



Date October 20, 2025

RESOLUTION **AFFIRMING** THE DECISION OF THE HISTORIC PRESERVATION
COMMISSION TO GRANT AN APPLICATION FOR CERTIFICATE OF
APPROPRIATENESS SUBJECT TO CONDITIONS FOR THE PROPERTY LOCATED AT
1917 CENTER STREET

WHEREAS, on August 20, 2025, the Historic Preservation Commission granted an Application from Colbert Properties for a Certificate of Appropriateness subject to conditions for the property located at 1917 Center Street in the Sherman Hill Historic Neighborhood District (Case Number CAHP-2025-000046). The Commission's decision allows for the construction of a new house and garage, subject to the following conditions:

1. Review and approval of the final design by the Planning and Urban Design Administrator.
2. Further study regarding building code compliance of the light well adjacent to the neighboring property.
3. Metal-clad windows are appropriate for use on this new construction project. Review and approval of the finalized window product by the Planning and Urban Design Administrator.
4. All construction shall be in accordance with all Building and Fire Codes, with issuance of any necessary permit by the City's Permit and Development Center.

WHEREAS, Matt Warner-Blankenship, on behalf of the Sherman Hill Association and concerned neighbors, has appealed the Commission's decision to the City Council pursuant to Section 15.459(3) of the Iowa Code and Section 58-31(f) of the Des Moines Municipal Code. He seeks to have the decision reversed or remanded for reconsideration; and

WHEREAS, on September 29, 2025, by Roll Call No. 25-1291, it was duly resolved by the City Council that the appeal be set down for hearing on October 20, 2025 at 5:00 p.m. in Council Chambers; and

WHEREAS, due notice of the hearing was published in the Des Moines Register on October 8, 2025 and due notice was provided to the appellant and applicant; and

WHEREAS, in accordance with the notice, those interested in the issuance of the Certificate of Appropriateness, both for and against, have been given an opportunity to be heard with respect thereto and have presented their views to the City Council; and

WHEREAS, Section 15.459(3) of the Iowa Code and Section 58-31(f) of the Des Moines Municipal Code provide that on an appeal from action of the Historic Preservation Commission, "the city council shall consider whether the commission has exercised its powers and followed the



Roll Call Number

Agenda Item Number

52A

Date October 20, 2025

guidelines established by law and ordinance and whether the commission's action was patently arbitrary or capricious.”

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the City Council of the City of Des Moines, Iowa, as follows:

1. The public hearing on the appeal is hereby closed.
2. The Commission has exercised its powers and followed the guidelines established by law and ordinance, following the Architectural Guidelines for New Construction in Des Moines’ Historic Districts.
3. The decision of the Historic Preservation Commission regarding the Application for Certificate of Appropriateness for the property located at 1917 Center St. is reasonable, is not patently arbitrary or capricious and should be upheld.
4. The City Council AFFIRMS the Certificate of Appropriateness granted by the Historic Preservation Commission subject to conditions in Case Number CAHP-2025-000046

(Council Communication No. 25-399)

Moved by _____ to adopt. Second by _____

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

Emily A. Duffy
Assistant City Attorney

COUNCIL ACTION	YEAS	NAYS	PASS	ABSENT
BOESEN				
SIMONSON				
VOSS				
COLEMAN				
WESTERGAARD				
MANDELBAUM				
GATTO				
TOTAL				
MOTION CARRIED		APPROVED		

CERTIFICATE

I, LAURA BAUMGARTNER, City Clerk of said City hereby certify that at a meeting of the City Council of said City of Des Moines, held on the above date, among other proceedings the above was adopted.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and affixed my seal the day and year first above written.

Mayor

City Clerk



Date October 20, 2025

RESOLUTION **REVERSING** THE DECISION OF THE HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION AND **DENIES** THE APPLICATION FOR CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS FOR THE PROPERTY LOCATED AT 1917 CENTER STREET

WHEREAS, on August 20, 2025, the Historic Preservation Commission granted an Application from Colbert Properties for a Certificate of Appropriateness subject to conditions for the property located at 1917 Center Street in the Sherman Hill Historic Neighborhood District (Case Number CAHP-2025-000046). The Commission's decision allows for the construction of a new house and garage, subject to the following conditions:

1. Review and approval of the final design by the Planning and Urban Design Administrator.
2. Further study regarding building code compliance of the light well adjacent to the neighboring property.
3. Metal-clad windows are appropriate for use on this new construction project. Review and approval of the finalized window product by the Planning and Urban Design Administrator.
4. All construction shall be in accordance with all Building and Fire Codes, with issuance of any necessary permit by the City's Permit and Development Center.

WHEREAS, Matt Warner-Blankenship, on behalf of the Sherman Hill Association and concerned neighbors, has appealed the Commission's decision to the City Council pursuant to Section 15.459(3) of the Iowa Code and Section 58-31(f) of the Des Moines Municipal Code. He seeks to have the decision reversed or remanded for reconsideration; and

WHEREAS, on September 29, 2025, by Roll Call No. 25-1291, it was duly resolved by the City Council that the appeal be set down for hearing on October 20, 2025 at 5:00 p.m. in Council Chambers; and

WHEREAS, due notice of the hearing was published in the Des Moines Register on October 8, 2025 and due notice was provided to the appellant and applicant; and

WHEREAS, in accordance with the notice, those interested in the issuance of the Certificate of Appropriateness, both for and against, have been given an opportunity to be heard with respect thereto and have presented their views to the City Council; and

WHEREAS, Section 15.459(3) of the Iowa Code and Section 58-31(f) of the Des Moines Municipal Code provide that on an appeal from action of the Historic Preservation Commission, "the city council shall consider whether the commission has exercised its powers and followed the guidelines established by law and ordinance and whether the commission's action was patently arbitrary or capricious."



Roll Call Number

Agenda Item Number

52B

Date October 20, 2025

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the City Council of the City of Des Moines, Iowa, as follows:

1. The public hearing on the appeal is hereby closed.
2. The Commission did not fully exercise its powers or follow the guidelines established by law and ordinance, and the Commission's decision on the Application was patently arbitrary and capricious because
3. The City Council hereby REVERSES the decision of the Historic Preservation Commission and hereby DENIES the Application.

(Council Communication No. 25-399)

Moved by _____ to adopt. Second by _____

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

Emily A. Duffy
Assistant City Attorney

COUNCIL ACTION	YEAS	NAYS	PASS	ABSENT
BOESEN				
SIMONSON				
VOSS				
COLEMAN				
WESTERGAARD				
MANDELBAUM				
GATTO				
TOTAL				
MOTION CARRIED			APPROVED	

CERTIFICATE

I, LAURA BAUMGARTNER, City Clerk of said City hereby certify that at a meeting of the City Council of said City of Des Moines, held on the above date, among other proceedings the above was adopted.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and affixed my seal the day and year first above written.

Mayor

City Clerk



Date October 20, 2025

RESOLUTION REMANDING THE APPLICATION FOR CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS
FOR THE PROPERTY LOCATED AT 1917 CENTER STREET TO THE HISTORIC PRESERVATION
COMMISSION FOR RECONSIDERATION

WHEREAS, on August 20, 2025, the Historic Preservation Commission granted an Application from Colbert Properties for a Certificate of Appropriateness subject to conditions for the property located at 1917 Center Street in the Sherman Hill Historic Neighborhood District (Case Number CAHP-2025-000046). The Commission's decision allows for the construction of a new house and garage, subject to the following conditions:

1. Review and approval of the final design by the Planning and Urban Design Administrator.
2. Further study regarding building code compliance of the light well adjacent to the neighboring property.
3. Metal-clad windows are appropriate for use on this new construction project. Review and approval of the finalized window product by the Planning and Urban Design Administrator.
4. All construction shall be in accordance with all Building and Fire Codes, with issuance of any necessary permit by the City's Permit and Development Center.

WHEREAS, Matt Warner-Blankenship, on behalf of the Sherman Hill Association and concerned neighbors, has appealed the Commission's decision to the City Council pursuant to Section 15.459(3) of the Iowa Code and Section 58-31(f) of the Des Moines Municipal Code. He seeks to have the decision reversed or remanded for reconsideration; and

WHEREAS, on September 29, 2025, by Roll Call No. 25-1291, it was duly resolved by the City Council that the Appeal be set down for hearing on October 20, 2025 at 5:00 p.m. in Council Chambers; and

WHEREAS, due notice of the hearing was published in the Des Moines Register on October 8, 2025 and due notice was provided to the appellant and applicant; and

WHEREAS, in accordance with the notice, those interested in the issuance of the Certificate of Appropriateness, both for and against, have been given an opportunity to be heard with respect thereto and have presented their views to the City Council; and

WHEREAS, Section 15.459(3) of the Iowa Code and Section 58-31(f) of the Des Moines Municipal Code provides that on an appeal from action of the Historic Preservation Commission, "the city council shall consider whether the commission has exercised its powers and followed the guidelines established by law and ordinance and whether the commission's action was patently arbitrary or capricious."



Roll Call Number

Agenda Item Number

52C

Date October 20, 2025

WHEREAS, in the Appeal, concerns were raised that (1) the Commission did not have all objections and related information during its initial review of the application, and 2. Commission member, York Taenzer, may have a conflict of interest that would prevent him from fully and impartially considering the item.; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the City Council of the City of Des Moines, Iowa, as follows:

1. The public hearing on the appeal is hereby closed.
2. That pursuant to Iowa Code § 15.459(3) and City Code § 58-31(f), the City Council has considered whether the Historic Preservation Commission exercised its powers and followed the guidelines established by law and ordinance, and whether its action was patently arbitrary and capricious.
3. The City Council hereby REMANDS the Application to the Historic Preservation Commission for reconsideration, for the following reasons:

NOTE: Council may select from one or more of the following reasons, or state other reasons to remand.

- i. Directs Commission Member, York Taenzer, to consult with the Legal Department to determine if an actual or apparent conflict of interest exists;
- ii. Directs the Commission to consider additional evidence that was not presented to the Commission and direct Commission member, York Taenzer, to recuse himself from reconsideration of the Application;
- iii. Direct Commission member, York Taenzer, to recuse himself from reconsideration of the Application.

iv.

(State other reasons here).



Roll Call Number

Agenda Item Number

52C

Date October 20, 2025

(Council Communication No. 25-399)

Moved by _____ to adopt. Second by _____

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

Emily A. Duffy
Assistant City Attorney

COUNCIL ACTION	YEAS	NAYS	PASS	ABSENT
BOESEN				
SIMONSON				
VOSS				
COLEMAN				
WESTERGAARD				
MANDELBAUM				
GATTO				
TOTAL				
MOTION CARRIED		APPROVED		

CERTIFICATE

I, LAURA BAUMGARTNER, City Clerk of said City hereby certify that at a meeting of the City Council of said City of Des Moines, held on the above date, among other proceedings the above was adopted.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and affixed my seal the day and year first above written.

Mayor

City Clerk

215-124
29
52

September 05, 2025

Jason Van Essen
City of Des Moines
Development Services Department
JMVanessen@dmgov.org

Councilmembers Josh Mandelbaum, Mike Simonson & Carl Voss
Des Moines City Council
JoshMandelbaum@dmgov.org
CarlVoss@dmgov.org
MikeSimonson@dmgov.org

Re: Appeal of Historic Preservation Commission Decision – 1917 Center Street Project

Dear Mr. Van Essen and Councilmembers Mandelbaum & Voss,

On behalf of the Sherman Hill Association (SHA) and concerned neighbors, I write to inform you that we have filed an appeal of the Historic Preservation Commission's approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness for the proposed Art Deco-style house at 1917 Center Street.

Our appeal is based on the limited time provided to SHA and adjacent neighbors to review the project prior to the HPC hearing, as well as concerns that our specific objections were not fully conveyed to the Commission. While I understand from Josh that the City has modified its outreach process, the effect in this case was that the neighborhood was deprived of a meaningful opportunity to prepare and present objections. In addition to SHA, adjacent neighbors including Randa LeJeune, Brad Argo, Noah Brinkmeyer, and Andrew Rudolphi objected to the project, raising concerns about the incompatibility of the proposed design with the historic character of Sherman Hill. Those concerns were not included in the record considered by the HPC, leaving the decision incomplete.

As documented in the attached correspondence, SHA specifically requested a delay so the neighborhood could be heard. While we do not impugn Commissioner Taenzer's motives or character, it does not appear that he conveyed these objections to the HPC. Given his role as realtor in the property sale and his simultaneous position as a Sherman Hill representative on the Commission, this creates an appearance of conflict of interest to which we object. In the interests of transparency, we believe it would have been appropriate to disclose that we had made a reasonable request for delay and further study and input given that we had not been previously approached about the project.

Our request to the Council is that it either 1) review the project on the merits or 2) remand the matter to the HPC for further consideration, so that the objections of the SHA and adjacent neighbors can be fairly considered in accordance with the City's preservation framework.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. We look forward to working with you to ensure that new development in Sherman Hill proceeds with both transparency and respect for the neighborhood's historic character.

Sincerely,

Matt Warner-Blankenship
President, Sherman Hill Association

NOTICE OF APPEAL

Filed with the Office of the City Clerk
City of Des Moines, Iowa

Date: September 05, 2025

To: City Clerk, City of Des Moines

Re: Appeal of Historic Preservation Commission Decision – 1917 Center Street Project

Dear City Clerk,

On behalf of the Sherman Hill Association (SHA) and concerned neighbors, I hereby submit this appeal of the Historic Preservation Commission's approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness for the proposed Art Deco-style new construction at 1917 Center Street.

I. Decision Appealed

The decision of the Historic Preservation Commission granting a Certificate of Appropriateness for the 1917 Center Street project at its meeting on August 20, 2025.

II. Basis for Appeal

This appeal is filed pursuant to Iowa Code § 15.459 and Des Moines Municipal Code § 58-31(f). The SHA was given very limited time to review this project before the Historic Preservation Commission hearing, learning of it only a day or two before the meeting. While we have come to understand that the City has changed its outreach process, this change does not alter the fact that the neighborhood was deprived of a meaningful opportunity to prepare and present its objections.

In addition to the SHA, adjacent neighbors including Randa LeJeune, Brad Argo, Noah Brinkmeyer, and Andrew Rudolphi objected to the project. Their concerns—focused on the incompatibility of the proposed Art Deco design with the historic character of Sherman Hill—were also excluded from the record considered by the Commission.

As documented in the attached correspondence, SHA conveyed its objections and requested a delay so the neighborhood could be heard. This request was sent to Mr. York Taenzer, a Sherman Hill resident serves as a Sherman Hill representative on the HPC but who also acted as realtor for the sale of the property in question (see attached webpage of the listing).

While we absolutely do not impugn Mr. Taenzer's motives or character, it does not appear that he conveyed SHA's specific request and concerns to the Commission. That omission, coupled with his financial interest in the property transaction, creates the appearance of a conflict of interest to which we object.

Under Des Moines Mun. Code § 58-31(c), the HPC must consider (1) City-approved design guidelines, (2) the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation, and (3) the relationship of proposed changes to exterior features of structures in the neighborhood. The neighborhood's objections concerned the incompatibility of the Art Deco design with the surrounding historic context, a factor central to subsection (3). Because these objections were not heard, the Commission's deliberations and decision were incomplete and failed to address a required element of the ordinance. As a result, the record before the Commission did not reflect the full impact of the project on the historic district, undermining the validity of the decision and therefore making it arbitrary and capricious.

III. Relief Requested

For these reasons, SHA respectfully requests that the City Council either review the project on the merits or remand the 1917 Center Street project back to the Historic Preservation Commission for a procedurally sound rehearing in which SHA and affected neighbors can present their objections on the record.

Respectfully submitted,

Matt Warner-Blankenship

President, Sherman Hill Association

From: [York Taenzer](#)
To: [Warner-Blankenship, Matt](#)
Subject: Re: 1917 Center Street Project
Date: Thursday, September 4, 2025 9:34:20 PM

[WARNING: EXTERNAL SENDER]

Matt,

Why don't you contact city staff to get the transcript of the meeting so you will have all the details you need instead of me trying to recall. I am crazy busy with work and personal stuff. At the meeting a letter was shared (I think from Brad Argo but maybe someone else) about project concerns by neighbors and requesting a delay. We all agreed the plan adhered to the National Park Services Preservation Brief and I think we all agreed it was good design. There are many more steps in the city's approval process for you to express your concerns.

York Taenzer
York@IowaRealty.com
515-321-1873
Iowa Realty Mills Crossing
5901 Mills Civic Pkwy
West Des Moines, IA 50266
Licensed to sell real estate in Iowa

From: Warner-Blankenship, Matt <matt.warner-blankenship@dentons.com>
Sent: Thursday, September 4, 2025 12:35 PM
To: York Taenzer <York@iowarealty.com>
Subject: Re: 1917 Center Street Project

York –

I want to confirm that you specifically shared that the SHA requested a delay to provide more input with the HPC - is that accurate?

Thanks,
Matt

Matt Warner-Blankenship
Shareholder

My pronouns are: (he/him/his)

 [+1 515 246 7805](tel:+15152467805)

[Des Moines](#)

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From: York Taenzer <York@iowarealty.com>
Date: Wednesday, August 20, 2025 at 10:29 PM
To: Warner-Blankenship, Matt <matt.warner-blankenship@dentons.com>
Subject: Re: 1917 Center Street Project

[WARNING: EXTERNAL SENDER]

The commission unanimously approved the proposed (updated) design.

York Taenzer
York@IowaRealty.com
515-321-1873
Iowa Realty Mills Crossing
5901 Mills Civic Pkwy
West Des Moines, IA 50266
Licensed to sell real estate in Iowa

From: Warner-Blankenship, Matt <matt.warner-blankenship@dentons.com>
Sent: Wednesday, August 20, 2025 8:51 PM
To: York Taenzer <York@iowarealty.com>
Subject: Re: 1917 Center Street Project

You don't often get email from matt.warner-blankenship@dentons.com.
[Learn why this is important](#)

Thanks York. How did it go?

Matt Warner-Blankenship
Shareholder

My [pronouns](#) are: (he/him/his)

☐ [+1 515 246 7805](#)

[Des Moines](#)

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From: York Taenzer <York@iowarealty.com>
Sent: Wednesday, August 20, 2025 4:25:12 PM
To: Warner-Blankenship, Matt <matt.warner-blankenship@dentons.com>
Subject: Re: 1917 Center Street Project

[WARNING: EXTERNAL SENDER]

Thank you for sharing your concerns. I appreciate your input. We will see how it goes tonight.

York Taenzer
York@IowaRealty.com
515-321-1873
Iowa Realty Mills Crossing
5901 Mills Civic Pkwy
West Des Moines, IA 50266
Licensed to sell real estate in Iowa

From: Warner-Blankenship, Matt <matt.warner-blankenship@dentons.com>
Sent: Wednesday, August 20, 2025 4:11 PM
To: York Taenzer <york@iowarealty.com>
Cc: Sherman Hill Board <board@shermanhilldsm.org>
Subject: 1917 Center Street Project

You don't often get email from matt.warner-blankenship@dentons.com.
[Learn why this is important](#)

York -

I hope all is well. I'm writing on behalf of the Sherman Hill Association to share our concerns, and those voiced by our members, including all of the adjacent homes, about the proposed new construction on Center Street that we have recently become aware of.

While the design has been described as Art Deco and technically falls within the district's window of significance, based on the plans we have seen so far, its overall scale, massing, and flat-roofed form feel inconsistent with the surrounding homes. The connection of the courtyard wall to the garage, in particular, gives the project a block-like, imposing quality that doesn't sit comfortably within the existing streetscape, and it would occupy almost the entire lot, and we are concerned that the size and shape of this home would alter the overall streetscape for the worse.

We are also concerned about precedent and are concerned that allowing a project that reads so differently from the neighborhood's character risks opening the door for other large, stylistically inconsistent houses to follow so long as they are "Art Deco."

Finally, we would urge caution in drawing comparisons between this proposal and nearby commercial or multi-family buildings. This is a single-family home on a residential block, and it should be evaluated within that context.

We appreciate the Commission's consideration and hope these concerns will be weighed carefully and addressed in the review process. In our view, the matter should be tabled so that additional neighborhood review and feedback can be solicited before this proceeds as planned.

Thanks,
Matt Warner-Blankenship
President
Sherman Hill Association

Matt Warner-Blankenship
Shareholder

My pronouns are: (he/him/his)

 [+1 515 246 7805](tel:+15152467805)

matt.warner-blankenship@dentons.com | [Bio](#) | [Website](#)

Dentons Davis Brown PC | The Davis Brown Tower, 215 10th Street, Suite 1300, Des Moines, IA 50309



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< Back

Des Moines, IA

X

View as owner

Seller represented by York Taenzer with
IOWA REALTY MILLS CROSSING

Buyer represented by Aly Williams with
REALTY ONE GROUP IMPACT



All 6 photos

1/6

What's your equity? (It's easy to find ou

Sold - May 2, 2025

Last sold for

\$91,500

5,968 sqft lot

1917 Center St, Des Moines, IA 50314

Land

Property type

\$91.5K in 2025

Last sold

View as owner

Share



https://www.realtor.com/realestateandhomes-detail/1917-Center-St_Des-Moines_IA_50314_M84443-23415

1/10

Property details

Exterior

- Land Info

 - Lot Description: Flat, Rectangular Lot
 - Lot Size Acres: 0.137
 - Lot Size Dimensions: 59.83 X 100
 - Lot Size Square Feet: 5972
- Exterior and Lot Features

 - Road Surface Type: Asphalt

Show more

Find out more about this property.

Contact agent

Local Home Services

Advertisement

Financial Services

LAST CHANCE! US Military & Veterans \$75,000 Home Giveaway. See Off. Rules

ENTER NOW

Presented By



Home value

RealEstimateSM

Chart

Table

1917 Center St, Des Moines, IA 50314 | Realtor.com®

September 20

Valuation provider

Collateral Analytics	
CoreLogic®	\$91,033
Quantarium	\$91,916

Unlock RealEstimate™ data

We provide up to three estimates for a comprehensive view of home value.

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Contact agent

Tap into your home's equity

Connect with a lender to explore a Home Equity Line of Credit (HELOC) to access flexible funding for home remodeling projects, debt consolidation, or other financial needs. A HELOC allows you to borrow against your home's equity, often at lower interest rates than other loan options, giving you the ability to draw funds as needed.

Connect with a lender

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Property history

\$91,500
Last sold in 2025

\$526
2024 taxes

2 permits
Recorded since 2021

Price history

Today

May 2, 2025	Sold Des Moines	\$91,500	-
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2024

Apr 5, 2024	Sold Des Moines	\$81,500 +16.43%	-
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Show more

Tax History

Year	Taxes	Total assessment		Land	Additions	
2024	\$526	\$25,800	=	\$25,800	+	-
2023	\$510	\$25,800	=	\$25,800	+	-
2022	\$506	\$20,900	=	\$20,900	+	-
2021	\$490	\$20,900	=	\$20,900	+	-
2020	\$508	\$19,000	=	\$19,000	+	-
2019	\$474	\$19,000	=	\$19,000	+	-

2018 \$470 \$17,100 = \$17,100 + -

Show more

The price and tax history data displayed is obtained from public records and/or MLS feeds from the local jurisdiction. Contact your REALTOR® directly in order to obtain the most up-to-date information available.

Want to get comps?

Contact agent

Permit history

Date	Type of work	name	Status
Aug 14, 2021	Building (residential) garage/shed	 Unlock permit history data Access public building permits for this property, all in one place.	Applied
Jul 24, 2021	Residential home or new accessory unit building permit	Sign up to unlock Already have an account? Login	Applied

The permit history displayed is obtained from public records and provided for informational purposes only. It may not represent the complete permit history for the property. Accuracy is not guaranteed.

Home improvements

Learn which renovations may increase your property value and give you the best return on investment.

Things to consider



Visualize renovations
Upload a few photos, choose your style, and start creating.

>

Recommended pros

These pros are highly rated and have upcoming availability in 50314.

Popular services

- Home remodel
- General contractor
- Handyman



Dexter Lab Maintenance Service

4.3 ★★★★★ (202 reviews)

2 years in business Hired 487 times

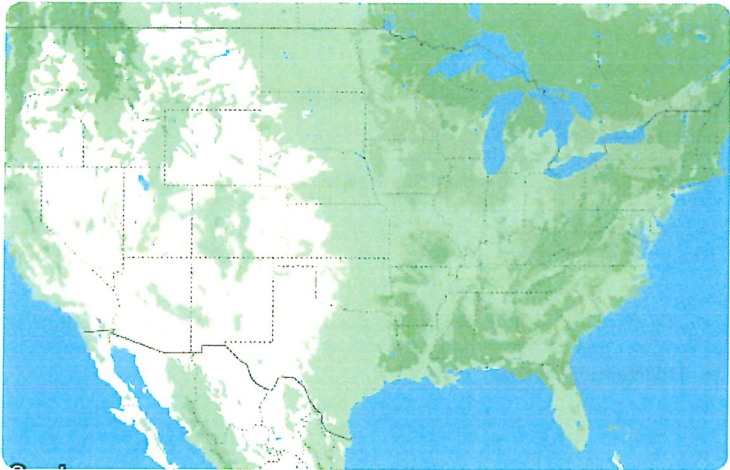
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Neighborhood & schools



Des Moines city in Polk, IA

Nearby Lifestyle Transportation

1917 Center St, Des Moines, IA 50314 | Realtor.com®

- 8

10



Groceries

New World Kitchen (0.3 mi), Gateway Market (0.3 mi), The Good Butcher (0.4 mi)
- 8

10



Parks

Chamberlain Park (0.3 mi)
- 8

10



Daycares

Central Academy (0.5 mi), Bright Horizons at the Downtown School (0.6 mi), First United Methodist Church (0.6 mi)
- 6

10



Cafes

Smokey Row Coffee (0.1 mi), HomeGrown - Des Moines (0.4 mi), Northern Vessel (0.6 mi)

Show more

Scores provided by LocalLogic | Locations provided by Yelp

Ask a neighborhood expert.

Contact agent

Schools

From listing agent:
Elementary School District: Des Moines Independent High School District: Des Moines Independent
Middle or Junior School District:
Des Moines Independent

We're sorry, no schools data is currently available for this home. Contact an agent for school information.

Environmental risk

Learn more about 1917 Center St

9/5/25, 11:47 AM

1917 Center St, Des Moines, IA 50314 | Realtor.com®

Connect with an agent

Full name*

Email*

Phone*

Are you selling or buying?*

Connect

By proceeding, you consent to receive calls and texts at the number you provided, including marketing by autodialer and prerecorded and artificial voice, and email, from realtor.com and [others](#) about your inquiry and other home-related matters, but not as a condition of any purchase. [More](#)



Seller represented by:
York Taenzer with Iowa Realty
Mills Crossing

Broker Location:	WEST DES MOINES
Buyer broker:	Realty One Group Impact
Data Source:	DesMoines
Source's Property ID:	715060

Buyer represented by:
Aly Williams with Realty One
Group Impact

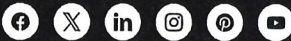
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[Iowa](#) > [Polk County](#) > [Des Moines](#) > [Center St](#) > 1917 Center St

Additional Information About 1917 Center St, Des Moines, IA 50314

See 1917 Center St, Des Moines, IA 50314, a plot of land located in the Sherman Hill neighborhood. View property details, similar homes, and the nearby school and neighborhood information. Use our heat map to find crime, amenities, and lifestyle data for 1917 Center St.

The property-related information displayed on this page is obtained from public records and other sources. While such information is thought to be reliable, it is not guaranteed and should be independently verified. Properties labeled Not for Sale are classified as such either because we do not have a record of such properties currently being for sale or because we are not permitted, by contract, law, or otherwise, to designate such properties as currently for sale. For the most accurate and up to date status of this or any other property, please contact a REALTOR®.



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HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
CITY OF DES MOINES
CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS
In the Following Matter

This Certificate of Appropriateness is valid for one year from the meeting date

REQUEST FROM:	:	CASE NUMBER: CAHP-2025-000046
	:	
COLBERT PROPERTIES	:	
	:	
PROPERTY LOCATION:	:	MEETING DATE: AUGUST 20, 2025
	:	
1917 CENTER STREET	:	

This Decision of the Historic Preservation Commission does not constitute approval of any construction. All necessary permits must be obtained before any construction is commenced upon the Property. A Certificate of Occupancy must be obtained before any structure is occupied or re-occupied after a change of use.

SUBJECT OF THE REQUEST:

Construct a new house and garage.

FINDING OF THE HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION:

Granting the application subject to conditions would be in harmony with the historic character of the neighborhood and would meet the requirements set out in the Historic District Ordinance, the Secretary of Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings, and the City of Des Moines' Standard Specifications.

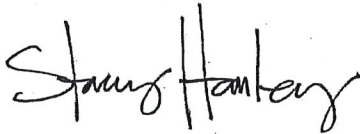
CONDITIONS:

1. Review and approval of the final design by the Planning and Urban Design Administrator.
2. Further study regarding building code compliance of the light well adjacent to the neighboring property.
3. Metal-clad windows are appropriate for use on this new construction project. Review and approval of the finalized window product by the Planning and Urban Design Administrator.
4. All construction shall be in accordance with all Building and Fire Codes, with issuance of any necessary permit by the City's Permit and Development Center.

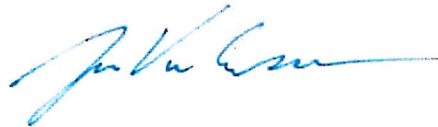
VOTE: A vote of 10-0 was registered as follows:

	<u>Aye</u>	<u>Nay</u>	<u>Abstain</u>	<u>Absent</u>
Allison	X			
Barry				X
Beard	X			
Bergman	X			
Ellsworth	X			
Green	X			
Hellstern	X			
Nelson	X			
Schmid				X
Shaw	X			
Taenzer	X			
Waddell	X			

Approved as to form:



Stacey Hanley, AIA, PLA, LEED AP
Urban Designer



Jason Van Essen, AICP
Planning & Urban Design Administrator

HPC PARTICIPANTS: Tiffany Allison, John Beard, Ryan Bergman, Ryan Ellsworth, Martha Green, Kathy Hellstern, Chad Nelson, Evan Shaw, York A. Taenzer, and Timothy Waddell.

HPC ABSENT: Patricia Barry and Ann Schmid.

STAFF PARTICIPANTS: Jacob Couppee, Jason Van Essen, and Stacey Hanley.

ITEM 5 DISCUSSION SUMMARY

5. 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.

STAFF REPORT TO THE HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

I. GENERAL INFORMATION

1. **Site Description:** The subject property is vacant and measures 59.72 feet by 100 feet (5,972 square feet). It is located on the north side of Center Street to the east of the 20th Street intersection. The Polk County Assessor webpage indicates that the property contained a house that was demolished in 1995.
2. **Sanborn Map:** The 1901 map shows a 1½-story house on the subject property. The 1920 and 1957 maps show a 2-story house. The primary footprint shown on the latter two maps matches the footprint from 1901. It appears that the house was added onto and not replaced during this timeframe.
3. **Relevant COA History:** On September 16, 2020, the Commission conditionally approved COA 20-2021-5.17 allowing relocation of a house from 2915 Brattleboro Avenue to 1917 Center Street. On March 17, 2021, the Commission conditionally approved COA 20-2021-5.23 allowing the construction of a new house, detached garage and site improvements. On August 18, 2021, the Commission conditionally approved COA 20-2021-5.32 allowing the use of Fypon in high-moisture areas, addition of exterior detailing and use of alternate material for wood windows as reviewed and approved by staff. On October 26, 2022, the Commission conditionally approved COA CAHP-2022-000079 allowing the relocation of a house from 2718 University Avenue with construction of a new foundation, plus construction of a new front porch, addition, driveway, patio, and wood and metal fences.

II. APPLICABLE DESIGN GUIDELINES

1. Architectural Guidelines for Residential New Construction (Massing - Height, Roof Form, Vertical Emphasis):

- a. The height of new construction should be similar in height to other original buildings of its basic architectural type: pitched roof or brick apartment structure or commercial building with flat roof. Height is the vertical distance from grade to the average height of the highest surface.
- b. New construction should be an appropriate height when it is viewed in relation to other original buildings on the block in which it is built in the neighborhood.
- c. Single-story structures are not permitted in either of Des Moines' historic districts. 1½ story structures with a steeply pitched roof (8:12 or greater) may be permitted in Sherman Hill if the height is similar to that of the other cottages in Sherman Hill and the location in the neighborhood is appropriate.
- d. Roof pitch and roof shape should be the same as that of existing original structures, repeating basic roof forms found in the original neighborhood.
- e. The roof volumes of new construction should be similar to that of buildings of the same basic type within the same historic district.
- f. Low pitched roofs (less than 8:12) are not permitted for new construction in either Owl's Head or Sherman Hill.
- g. Wood shingles should be used on new construction with pitched roofs if this is the predominant original roofing material in the neighborhood. Asphalt or fiberglass shingles in a medium to dark color may be an acceptable substitute.
- h. Vertical emphasis is a characteristic of the architecture of both historic districts. It should be reinforced by overall building height, vertical windows, doors with transoms, window bays, repeating column bays, and floor-to-floor heights.
- i. The floor-to-floor heights of new construction should match the floor-to-floor heights of adjacent historic buildings or other original buildings of its basic style and construction type.
- j. Strong horizontal emphasis is **not** appropriate in either the Owl's Head or Sherman Hill historic districts.

The applicant is proposing construction of a new house and garage on the vacant lot at 1917 Center Street. This portion of Center Street contains a mix of residential building types and a larger flat-roof commercial building on the corner. The subject lot is bounded by Center Street to the south and an alley on the east.

The proposed house and garage are designed in a modern interpretation of the International Style, with elements influenced by Art Deco. While this is not a typical residential style in Sherman Hill, examples can be found in scattered locations throughout Des Moines' residential neighborhoods. The house is a two-story stucco structure with metal-clad windows. Several outdoor patios and courtyards are located along the rear and alley sides of the property, serving to break down the scale of the building. Located to the rear of the property is a 4-car tandem garage, with two single-car garage doors facing the alley.

Although this design differs from the prevailing residential styles in Sherman Hill, the Commission has previously approved modern new construction homes and modern home additions. This staff report evaluates the extent to which the proposed design meets the Local Historic District Design Guidelines for Residential New Construction.

Height

The design guidelines recommend that the height of new construction be similar to other original buildings of its basic architectural type: pitched roof residences, brick apartment structure, or commercial building with a flat roof. The height of the proposed house is 23-feet, 8-inches, which is consistent with the surrounding houses on Center Street. Immediately to the west of the subject property is the smallest residence on the street, a one-story cottage approximately 17-feet in height. Three additional houses to the west are two-story residences of approximately 23-feet in height. The flat-roofed commercial building on the corner is also two-stories and stands 24-feet tall. Across the street is a large residence with a considerable footprint and overall height of approximately 32-feet. In this context, the proposed height falls in the mid-range of the street and appears appropriate.

The finished floor of the proposed house is set higher on the site to address drainage on the sloped site, creating a front entrance lawn that sits on a plinth defined by site walls. In elevation drawings of the full block, this condition makes the proposed house appear substantially taller than the neighboring cottage, and therefore not appropriate for the neighborhood. However, the actual building height is comparable to nearby structures, and the perceived height difference results from the combination of the property's existing grade and the downward slope of Center Street toward the west. In response to this perceived effect, the applicant has attempted to break down the mass on the west side of the house with increased transparency of the site walls and ample landscaping.

Roof Form

The design guidelines recommend that the roof pitch and roof shape should repeat basic roof forms of the neighborhood, which the proposed project does. The proposed flat roof form is common in Sherman Hill, particularly on commercial buildings, and has been approved for residential use in the past. Additionally, the roof volume should be similar to other buildings of the same basic type, which the proposed project does appear to match the surrounding context in volume.

Vertical Emphasis

Vertical emphasis is characteristic of the Sherman Hill historic district, and the design guidelines recommend that any new construction exhibit this characteristic and reinforce it with overall building height, vertical windows, doors with transoms, window bays, repeating column bays and floor-to-floor height. They also recommend that a strong horizontal emphasis should be avoided. The proposed house meets these recommendations with its two-story

height and predominantly vertical window orientation. While the house incorporates some horizontal windows and a landscape wall extending into the alley-side landscape, elements that introduce a degree of horizontal expression, these features help break up the building's mass and reflect the International Style influences of the design. Overall, they enhance the project's visual interest and balance without diminishing its primarily vertical emphasis.

2. Architectural Guidelines for Residential New Construction (Materials – Foundations, Siding):

- a. The amount of exposed foundation should be typically 12-18" or greater depending on the other similar original buildings in the neighborhood, compatibility with building style, adjacent buildings and site characteristics.
- b. The exposed portions of new foundations should be faced with brick similar to the original brick typically used in both historic neighborhoods.
- c. Light wells should be constructed of brick or concrete.
- d. Openings in foundation should be similar in size and placement to those on similar type buildings in the neighborhood.
- e. New construction should continue the material palette of the historic buildings in type, size and color.
- f. Masonite and other synthetic sidings may be an acceptable substitute for wooden clapboard siding; however, they should be of high quality, well-detailed and appropriate in size, texture and color.
- g. Other very contemporary and contrasting new materials may also be appropriate when a complementary relationship is established with the surrounding context.
- h. Color selection should be based on architectural design, historic appropriateness and compatibility with other adjacent buildings.

Foundations

Due to the unique design of the proposed structure, the design guidelines around foundations are less directly applicable. The amount of exposed foundation will not read in the same way as on a traditional house in Sherman Hill, as all exposed areas will be clad in stucco, creating a continuous monolithic appearance to grade. Multiple stucco-clad site walls will mitigate the grade changes around the building as well, further reducing visibility of the foundation. A light well is planned on the west side of the building, which will be constructed of stucco-clad concrete, meeting the design guidelines.

Siding

The design guidelines recommend that new construction should continue the material palette of the historic buildings in type, size and color. The proposed project does not replicate this approach due to its modern, stylistic nature. However, the guidelines also recommend that other very contemporary or contrasting new materials may also be appropriate when a complementary relationship is established with the surrounding context. The subject property is adjacent to a brick and masonry, flat-roof commercial building located at the corner of Center Street and 19th Street, which contains a contemporary addition located at the back of the building closest to the proposed house. This context

helps set a precedent for contemporary design on the block. The proposed project's simple, minimalist material palette of stucco and metal-clad windows will allow it to function as a neutral, contemporary addition within a street context that contains a variety of building types and styles.

3. Architectural Guidelines for Residential New Construction (Site Relationships – Street Rhythm, The Front):

- a. The spacing between buildings on a block and the size of building fronts should relate to the existing rhythm that is already established on a block face.
- b. Larger residential buildings should be visually subdivided and broken down in scale and given a vertical directional emphasis to maintain this rhythm.
- c. Horizontal and monotonous facades which break the street rhythm should **not** be used in historic districts.
- d. New entry levels should match the height of the entry level of adjacent buildings of its basic construction type unless the site makes this inappropriate.
- e. The general historical pattern for the way the fronts of original buildings were designed should be carried to new construction of similar building types.
- f. Sherman Hill buildings constructed on corners should typically face the streets running north/south.
- g. Front porches and steps, articulation of surface areas, special emphasis at window and door areas, and other decorative features should be used in a simple contemporary version of the neighborhood pattern in order to lend emphasis to the entry and make it visible from down the street.

Street Rhythm

The proposed house meets the design guidelines for street rhythm by maintaining building spacing consistent with the block and aligning with the existing rhythm of street fronts. Additionally, the design guidelines recommend larger residential buildings should be visually broken down in scale, which the proposed project achieves effectively on the east side of the building facing the alley through a series of exterior patios, balconies and site walls. Even the proposed garage is detached from the house to break down the scale of the building.

The west façade, which faces the adjacent one-story cottage, is less broken down in scale, with the majority of the two-story mass positioned to that side of the property. Staff has recommended that further design modifications to break down scale at this façade are warranted, such as creating more space for landscaping and more transparency in the site walls.

The Front

The design guidelines recommend that new entry levels should match the height of the entry level of the adjacent buildings, unless the site makes this inappropriate. Due to the slope of the site and Center Street, the proposed entry level is above that of the closest neighbors, and also set up above the sidewalk behind several site walls. This raised front entrance condition, with retaining walls adjacent to the sidewalk, is consistent with the character of the block. The

adjacent houses to the west have also dealt with the slope of the existing site with raised entries and retaining walls. As such, the proposed design aligns with the block's existing character while accommodating the site's unique grading challenges.

The design guidelines also recommend incorporating simplified contemporary interpretations of decorative features from the neighborhood to articulate the front entrance. While the proposed design clearly identifies the front entrance through the design language of the chosen architectural style, it does not incorporate simplified versions of Sherman Hill's traditional decorative features. However, given that modern buildings with non-traditional detailing have been approved in the district, staff finds this guideline is generally met.

4. Architectural Guidelines for Residential New Construction (Compositional Elements – Porches and Decks, Garages, Details):

- a. New buildings should have front porches if this is the historic pattern in the neighborhood.
- b. New porches should have proportions and materials similar to original porches in the neighborhood.
- c. Decks and other semi-private outdoor areas should be located at the back and screened from public view.
- d. Insubstantial vertical supports such as undetailed 4"x4" posts or decorative wrought iron are **not** permitted.
- e. Porch posts and columns should have the support visually expressed below the porch with lattice or skirting infill between supports.
- f. Porches should have a connection to the interior by the use of windows and doors.
- g. Double garages should have two single doors rather than one double-wide door.
- h. Garages which are part of new construction should be located in a position relative to the main building which is the same as other original garages and outbuildings in the historic district.
- i. Garages built into new residential structures should **not** visually dominate the front of the building and should **not** be set further toward the street than the primary elevation.
- j. The windows of new construction should repeat the rhythm and the size and shape of window openings found in the walls of similar historic buildings.
- k. Horizontal sliding windows and awning windows are **not** permitted in Des Moines' historic districts because of their horizontal proportion.
- l. Large areas of solid blank wall should **not** be created on any highly visible elevations in historic districts.
- m. Window trim elements should be used in a manner similar to the original buildings in the neighborhood or in a simplified contemporary version of this.

Porches and Decks

The design guidelines recommend that decks and other semi-private outdoor areas should be located at the back and screened from public view. The proposed project meets this recommendation by placing all exterior patios and

courtyards at the rear or alley side of the property, and proposes to screen these spaces with stucco-clad site walls and landscaping.

Garages

While the proposed garage is large for the site at a four-car capacity, it is primarily concealed from view and designed to minimize its apparent scale. The garage is configured in a tandem layout so that the façade facing the alley presents as a two-car garage. Consistent with the design guidelines, the double garage utilizes two single garage doors. Additionally, the garage's scale is similar to that of the adjacent alley-facing garage to the north, though that structure predates the property's inclusion in the local historic district in 2012. The garage does not visually dominate the front of the building and is not set further toward the street than the primary elevation. The majority of its mass is hidden behind the proposed house and site walls, making it appear like a typical two-car garage instead of a tandem four-car garage.

Details

The design guidelines recommend that new construction should repeat the rhythm and size and shape of windows and walls found in the historic district, and that horizontal windows are not permitted due to their horizontal proportion. Given the unique architectural style of the proposed house, one not otherwise represented in the district, strictly repeating these design patterns would not be appropriate. Several of the proposed windows have more horizontal proportions, which are consistent with the architectural style of the propose project. As contemporary architecture has been approved in Sherman Hill in the past, staff finds these deviations from the design guidelines acceptable.

The design guidelines go on to recommend that large areas of solid blank wall should not be created on any highly visible elevation. The proposed design generally meets this recommendation, however, the west façade would benefit from further design refinement to break down its scale and add visual interest, particularly when compared to the other three elevations.

In summary, staff is generally supportive of the proposed design, with the condition that additional design exploration on the west façade is warranted to break down the scale and add visual interest, especially given the context of the adjacent one-story cottage located downhill from the subject property. Staff also recommends further study of the light well adjacent to the neighboring property to ensure safety and determine if it would require a guardrail or other modifications to meet building code.

III. STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends approval of the requested Certificate of Appropriateness subject to the following conditions:

1. Review and approval of the final design by the Planning & Urban Design Administrator.
2. Further study regarding safety and building code compliance of the light well adjacent to the neighboring property and coordination with staff on findings and resulting design revisions.
3. Modifications to the west façade, subject to review and approval of the Planning and Urban Design Administrator, to reduce the perceived scale relative to the smaller adjacent structure to the west and to incorporate a level of visual interest consistent with the other three facades.
4. Commission input on use of metal-clad windows in new construction. Review and approval of window product and design by the Planning & Urban Design Administrator.
5. All construction shall be in accordance with all Building and Fire Codes, with issuance of any necessary permit by the City's Permit & Development Center.

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION

Stacey Hanley presented the staff report and recommendation for the construction of a new single-family home with a detached four-car tandem garage at 1917 Center Street. She provided a copy of an email to the Commission from a neighboring property owner that had been sent to staff expressing opposition to the proposed design. The property is currently a vacant lot with a history of prior proposals that were never completed, including house relocations. Stacey presented and explained the submitted design materials including the site plan, floor plans, material palette, 3D renderings, and massing studies. Key elements of the design presented are as follows:

Site Plan

- The detached garage is located at the rear of the site with the house facing Center Street.
- The front entrance is centered on the site.
- A series of stucco-clad site walls are proposed to mitigate grade changes, create a raised lawn or "plinth" before reaching the front entrance – similar to neighboring properties.
- Proposed outdoor spaces include:
 - A covered exterior balcony/patio
 - An at-grade patio to the side of the house
 - Another patio to the rear of the house with access to the detached garage.

- The garage is designed as a four-car tandem garage. Its width generally matches the garage to the north, which predates the 2012 expansion of the local historic district boundaries. These properties were not in the local historic district prior to that. This garage has a double-wide overhead door instead of two single-wide doors as required by the design guidelines. The proposed garage would have two single-wide overhead doors.

Floor Plans

- A finished basement with an egress well.
- First-floor plan shows exterior areas and detached garage.
- Second-floor plan includes the covered balcony/patio area.

Elevations

- The front elevation of the house faces Center Street.
- The alley-facing façade includes the detached garage with two single-car garage doors.
- The west façade faces 1921 Center Street.
- The rear façade looks out to the detached garage.

Materials

- Primary exterior finish is a hard coat stucco in a white finish with metal clad windows.

Design Renderings and Massing Studies

- The applicant provided axonometric (bird's eye) views showing how the proposed project fits into the neighborhood context.
- The applicant provided a rendering to show materiality of the façade facing the 1921 Center Street neighbor, and provide a better understanding of the feel of the proposed project next to its smaller neighbor.
- Massing diagrams illustrate the relationship of the proposed project with its surrounding context, that includes a mix of residential and commercial structures.

Stacey Hanley continued with the review of how the proposed design meets the Design Guidelines for Residential New Construction. The block and the opposite side of the street contain a variety of building types and sizes. The proposed project's building height falls within the mid-range of the surrounding context, although the raised finished floor level (for stormwater and garage finished floor requirements) results in a perceived taller appearance. The massing is set toward the west side of the lot, which along with the grade change, further increases the perceived height; however, the height (23'-8", measured from first floor level to roof) is comparable to neighboring structures (24'). Across the street from the site are taller structures.

Stacey Hanley continued with a review of the proposed roof form and the design's vertical emphasis. Flat roofs exist within Sherman Hill, particularly on commercial buildings, but have been approved in the past for residential use. The design guidelines call for a vertical emphasis in the design of a new construction home as that is

characteristic of the Sherman Hill neighborhood. The proposed design has an overall vertical emphasis with vertically oriented windows. While it does have horizontal extensions in the form of site walls, these serve to help break up the façade and do not overpower the overall vertical presentation.

Stacey Hanley continued with a review of the foundation and “siding” material. The foundation and site walls will be clad in stucco to match the rest of the façade, with the site walls serving to mitigate grade changes on site and around the house. There is a light well on the west side of the house that would be constructed of stucco-clad concrete, meeting our design guidelines. The design guidelines recommend that new construction continue the material palette of historic buildings in type, size, and color, or use a contemporary or contrasting material when a complementary relationship is established with the surrounding context. The subject property is adjacent to a brick and masonry flat-roof commercial building with a modern rear addition, as well a site wall extension and natural area to the rear. This modern context allows for the stucco-clad contemporary material to feel complementary and appropriate.

Commissioner Green stated that there is an existing International Style three-story building with stucco siding in Sherman Hill. It is located on 19th Street.

Stacey Hanley continued with addressing the street rhythm and commended the design for changes that keep the home and detached garage in scale with the rest of the neighborhood. The design guidelines recommend larger residential buildings be visually broken down in scale, which the proposed design successfully accomplishes, with the detached garage further reducing the scale. The west façade facing the one-story cottage is less broken down in scale compared to the other facades. Staff recommends further design modifications to break down the scale, such as creating more space for landscaping and increasing transparency in the site walls. After the staff report was posted, the applicant responded to this feedback by revising the design to shift the structure to the east to provide more space between 1921 Center Street’s existing driveway and the proposed light well. Additionally, the applicant increased the transparency of the site walls on the west façade and added an additional window at the kitchen to improve the relationship to the neighboring property.

Stacey Hanley continued with reviewing the design guidelines regarding the front entry. The design guidelines recommend new entry levels match adjacent buildings unless the site conditions make this inappropriate. The elevated entryway in the proposed design is consistent with how other houses on the street handle their sloped front yard, with site walls along the sidewalk and raised front entrances. The design guidelines also recommend simplified contemporary interpretations of decorative features to articulate the front entrance. Staff finds the proposed design clearly articulates the entrance within the chosen architectural style and does not require additional decorative features.

Stacey Hanley continued with reviewing the design guidelines for decks and semi-private outdoor areas, which should be located at the rear and screened from public view; the proposed design meets this design guideline. The four-car garage is large for the site but primarily concealed from view and designed to minimize its apparent scale.

It matches the width of the garage behind it, and the tandem portion is not visible from the alley or Center Street except when looking up the driveway to the west of the subject property. The two single-car overhead doors proposed on the garage meet the design guidelines. The design guidelines recommend new construction repeat the rhythm, size, and shape of windows found in the district. While architecturally unique and not duplicating traditional window sizes or shapes, the house offers a contemporary interpretation consistent with its style.

Staff supports the proposal subject to the conditions listed in the report.

Commissioner Green asked if this had been presented to the Sherman Hill Neighborhood Association. She personally likes the bold design but suspected it might be controversial.

Stacey Hanley stated that they had received an opposition email from a neighbor, which was shared with the Commission at the start of the presentation.

Commissioner Beard noted that he received an opposition email the day of the meeting from a neighbor who lives across the street from the proposed project. The opposition email also stated that the Neighborhood Association didn't have any knowledge of the proposed design.

Commissioner Green noted that the letter passed around at the meeting was from the neighbor immediately north of the site.

Commissioner Taenzer stated other than the garage wall to the west needing something to break it up to soften the look, he liked the design.

Commissioner Green stated that scoring could be done or some other reveal to soften up the look. The design being a solid wall was done because they would be within five feet of the property line.

Jon Bassett, 732 52nd Street, architect for the project, stated that the design had been revised to respond to staff input prior to the meeting. The revised design shifts the house to the east to allow for the five-foot separation between the adjoining property and the proposed structure. This is done to address fire safety requirements, getting the egress well off the property line, but then to also soften up the look. An additional window was also added in the kitchen area.

Commissioner Beard questioned the need for the four-car garage and if it might be possible to scale it back.

Jon Bassett stated the depth for the four-car garage was based on what the owners would need for vehicles they currently own along with some work bench space in the building. The width is 24 feet, which is typical for a garage, and they have also worked to keep the height of the garage down and minimize its presence from the alley.

Commissioner Taenzer inquired what was directly behind the garage area.

Jon Bassett stated the neighboring property has a retaining wall with a privacy fence on top of it.

Jason Van Essen asked for the street view to be shown and then pointed out the neighboring property to the north with the retaining wall and six-foot-tall privacy fence.

Commissioner Waddell pointed out the difficulties that tandem garages pose when trying to move cars in and out of the garage. He agreed that the back portion of the garage wall façade is blank.

Jon Bassett commented on the garage use that he believed one of the cars was not used often and the other space is for a trailer.

Commissioner Taenzer asked if the garage placement to the west was right on the property line.

Jon Bassett stated it was currently located right on the line to accommodate driveway use off the alley.

Commissioner Beard asked if the patio space outside the dining area also had a separation wall between the house and the garage. And also wondered if a different type of masonry would be used in this area.

Jon Bassett stated there was a wall between them as the neighboring property's patio space was also located in the area to view across the property. The wall will allow privacy between the spaces. The different masonry was an architectural block on the top two feet to break up the solid aspect of the wall.

Commissioner Bergman stated that he liked this design and believes it fits the Sherman Hill area nicely, which is an eclectic area and is a mixture of structures built over time. The proposed design does not seem out of place. It feels like it is part of a cool, dynamic neighborhood.

Commissioner Shaw noted that the historical guidelines in NPS (National Park Service) want new homes to be built to reflect the time they were built. They should not have to replicate another time in history.

Commissioner Hellstern questioned how much debate on the home would happen if it had been done in a Victorian style.

Commissioner Taenzer stated it is one thing to move an old home in and another to build new.

Commissioner Bergman noted that the Commission has approved new construction in Sherman Hill that was Victorian in style.

Jason Van Essen agreed with Commissioner Shaw about giving a false sense of history and explained further how staff believed this to have a strong modern look without trying to duplicate the International Style.

Commissioner Bergman stated that many International Style buildings can be found around Des Moines.

Commission Green stated again that there is an International Style building located nearby in Sherman Hill.

Jason Van Essen reaffirmed that the design is strong. Noted that if we were to allow a Victorian Style home, we wouldn't want it replicate to the point that we wouldn't be able to tell it was a new build. It is intended to be modern.

Commissioner Green stated we do not live in a museum.

Commissioner Beard commented that sometimes in doing Victorian as a new build it looks worse than an existing home that is being restored, or something new like this proposal.

Commissioner Hellstern spoke on the opposition comments brought up by the neighbor. She acknowledged the importance of listening to these comments. Noted that this is a ground-up project, new construction, and not a project where changes are proposed to an existing building.

Commissioner Nelson believed the opposition comments to be short-sighted and noted that there were many more styles in the Sherman Hill area than the writer of the email lets on, including everything from Queen Anne Victorian to Craftsman and many variations of old homes. This home represents a continuing evolution in home design and while it is not his personal style of home, he finds the design to be stunning and to fit in well in the area. Someday this will be considered a historic home.

Commissioner Taenzer asked if there were any further questions for the applicant.

Commission Green mentioned that the staff report asked for Commission input on the proposed metal-clad windows, and she was agreeable as it would fit this style.

Commission Taenzer points out that in the 1930's windows were done with metal and an International Style home with wood windows would not make sense.

Jason Van Essen stated staff wanted to make the Commission aware of the window design and that staff also agree it would be suitable with this type of residential style.

Commissioner Taenzer asked if anyone in the audience wished to speak.

Declan Phillips, 804 17th Street, inquired about the wall that had been characterized as lacking detail, wanted confirmation as to which wall was being referred to.

Commissioner Taenzer asked for the plans to be displayed to answer the question regarding the west wall of the garage.

Commissioner Beard referred to an artist studio addition made to the house at 1605 Woodland Avenue. Noted it had wall sections without openings.

Commissioner Green explained that some people had been bothered by that project, but she did not believe the Commission had been bothered by it.

Commissioner Taenzer commented that the Woodland Avenue project did not look historic nor does it give a false sense of history.

Commissioner Nelson stated that we are viewing this large wall from a very static viewpoint when realistically, this is a wall that does not face the street and would only be seen from the back side of the home.

Commissioner Green did not feel that the back wall of the garage would be a deterrent when viewed in real life.

Commission Taenzer agreed and felt people won't be looking at the back of the garage, they will only be looking at the house.

COMMISSION ACTION

Commissioner Green made motion for approval of the requested Certificate of Appropriateness subject to the following conditions:

1. Review and approval of the final design by the Planning and Urban Design Administrator.
2. Further study regarding building code compliance of the light well adjacent to the neighboring property.
3. Metal-clad windows are appropriate for use on this new construction project. Review and approval of the finalized window product by the Planning and Urban Design Administrator.
4. All construction shall be in accordance with all Building and Fire Codes, with issuance of any necessary permit by the City's Permit and Development Center.

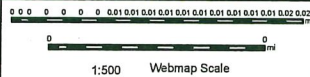
Motion was seconded by Commissioner Shaw.

THE VOTE: 10-0

Des Moines Webmap



Description



Coordinate System: WGS 1984 Web Mercator Auxiliary SphereProjection: Mercator
Auxiliary SphereDatum: WGS 1984False Easting: 0.0000False Northing: 0.0000Central
Meridian: 0.0000Standard Parallel 1: 0.0000Auxiliary Sphere Type: 0.0000Units: Meter

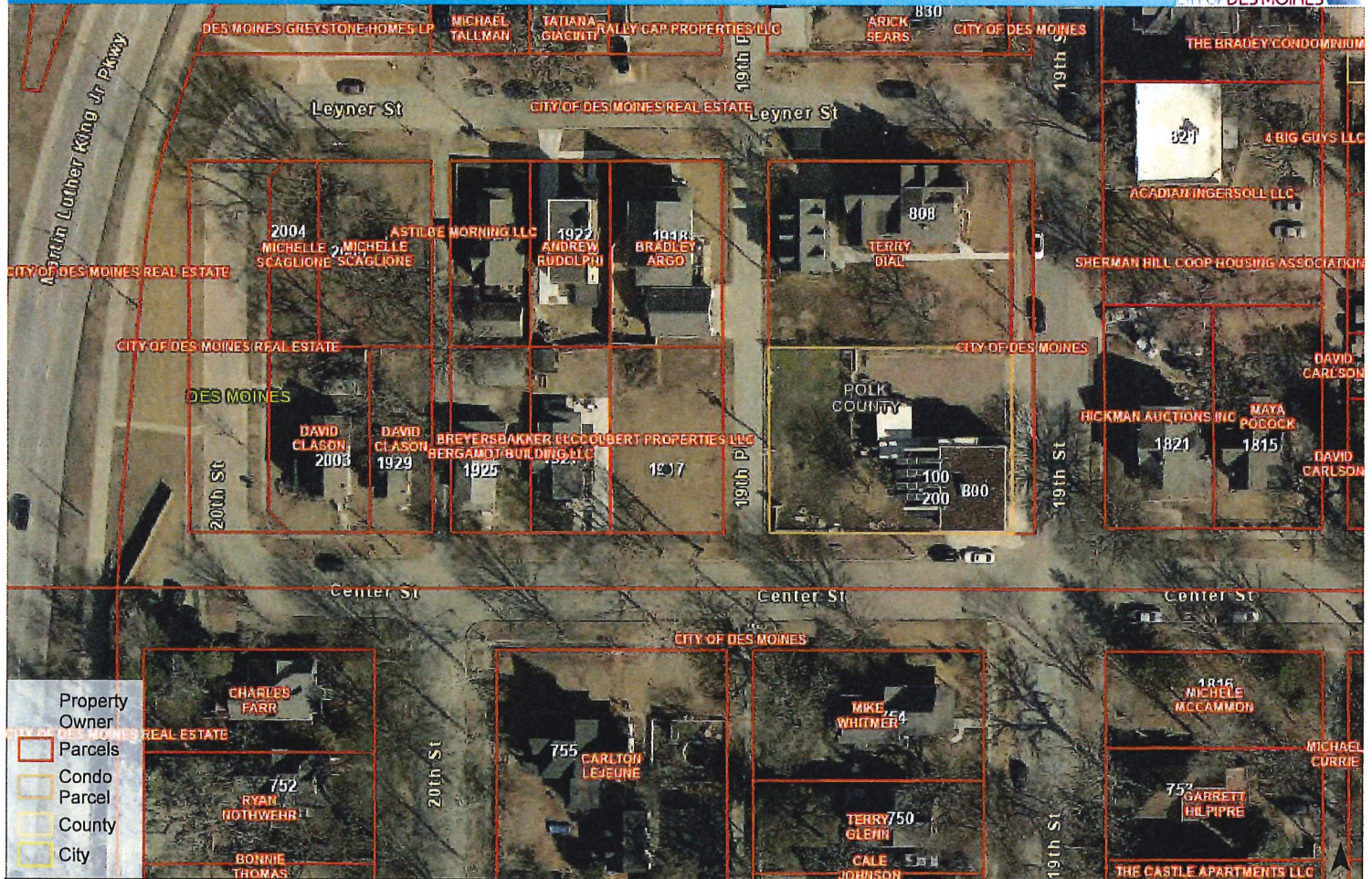
Author: City of Des Moines

Date: 8/19/2025
Time: 1:14 PM

Disclaimer: This map is approximate and may not be complete.
City assumes no liability for accuracy. Consult sources listed to verify information. Sources: City of Des Moines IT

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Des Moines Webmap



- Property Owner
- Parcels
- Condo
- Parcel
- County
- City

Description	 1:1,128 Webmap Scale	Coordinate System: WGS 1984 Web Mercator Auxiliary Sphere Projection: Mercator Auxiliary Sphere Datum: WGS 1984 False Easting: 0.0000 False Northing: 0.0000 Central Meridian: 0.0000 Standard Parallel 1: 0.0000 Auxiliary Sphere Type: 0.0000 Units: Meter	Author: City of Des Moines Date: 8/19/2025 Time: 1:15 PM

Disclaimer: This map is approximate and may not be complete. City assumes no liability for accuracy. Consult sources listed to verify information. Sources: City of Des Moines IT

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1917 Center Street

Existing Site Photographs



View from Center St. looking NW



View from Center St. looking North

1917 Center Street

Existing Site Photographs

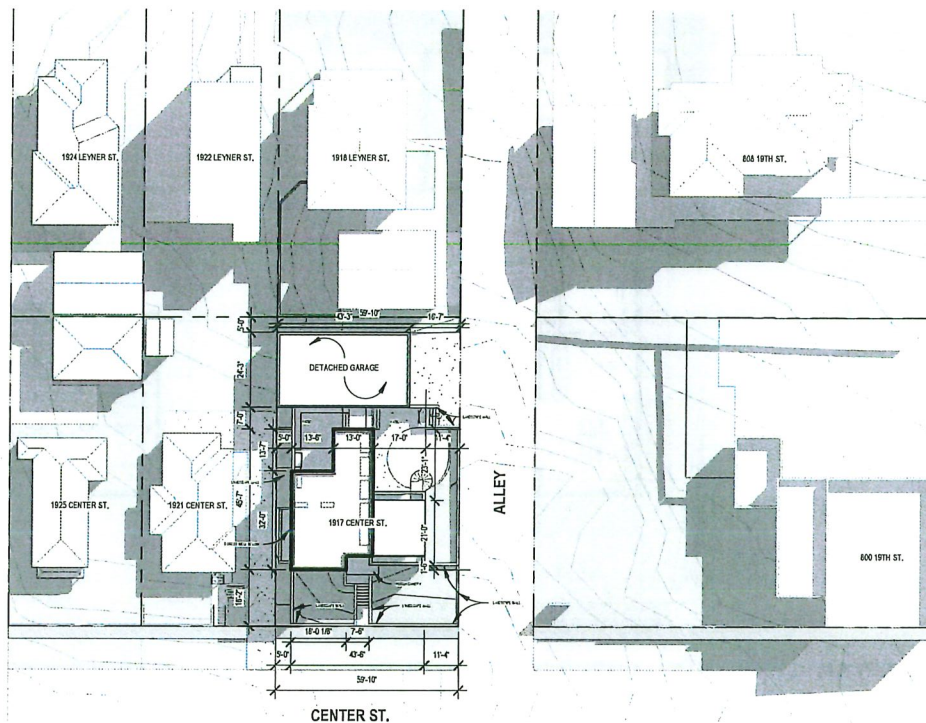


View from Center St. looking NE



View from the alley looking SW

1917 CENTER ST - SITE PLAN

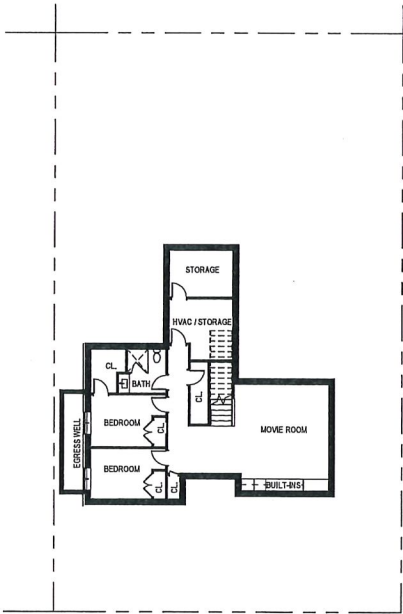


1 SITE PLAN - PRESENTATION
1" = 30'-0"

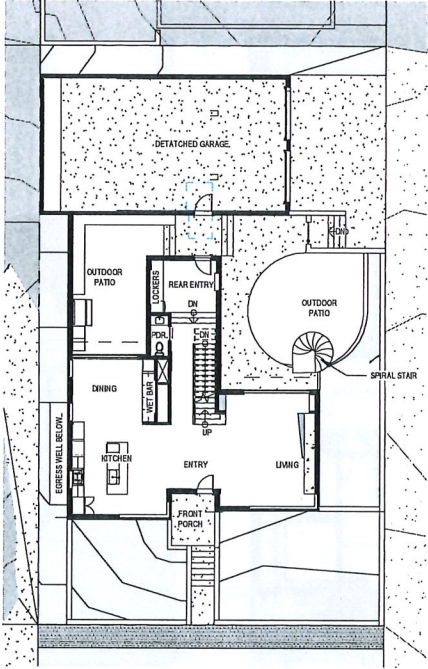
$$1'' = 30' - 0''$$

COLBERT PROPERTIES
08/20/25

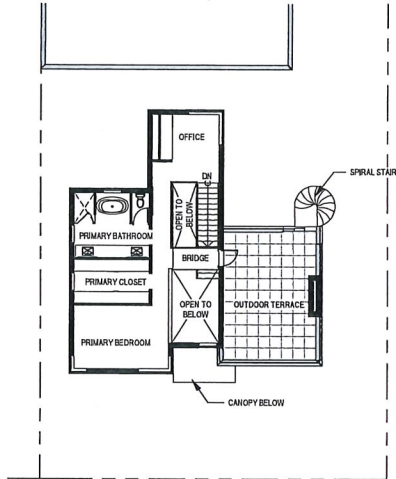
1917 CENTER ST - FLOORPLANS



1 BASEMENT PRESENTATION PLAN
1/16" = 1'-0"



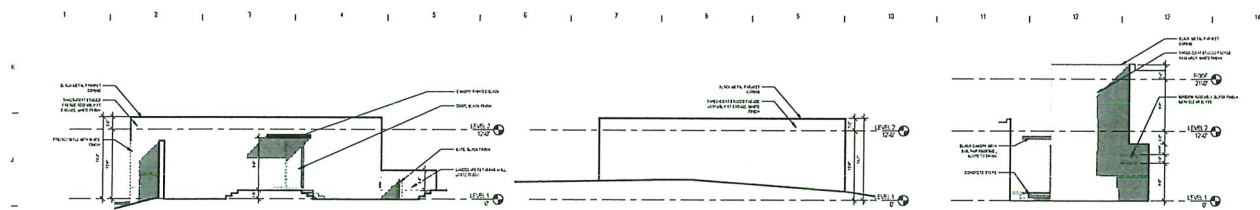
2 LEVEL 1 PRESENTATION PLAN
1/16" = 1'-0"



3 LEVEL 2 PRESENTATION PLAN
1/16" = 1'-0"



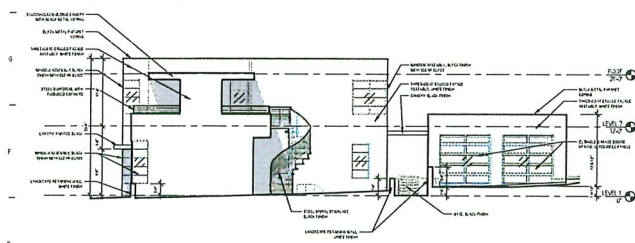
Copyright © 2014 Hartman Spiller Architects, LLC



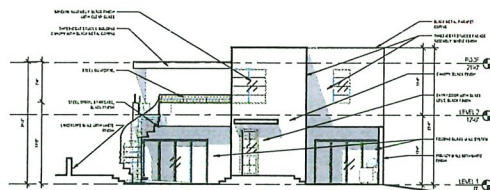
C1 GARAGE ELEVATION - SOUTH FACADE
1/8" = 1'-0"

C2 GARAGE ELEVATION - NORTH FACADE
1/8" = 1'-0"

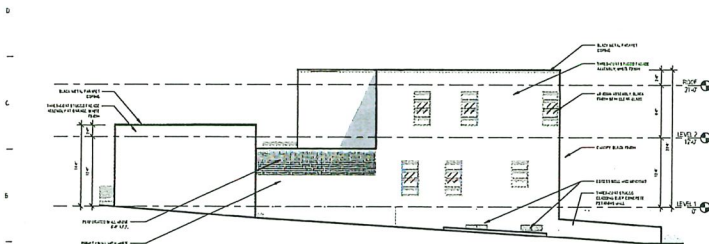
C3 BUILDING ELEVATION - WEST FACADE AT BUMPOUT
1/8" = 1'-0"



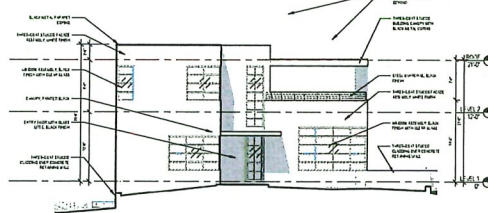
B1 BUILDING ELEVATION - EAST FACADE
1/8" = 1'-0"



B2 BUILDING ELEVATION - NORTH FACADE
1/8" = 1'-0"



A1 BUILDING ELEVATION - WEST FACADE
1/8" = 1'-0"



A2 BUILDING ELEVATION - SOUTH FACADE
1/8" = 1'-0"

HARTMAN SPILLER

ARCHITECTURE & INTERIOR DESIGN

1917 Center Street, Suite 300

San Francisco, CA 94109

Phone: (415) 447-1000

www.hartmanspiller.com

Company Name

Address Line 1

Address Line 2

Address Line 3

City, State, Zip

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City, State, Zip

1917 Center Street

Primary Building Materials



Building Cladding :
Hardcoat Stucco - White Finish



Building Fenestration :
Metal-Clad Windows with
Clear Glazing

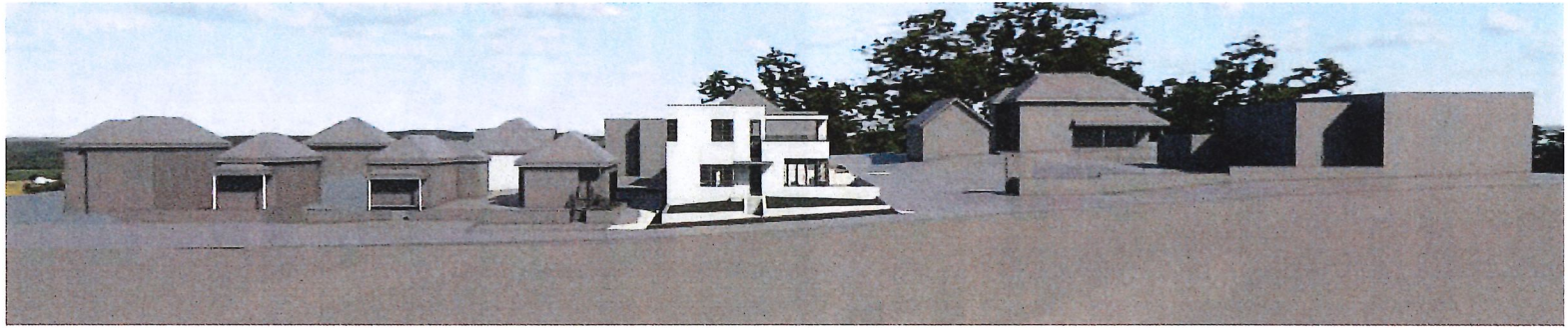












From: [Van Essen, Jason M.](#)
To: [Hanley, Stacey R.](#); [Couppee, Jacob T.](#)
Subject: FW: 1917 Center St
Date: Wednesday, August 20, 2025 3:18:19 PM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)

Jason Van Essen, AICP
Planning & Urban Design Administrator
Development Services



City of Des Moines, 602 Robert D. Ray Dr., Des Moines, IA 50309
Phone: (515) 283-4147

Visit us online at [DSM.city](https://www.dsm.city)
Download the [myDSMmobile](#) app

The City of Des Moines has launched a new online platform to make the Zoning and Planning and Design Ordinances (Chapter 134 and Chapter 135) more accessible. Users will also find direct access to multiple GIS maps, a signage calculator, and a tool that generates Regulations by District reports. The new platform is available online at <https://online.encodeplus.com/regs/desmoines-ia/index.aspx>.

From: Brad Argo <bradargo@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, August 20, 2025 3:15 PM
To: Van Essen, Jason M. <JMVanessen@dmgov.org>
Subject: 1917 Center St

EXTERNAL EMAIL - This email was sent by a person from outside your organization. Exercise caution when clicking links, opening attachments or taking further action, before validating its authenticity.

Jason,

Thank you for the time, I appreciate the opportunity to comment on the proposed design for the Center Street project.

From discussions with neighbors, the general concern is that the style of the proposed home does not align with the architectural fabric of Sherman Hill. While I understand that the design has been described as "Art Deco"—and that this style technically falls within the historic window for our district—based on the renderings it appears significantly out of character with the surrounding homes. And our concern is that, if approved, this project could set a precedent that can be exploited for additional designs that depart substantially from the established neighborhood aesthetic.

In my opinion, the Historic Preservation Commission has long worked to maintain consistency in the details of our homes, even as small as gutters and windows, reflecting the importance placed on preserving the historic identity of Sherman Hill. And the results speak for themselves – it has been a success! But this raises the question: what message does it send to homeowners who have invested time and resources maintaining architectural conformity if a project of such contrasting style is allowed to move forward?

It is also worth noting that this lot has changed hands multiple times, with each prior proposal for a modern-style design ultimately denied. Reframing a similar proposal under the “Art Deco” name does not appear to resolve the same underlying concern—that the design simply does not fit within the character of the neighborhood. As such, I respectfully request that this project be denied.

Thank you for considering these comments as you review the project.

More detail in the HPC packet which I think speaks loudly on why this should be denied: All neighbors touching this lot are firmly against the build.

The proposed house and garage are designed in a modern interpretation of the International Style, with elements influenced by Art Deco. While **this is not a typical residential style in Sherman Hill**, examples can be found in scattered locations throughout Des Moines’ residential neighborhoods. The house is a two-story stucco structure with metal-clad windows. Several outdoor patios and courtyards are located along the rear and alley sides of the property, serving to break down the scale of the building. Located to the rear of the property is a 4- car tandem garage, with two single-car garage doors facing the alley. Although **this design differs from the prevailing residential styles in Sherman Hill**, the Commission has previously approved modern new construction homes and modern home additions. This staff report evaluates the extent to which the proposed design meets the Local Historic District Design Guidelines for Residential New Construction.

Thanks,
Brad

Dear City of Des Moines Council and Staff:

This note is regarding the proposal of our new construction single-family home on a vacant lot in the Sherman Hill Neighborhood. At a high level, our proposed single-family home project received unanimous support (10-0 vote of approval) from the Historic Preservation Commission (two members were absent) to receive a Certificate of Appropriateness - that was on August 20. On September 5, the Sherman Hill Association appealed the decision.

We saw and heard the Historic Preservation Commission as they were presented with the project, including opposing views/concerns, and appreciate the discussion which followed, including comments from the Historic Preservation Commission, our design team, and residents of the community, prior to the vote.

At no point did we engage in any discussions with York Taenzer related to our design intentions. In fact, we did not even know what direction our project would take until well after the property transacted.

We are ready to proceed immediately and we look forward to becoming new citizens of Des Moines, being good neighbors, and adding to the tax base in a positive manner.

Sincerely,

Owners of 1917 Center St.