

 <p style="text-align: center;">Council Communication Office of the City Manager</p>	Date:	December 21, 2015
	Agenda Item No.	62
	Roll Call No.	<u>15-2182</u>
	Communication No.	<u>15-651</u>
	Submitted by:	Phillip Delafield, Community Development Director

AGENDA HEADING:

Consideration of request from Burns United Methodist Church, 1909 Martin Luther King, Jr. Parkway represented by Joyce Wilks to demolish the building located at 811 Crocker Street pursuant to Section 58-70 of the Historic Preservation Ordinance.

SYNOPSIS:

The subject property contains a building that was the former location of the Burns United Methodist Church. The church has moved to 1909 Martin Luther King, Jr. Parkway and wishes to sell the Crocker Street property as a cleared site. A request for a demolition permit has been submitted. In accordance with Section 58-70 of the Historic Preservation Ordinance, staff has reviewed the request and determined that the building is greater than 50 years old and meets the criteria for landmark designation set forth in Section 58-58. The City Council is charged with determining if the request should be referred to the Landmark Review Board for further study or if no additional evaluation is necessary. The applicant is required to document the building and prepare a salvage plan before permits will be issued if an alternative to demolition is not found. Staff recommends that the Council refer the item to the Landmark Review Board for further study.

FISCAL IMPACT: NONE

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

This property is individually listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The areas of significance noted in the nomination are relating to religion, social/humanitarian and African-American history. The building meets landmark designation criterion 1 and 2 as listed below based on the building's role in the history of the African-American community in Des Moines and given that it is one (1) of the few surviving buildings from the neighborhood that existed before Interstate 235 was constructed and urban renewal projects occurred.

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 building was constructed in 1912. It was purchased in 1930 by the Burns United Methodist Church from the German Emmanuel Methodist congregation. According to the National Register Nomination Form the Burns United Methodist Church was “organized in 1866 as the first black congregation of its denomination in Des Moines. The church was named for Francis Burns (1809-1863), the first black missionary bishop in the Methodist Episcopal Church, who served from 1838 in the American-instituted colony for former slaves in Liberia.”

The building is constructed of brick laid in 8-course common bond with Flemish variants. It is 1-story tall with a raised basement. The footprint of the building measures 1,977-square-feet. The main floor is generally divided into east and west halves with the sanctuary to the east and a classroom and pastor’s office to the west. The flooring consists of oak and the walls and ceiling consist of painted plaster and woodwork. The basement contains restrooms, classrooms, a multi-purpose room and utility space. The main floor has stained glass windows and Tudor arches.

The City Council is charged with determining if the request should be referred to the Landmark Review Board for further study or if no additional evaluation is necessary. 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 Landmark Review Board for further study and review.”

If the application is not referred to the Board, 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 Community Development 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 Community Development 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 Landmark Review Board, 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; and
- (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 Community Development 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 Community Development 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.

On December 4, 2015 Community Development Department staff toured the building. Staff's general observations are that the brick walls need repointed, the roof needs new shingles and the chimney needs to be repaired. Overall, the building appears to be structurally sound. No noticeable bowing in the walls or foundation were observed and the stain glass windows appear to be in good repair. If the building were to be reoccupied, a new tenant would likely wish to completely remodel the basement and replace the existing finishes and fixtures.

PREVIOUS COUNCIL ACTION(S): NONE

BOARD/COMMISSION ACTION(S): NONE

ANTICIPATED ACTIONS AND FUTURE COMMITMENTS: NONE

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