Billings Old Town Historic District. However, if the replacement siding is removed, the building should be re-evaluated regarding eligibility as a contributing building to the Old Town Historic District.
- The parking facilities are not required by the Zoning Code and although it is understood that additional on-site parking is desired, there are public lots and on-street parking available nearby. Parking lots next to historic structures are detrimental to the context of the structure and setting.

CONCLUSION

This building is noncontributing and structurally compromised, it currently does not add a visual and context rich addition to the Old Town Historic District. Although the National Register nomination states that if the 1999 replacement siding was removed, the building could be re-evaluated concerning eligibility. However, our demolition code only

allows the board to condition a delay on a demolition request by 6-months and does not have the ability to force any additional work or reuse procedures, therefore, staff is recommending conditional approval of the request.

STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS

Staff is recommending the following conditions:

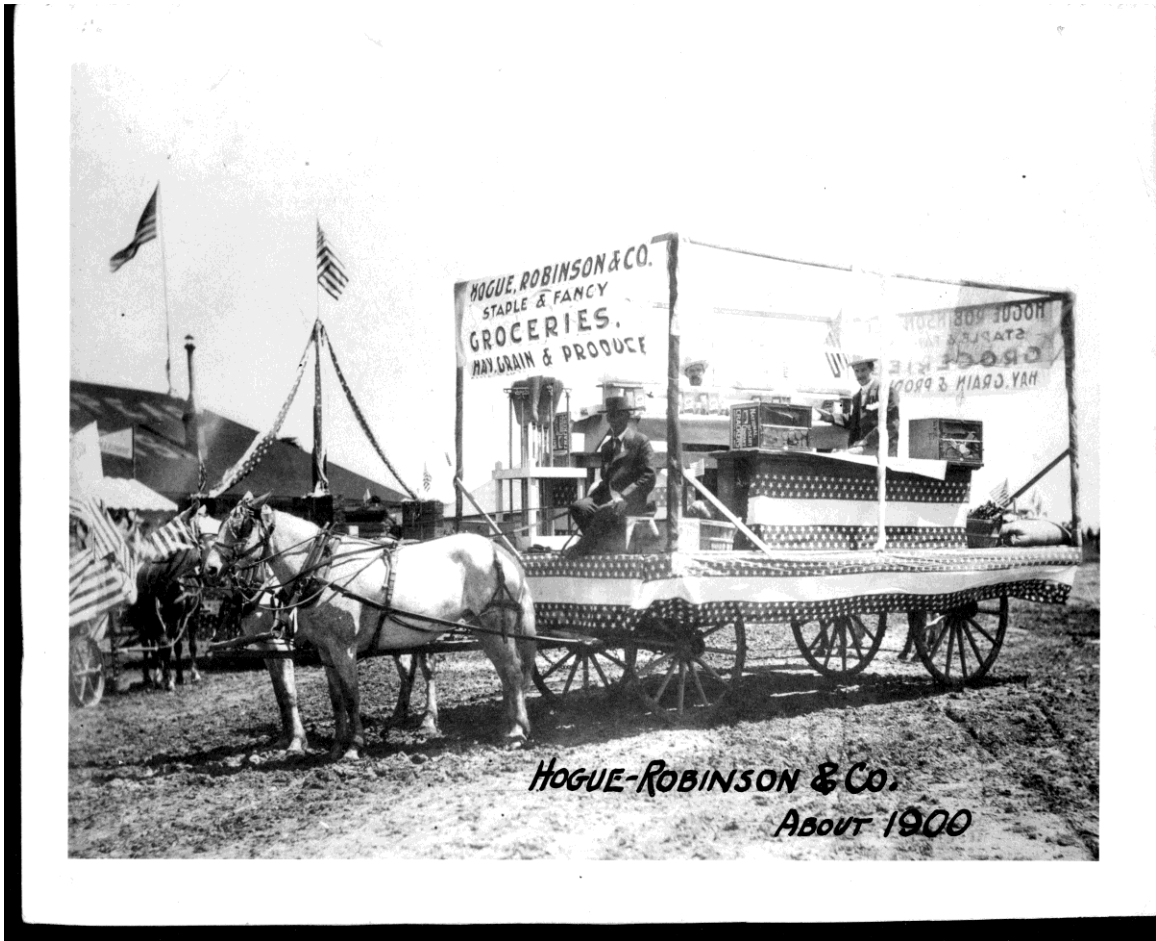
1. This request is only for the demolition of the noncontributing structure located at 2910 Minnesota Avenue.
2. All other applicable zoning and building codes apply to the redevelopment of this lot.
3. A fence permit is required to be obtained from the Planning & Community Services Department.

ATTACHMENT A
Yellowstone Historic Preservation Board Determinations
COA – 2910 Minnesota Avenue

Prior to any action, the Yellowstone Historic Preservation Board shall consider the following:

1. Every reasonable effort shall be made to provide a compatible use for a property that requires minimal alteration of the building, structure or site and its environment.
2. The distinguishing original qualities or character of a building, structure, or site and its environment shall not be destroyed. The removal or alteration of any historic material or distinctive architectural feature should be avoided when possible.
3. All buildings, structures, and sites shall be recognized as products of their own time. Alterations that have no historical basis and that seek to create an earlier appearance shall be discouraged.
4. Changes that may have taken place in the course of time are evidence of the history and development of a building, structure, or site and its environment. These changes may have acquired significance in their own right, and this significance shall be recognized and respected.
5. Distinctive stylistic features or examples of skilled craftsmanship that characterize a building, structure, or site shall be treated with sensitivity.
6. Deteriorated architectural features shall be repaired rather than replaced, wherever possible. In the event replacement is necessary, the new material should match the material being replaced in composition, design, color, texture, and other visual qualities. Repair or replacement of missing architectural features should be based on accurate duplication of features substantiated by historic, physical or pictorial evidence, rather than on conjectural designs or the availability of different architectural elements from other buildings or structures.
7. The surface cleaning of structures shall be undertaken with the gentlest means possible. Sandblasting and other cleaning methods that will damage the historic building materials shall not be undertaken.
8. Every reasonable effort shall be made to protect and preserve archaeological resources affected by, or adjacent to, any project.
9. Contemporary design for alterations and additions to existing properties shall not be discouraged when such alterations and additions do not destroy significant historical, architectural, or cultural material, and such design is compatible with the size, scale, color, material and character of the property, neighborhood, or environment.

HISTORIC PHOTO



*HOGUE-ROBINSON & CO.
ABOUT 1900*

Only historic reference found for this property, no photos.

CURRENT PHOTOS



View south from Minnesota



View southeast from Minnesota

CURRENT PHOTOS – CONTINUED



View southwest from Minnesota



View north across Minnesota

CURRENT PHOTOS – CONTINUED



Rear of building in CLDI parking lot

BUILDING INTEGRITY LETTER – KRIVONEN ASSOCIATES



7.25.2022

Community Leadership & Development, Inc.
Attn: Eric Basye
PO Box 3381
Billings, MT 59103

Re: 2910 Minnesota Ave – Structural concerns

Eric,

I visited 2910 Minnesota Ave in Billings, MT on 10/13/2021 in order to provide consultation regarding the structural condition of the building. It was our understanding that the age and condition of the structure might be of concern.

Several observations were made after walking thru the building that indicated structural issues. The floors were unlevel which could indicate either structural failure in the framing, or more likely, differential foundation movement. While inspecting the accessible portion of the basement, there were several notable structural deficiencies. There were several floor joists that were clearly rotating due to either lack of blocking and bracing or foundation movement. Earth to wood contact was visible at several areas. Spalling at joints of the cobblestone foundation walls was visible at several locations. In other areas, there appeared to be signs of rot and water damage to wood framing, likely due to water infiltration or inadequate wood to earth clearance.

In order to salvage the structure, significant remediation would be required. The entire structure would need to be lifted and a new concrete foundation would need to be installed. During the process of demolition and replacement of the foundation, it would be necessary to bring the framing back to a more level condition. Any damaged or inadequate framing would need to be replaced or reinforced. Given the lack of building code and regulation at the time of original construction, it can be assumed that significant alterations will be required to bring the structure to current building standards such as adding floor and roof framing. Permanent foundation elements would be needed to be installed in order to adequately support interior structural elements as well.

In our experience, lifting a structure in order to replace an existing foundation with a new foundation is an extremely aggressive procedure. Interior finishes will likely experience extensive cracking and would require significant repair. Subfloors and finished floors may experience fracturing and dislodgement of fasteners. These damages would require removal and replacement with like materials. Given the extent of differential settlement, it can be anticipated that these damages would be extensive throughout the structure.

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It is our opinion that the rehabilitation of this structure to a level of safety compliance and code compliance would be an extremely extensive undertaking. While we understand the historical significance of a 120+ year structure to the community, it would be a financially unfeasible approach to attempt to rehabilitate the building.

Please let us know if you have any questions regarding our analysis or if we can be of any service in the future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Sam Kiyantsa'.

Sam Kiyantsa
Professional Engineer



PROPOSED PARKING LOT SITE PLAN

