



Legislation Text

File #: 18-185, **Version:** 1

DATE: April 19, 2018

TO: Members of the Northfield Heritage Preservation Commission

FROM: Scott Tempel, City Planner

Sign Permit for Armory, 519 Division

SUMMARY AND ACTION REQUESTED:

The HPC is requested to approve signage at 519 Division Street.

BACKGROUND:

The Armory Event Center is requesting a new wall sign and a ground sign for the Armory building. We have a unique situation here because the property has been designated a local preservation site, but has not yet been officially amended into the Historic District. The HPC has review authority for the Certificate of Appropriateness (COA), but, since the property is not yet in the Downtown Historic District Overlay zone, we must allow signage that would otherwise be conforming in the C1 Downtown district. The analysis below will detail which C1 regulations come into play along with the Historic District regulations.

The applicable sections of the Downtown Historic District regulations in the sign ordinance include the following (Staff response is shown in **bold**):

1. Placement: Signs shall be positioned so they are an integral design feature of the building; signs shall complement and enhance the architectural features of the building. They shall be placed so that they do not destroy architectural details such as stone arches, glass transom panels, or decorative brickwork. Unless other placement is specifically approved by the Heritage Preservation Commission for reasons stated in the certificate of appropriateness by the Commission, signs may be placed only as follows:

- a. At or above the horizontal lintel, cornice, or beltcourse, or above the storefront windows;
- b. Projecting from the building;
- c. Applied to or painted on canvas awnings;
- d. In areas where signs were historically attached.

Staff response: The signs meet placement requirements. Ground signs are allowed in the C1 zone district. The proposed ground sign meets the C1 standards and the HPC is allowed to approve alternate sign locations via the COA. Locating the ground sign in the proposed location serves to make a better street front edge for the property and screens the handicapped ramp in the front of the building. The wall sign meets district placement requirements.

3. Sign Shape: Signs shall be designed to match the historical time period elements and regional location of the City, which primarily exclude such features as cut corners and non-rectangular shapes. In most cases, the edges of signs shall include a raised border that sets the sign apart from the building surface or hanging space. Individual raised letters set onto the sign area surface are also preferred.

Staff response: The signs meet shape requirements. The wall sign consists of individual raised letters that meet this requirement. The ground sign is generally rectangular in shape. Closer examination reveals the sign mimics the shape and architecture of the building itself including parapet cutouts.

4. Colors: Sign colors shall coordinate with the building façade to which the sign is attached and shall be compatible with the property's use. A combination of soft/neutral shades and dark/rich shades are encouraged in order to reflect the historical time period. No more than two colors shall be used for the sign letters.

Staff response: The signs meet color requirements. The ground sign utilizes dark rich colors compatible with the building including imitation brick facing. The wall sign letters are white, similar to the existing integral building name sign.

5. Material: Signs and sign letters should be made of wood or metal that is in keeping with the corresponding historical time period of the building. Brackets for projecting signs shall be made of iron or other painted metal, and shall be secured at the top of the sign and anchored into the mortar, not the masonry.

Staff response: The signs meet the material requirements. The signs are made of MDO board.

6. Message: The sign message shall be legible and shall relate to the nature of the business. These requirements may be accomplished through the use of words, pictures, names, symbols and logos.

Staff response: The signs meet message requirements. The signs are legible and relate to the businesses. The ground sign provides two informational memo boards regarding building events.

7. Lettering: Lettering styles shall be legible and shall relate to the character of the property's use and the era of the building. Lettering shall preferably include serif rather than strictly block type styles. Each sign shall contain no more than two lettering styles, and the lettering shall occupy no more than approximately 60% of the total sign area.

Staff response: The signs meet lettering requirements. The lettering used on both signs is based on the font in the existing integral building name sign. The use of this font helps to tie the signage to the building.

8. Illumination: External illumination of signs is permitted by incandescent or fluorescent light, but shall emit a continuous white light that prevents direct shining onto the ground or adjacent buildings. Exposed neon signs shall be permitted when installed inside windows of the interior of the building.

The use of internally lit signs, such as but not limited to backlit plastic, is not permitted. Exceptions to this guideline shall be allowed for public service, time/temperature and theater signs.

Staff response: The signs meet illumination requirements. The signs will not be illuminated.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends approval of the Certificate of Appropriateness.