



## Legislation Text

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**File #:** BC 18-001, **Version:** 1

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**DATE:** September 6, 2018

**TO:** Members of the Northfield Heritage Preservation Commission

**FROM:** Scott Tempel, City Planner

Review of Grand Event Center Portico reconstruction

**ACTION REQUESTED:**

The HPC is asked to review a request from The Grand Event Center for a License Agreement to reconstruct the historic portico in City Right-of-Way.

**SUMMARY:**

The Grand Event Center was constructed in 1899 as the Ware Auditorium. It has gone through multiple renovations and changes over the past 120 years which are detailed in the attached survey. The original Federal Style formal portico was removed from the east side of the structure in the 1920's. The current owner would like to reconstruct the portico and reopen the balcony on top of it to expand and enhance the event space.

The HPC is being asked to provide input on the preliminary design to be included in a staff report to the City Council. The owner will need to obtain a License Agreement to encroach on the public Right-Of-Way (ROW), which requires City Council approval. Comments and feedback from the HPC will be included in the report to the Council. The License Agreement will be conditioned upon formal approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness from the HPC. Feedback and input from the HPC will provide the owner with the confidence to move forward with completing architectural design documents for the proposed project.

**ANALYSIS:**

As part of the Washington Street Reconstruction project, the sidewalk in front of the Grand will be expanded, further increasing pedestrian accessibility. There is sufficient space to accommodate the portico without obstructing the sidewalk. Reconstruction of missing historic elements is treated a little differently in the NPS preservation guidelines.

**Standards for Reconstruction**

1. Reconstruction will be used to depict vanished or non-surviving portions of a property when documentary and physical evidence is available to permit accurate reconstruction with minimal conjecture and such reconstruction is essential to the public understanding of the property.
2. Reconstruction of a landscape, building, structure or object in its historic location will be preceded by a thorough archeological investigation to identify and evaluate those features and artifacts which are essential to an accurate reconstruction. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures will be undertaken.

3. Reconstruction will include measures to preserve any remaining historic materials, features, and spatial relationships.
4. Reconstruction will be based on the accurate duplication of historic features and elements substantiated by documentary or physical evidence rather than on conjectural designs or the availability of different features from other historic properties. A reconstructed property will re-create the appearance of the non-surviving historic property in materials, design, color and texture.
5. A reconstruction will be clearly identified as a contemporary re-creation.
6. Designs that were never executed historically will not be constructed.

In this case:

1. We have photographic documentation of the original portico. It is questionable that original plans exist, but there may be additional photos somewhere.
2. An archeological investigation is not possible at this time as it would involve tearing up the City sidewalk. It is highly unlikely that any original footings or other original artifacts exist as the City would have destroyed them during original construction or reconstruction of the sidewalk. The City will be doing work in the ROW with the Washington Street project and may be able to confirm this. As part of the project, the sidewalk in front of the Grand will be expanded.
3. All remaining architectural features would be required to be retained as part of the approval. The original doorway has been replaced by a window and would need to be reconstructed in its original form, but the façade above the portico has retained its original configuration.
4. The historic photos should provide sufficient guidance to re-create the appearance of the portico in materials, design, color and texture without conjecture. It is doubtful that original paint colors could be determined. The applicant's stated intent is to recreate the portico as accurately as possible.
5. Identification of the contemporary recreation can be accomplished through signage.
6. Not applicable

#### **OPTIONS:**

The HPC could require additional historical documentation and intended design concepts prior to making a recommendation.

#### **RECOMMENDATION:**

Staff recommends HPC support for the applicant to move forward with a request to the City Council for a License Agreement. The project will restore the building closer to its original form. It will have no negative effects on the surrounding area and will improve the functionality and appeal of the event center business.

As delineated in the Northfield Downtown Preservation Design Guidelines, a formal building review will take place at a regular scheduled meeting after the following items have been submitted for HPC review and approval:

- A. Photographic documentation (also, if available, older/historic photographs should be submitted).
- B. Scaled elevation drawing of side(s) to be modified, indicating materials to be used.
- C. Paint chips of intended colors to be used.
- D. Narrative of work to be done and how the work relates to the historical appearance of the building.
- E. Building material or sign samples if not otherwise clearly defined.

