

COUNCIL COMMUNICATION



	Number: 26-001	Meeting: January 12, 2026
	Agenda Item: 33	Roll Call: 26-0079
	Submitted by: Cody Christensen, Development Services Director	

AGENDA HEADING:

Appeal from Noah Brinkmeyer of the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) decision to grant a Certificate of Appropriateness on a request from Colbert Properties (owner), represented by Jon Bassett (architect), to construct a new house and garage at 1917 Center Street in the Sherman Hill Local Historic District.

SYNOPSIS:

Noah Brinkmeyer appealed the HPC's decision on November 5, 2025, to conditionally approve a Certificate of Appropriateness (CAHP-2025-000046) for a new construction residence at 1917 Center Street in the Sherman Hill Local Historic District. The appeal cites procedural and design concerns. The appellant requests the City Council either review the project on the merits or remand it to the HPC for a rehearing where design guidelines and evidence presented by residents are meaningfully considered. The City Council can affirm, reverse, or remand the HPC's decision.

FISCAL IMPACT: NONE

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

- Colbert Properties is proposing to construct a two (2)-story residence and detached four (4)-car tandem garage on a vacant parcel at 1917 Center Street. The house is a modern interpretation of the International Style with Art Deco influences and features a flat roof, stucco exterior, and metal-clad windows. The garage is positioned at the rear of the lot to minimize its visual impact and has two (2) single-car garage doors facing the alley. The request was first considered on August 20, 2025, and was conditionally approved by the HPC.
- The Sherman Hill Association (SHA) appealed the August 20, 2025, HPC decision to approve the request, citing concerns regarding limited neighborhood notice, compatibility with the surrounding historic context, and a potential conflict of interest. In response to the appeal, the City Council remanded the item back to the HPC for further consideration.
- The HPC met to review the request again on November 5, 2025, and approved the Certificate of Appropriateness, with additional conditions of approval intended to respond to comments raised by residents during the appeal and rehearing process.
- An appeal of the November 5, 2025, HPC decision has been filed by Noah Brinkmeyer, the adjacent property owner at 1921 Center Street. The appeal cites that the Commission's decision

was arbitrary and capricious and did not adequately apply the criteria in Des Moines Municipal Code 58-31(c) or the Architectural Guidelines for New Construction in Des Moines's Historic Districts.

- The proposed design was evaluated against the *Architectural Guidelines for New Construction in Des Moines's Historic Districts*, which addresses building height, massing, materials and site relationships. The guidelines also include the following statements:
 - “The guidelines are developed to encourage new construction in historic districts – new construction which participates in the overall historic neighborhood pattern and at the same time develops a genuine character of its own.”
 - “Sherman Hill, however, developed with greater diversity of land use and building type, and has suffered some demolition and intrusive new construction. Here, because of the diversity of original buildings, new compatible in-fill based on relationship of either contrast or similarity could be successful.”
- The design demonstrates compatibility with the Sherman Hill Historic District with its height and overall scale staying consistent with the context of the area it is located in, and by aligning with the established street rhythm. The project reinforces the district's characteristic vertical emphasis through its window proportions and building height, while its flat roof form reflects patterns also present in nearby commercial and residential structures. The use of smooth stucco and metal-clad windows provides a simple, contemporary material palette that complements the surrounding context and relates to the nearby modern era structures. Commission discussion during the August 20, 2025, meeting identified an existing example of the International Style of architecture in Sherman Hill (an apartment building on 19th Street) and noted the district's eclectic mix of architectural styles provides a fitting context for contemporary designs that reflect their own time, such as this proposal.

PREVIOUS COUNCIL ACTION(S):

Date: October 20, 2025

Roll Call Number: [25-1443](#)

Action: [On](#) an appeal from Sherman Hill Association (Matt Warner-Blankenship, President) of the HPC's decision to grant a Certificate of Appropriateness on a request from Colbert Properties (Owner) to construct a new house and garage at 1917 Center Street in the Sherman Hill Local Historic District. ([Council Communication No. 25-399](#)) Moved by Mandelbaum to remand the application to the HPC for reconsideration and direct Commission Member York Taenzer to recuse himself from reconsideration of the application. Make sure the Neighborhood Association is notified of the meeting date and location. Second by Gatto. Motion Carried 7-0.

BOARD/COMMISSION ACTION(S):

Board: Historic Preservation Commission

Date: November 5, 2025

Resolution Number: CAHP-2025-000046

Action: Conditional Approval

Board: Historic Preservation Commission

Date: August 20, 2025

Resolution Number: CAHP-2025-000046

Action: Conditional Approval

ANTICIPATED ACTIONS AND FUTURE COMMITMENTS: NONE

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