

**CAPITOL ZONING DISTRICT COMMISSION
STAFF REPORT
4/25/18
JBC / BIM**



Location: 1415 West Seventh Street
Applicant: Roby Brock for The American Legion, Department of Arkansas
Permit Type: Certificate of Appropriateness

Project Description: This application is for a Certificate of Appropriateness for the installation of a front porch column and for the (after the fact) removal of a ground-mounted sign in front of the building. The application also calls for installation of new signage, which can be approved at the staff level.

Historic Significance: The 1400 block of West Seventh Street, much like the surrounding area, was originally a working-class neighborhood, while later transitioning into a predominately commercial area during the post-war period. The Mid-Century Modern structure seen today at 1415 was built in 1958 for the American Legion's Arkansas headquarters. The Legion remained here until 1980, when it moved to the building next door that once contained a Union National Bank branch, and handed the 1415 building over to its women's auxiliary organization. A small granite marker stands in the front lawn dedicated to the American Legion, although the metal emblem featured on it has since fallen off. In recent years, the property has housed such businesses as American Medical Rentals and Bug Busters Pest Control. The Auxiliary still operates in the smaller building at the rear of the property.

Previous Action: In 2007, staff approved the installation of a sign for American Medical Rental, and in 2010 staff issued another permit to reroof the structure. The Commission approved a Conditional Use Permit in April 2018 to allow the operation of an events center and meeting facility.

Zoning: This property is located in Zone "A", the State Capitol Foreground. This mixed-use zone calls for medium-scale office and commercial buildings, with some taller structures allowed along Capitol Avenue.

Review Standards for Certificates of Appropriateness:

Capitol Zoning District Commission Rule, Section 2-105, Permit Approval Procedure

C. 1. (a) A Certificate of Appropriateness must be obtained prior to effecting any major modification or addition to a structure, site or improvements within the District. *Major modifications* are those which substantially alter, from the public right-of-way, the appearance of a structure or site feature. Applications for major modifications requiring Commission review will first be scheduled for a review by the Design Review Committee which will make a recommendation regarding proposed work's appropriateness of the modification to the historical style of the structure and neighboring structures; compatibility with its architectural, historical or cultural significance and level of intactness; and its consistency with the goals of the Commission's Master Plan and Standards.

Staff finds the proposal constitutes a request for a major modification and requires a Certificate of Appropriateness that must be reviewed by the Design Review Committee and approved by the Commission.

F.1. All changes in the Capitol Zoning District will be evaluated according to the General Standards and the applicable Area Master Plan. Also,

- a. Changes to historic structures or site features shall be evaluated according to the Rehabilitation Standards for Historic Properties.
 - i. Structures and site features 40 years or older are assumed to be historic ...
 - ii. The Commission may waive the Rehabilitation Standards for cause (see Section 4-101 C.), in which case a proposed change to a historic structure or site feature shall be evaluated according to the applicable Design Standards.

*Staff finds, based on documentary and physical evidence, the site feature in question to be historic because it is over 40 years old and not significantly altered. Staff finds the proposal should be evaluated using the General Standards, the Capitol Area Master Plan, and the Rehabilitation Standards. **If the Commission finds cause to waive one or more of the Rehabilitation Standards, the Capitol Area Design Standards should be used in their place.***

Capitol Zoning General Standards, Section 3-401, Signage Requirements

S.2 Allowable Signage in Zones A, C and D

Signs consistent with these requirements, per each permitted use, may be approved at the staff level:

1. One wall sign not to exceed 24 square feet. Wall signs shall be located on a vertical surface of the building including canopies, wing walls, etc., but not higher than the eave or rafter line of the wall on which located.
2. One ground-mounted sign not to exceed 24 square feet in area nor six (6) feet in height ...

The proposed new signs appear to be consistent with these requirements, though no dimensions are given. Provided they do not exceed the dimensions given above, the proposed new signage could be approved by staff.

Capitol Zoning Rehabilitation Standards, Section 4-301, Interpretation of Terms Related to Compliance

Historic - In general, a historic property is one that is at least 40 years old or older and largely unchanged; some properties less than 40 years old may also be considered historic if they are of exceptional significance. The CZDC is especially concerned with those properties that are associated with significant people or events or convey a character of building and design found during the District's period of significance, roughly 1880-1940. Note that in some cases, a CZDC-designated property may also be listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

Staff finds the property to be historic, but not constructed during the District's period of significance, because of the documentary and physical evidence indicating the structure was built in 1958.

Capitol Zoning Rehabilitation Standards, Section 4-104, Preservation Principles

Principle 4: Preserve any existing original site features or original building materials and features.

Staff finds the proposal to remove the sign is not consistent with this principle.

Capitol Zoning Rehabilitation Standards, Section 4-201, Historic Streetscape and Design Features

Policy: Historic streetscape and site features that survive should be preserved ...

Staff finds the proposal to remove the sign is not consistent with this policy. There do not, however, appear to be any Rehabilitation Standards, in this section, relating specifically to historic signs.

Capitol Zoning Rehabilitation Standards, Section 4-205, Porches

Policy: Where a porch is a primary character-defining feature of a front facade, it should be maintained ...

*** R5.4 If porch replacement is necessary, reconstruct it to match the original in form and detail.**

- Speculative construction of a porch is discouraged. Avoid applying decorative elements that are not known to have been used on such [structures].

Staff finds the proposal is not consistent with this standard. Though written regarding whole porch replacement, staff believes this standard is also applicable to individual porch elements. Staff believes the proposed column represents a decorative element not known to have been used on similar buildings.

Capitol Zoning Rehabilitation Standards, Section 4-206, *Architectural Details*

Policy: Architectural details help establish a historic building's distinct visual character; thus, they should be preserved whenever feasible ...

* **R6.1 Avoid removing or altering significant architectural details.**

* **R6.3 Protect and maintain significant stylistic elements.**

Staff believes these standards relate most closely, in this case, to the removal of the historic sign. Staff finds the proposal to remove the sign is not consistent with these standards. Staff finds the applicant's request for an after-the-fact review of this work constitutes a request for a waiver of these standards.

Capitol Zoning Rehabilitation Standards, Section 4-101, *Purpose & Applicability*

C. An asterisk (*) adjacent to a statement in the text in this article indicates that it is a standard that will not be waived by the Capitol Zoning District Commission for historic structures or site features built during the District's period of significance and/or listed in the National Register of Historic Places ...

1. For other historic structures or site features, these standards may be waived if it is demonstrated to the Commission's satisfaction that such a waiver will not adversely affect the historic character of the surrounding neighborhood.

2. Compliance with other standards, without an asterisk, is also required, but may be waived if it is demonstrated to the Commission's satisfaction that such a waiver will not adversely affect the historic character of the surrounding neighborhood.

*Since the preservation principles are not marked with an asterisk, and since the sign in question does of date to the period of significance, **the Commission may waive Rehabilitation Standards R5.4, R6.1, and R6.3** (above) if it determines the proposal will not adversely affect the neighborhood and is consistent with the Capitol Area Design Standards.*

Capitol Area Design Standards, Section 7-101(A), *Overall design goals for the Capitol Area*

4. Signs also should be subordinate to the overall neighborhood character. While it clearly is important to identify businesses and signs will continue to be a part of the scene, they should complement building designs, not detract from them and their placement and design should help to convey a sense of order for the area.

There do not appear to be any Capitol Area Design Standards that deal specifically with sign design or placement. Staff believes, however, the proposal to replace the ground-mounted sign is generally consistent with this overall goal.

Capitol Area Design Standards, Section 7-101, *Site Design Standards*

C17. Develop the street level of a building to provide visual interest to pedestrians.

C29. The primary building material should be masonry.

- Brick, stone and concrete are appropriate.

C30. Reserve strongly contrasting materials and colors for accents, such as building entrances.

- Avoid the excessive use of many different façade materials.

C36. Design the ground floor exterior of a building to be "pedestrian-friendly."

- Decorative wall surfaces and landscape materials are encouraged at this level.

C37. Develop main entrances to be clearly identifiable.

- Design building entrances to contrast with the surrounding wall plane.
- Create a frame around doorways, by changing materials from the primary facade material.

Staff finds the proposal to install a masonry column near the front entrance is generally consistent with these standards.

Capitol Area Master Plan, Section 5-201(A), *Goals for the Capitol Area*

1. **To promote the development of more ... professional office uses.**

6. **To provide an attractive foreground for the Capitol.**

Staff finds the proposal is generally consistent with these goals.

Neighborhood Reaction: None to date.

Staff Recommendation: Staff recommends **approval** with the following conditions:

- 1) That all State and City Codes be followed at all times; and
- 2) That the property be maintained in a neat and safe condition at all times.

Design Review Committee Recommendation: The Committee voted 7-1 to recommend approval with the following conditions:

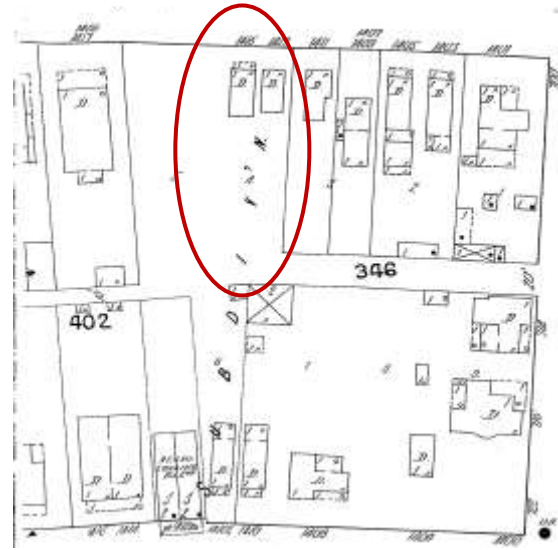
- 3) That the new sign be fabricated of a period-appropriate material, such as metal or masonry; and
- 4) That the proposed porch column be omitted from the final design.

Capitol Area Advisory Committee Recommendation: The CAAC voted 7-1 via a voice vote to recommend approval with the Design Review Committee’s recommended conditions (3 and 4, above).

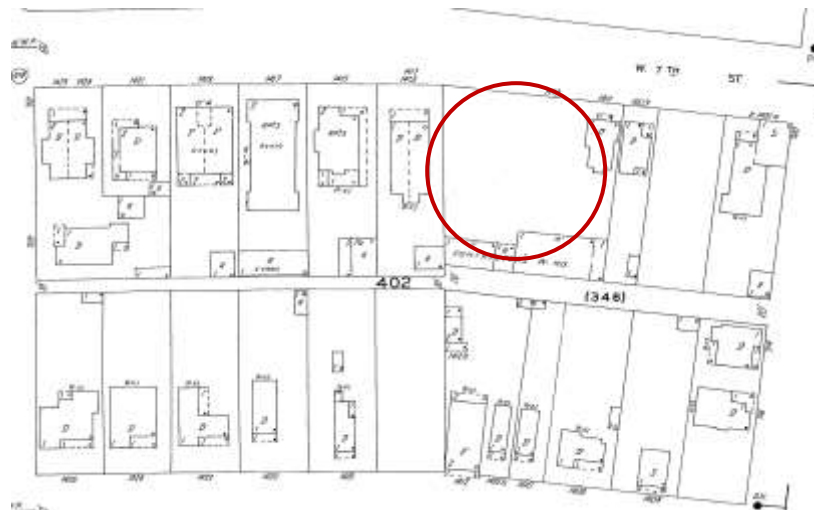
Sanborn Insurance Company map details



1897 – The 1400 block of 7th Street, like much of the surrounding area, consisted of working-class housing. Likely, the structure at 1415 was a small-framed house. An alley once existed behind the block.



1913 – The area experienced rapid change over the next 16 years. The back porch at the house on 1415 now has been enclosed.



1939 – The single-family home is gone and the lot now empty. Although, notice how the neighborhood has expanded and changed to include multi-family housing and now a contractor’s warehouse behind the demolished residence.

Archival Aerial Photos



1943 – The lot is empty, while still surrounded by several single and multi-family homes.



1960 – The auxiliary building, built ca. 1958, appears.



1974 – Residential housing around the State Capitol had disappeared around this time. Notice how the granite marker is now visible in the front lawn. The I-630 right-of-way has been cleared in the southern half of the block.

Archival Aerial Photos (continued)



1980 – The new American Legion building appears. The structure at 1415 S. 7th Street is now turned into its auxiliary operations.

Archival Photographs (1992)



Archival Photographs (March 2018)



Current Photograph



Note that the concrete sign has been removed.



CAPITOL ZONING DISTRICT COMMISSION

APPLICATION FORM

PROPERTY ADDRESS 1415 W. 7th St.

PROPERTY OWNER AMERICAN LEGION DEPT.

PERSON FILING APPLICATION Roby Buck
if other than owner

APPLICANT PHONE AND EMAIL [REDACTED] Roby@TalkBusiness.net

APPLICANT SIGNATURE AND DATE Roby Buck 4/13/18
Signatures certify that applicant is authorized to represent this property, and that all information presented in this application, as well as in any supporting materials, is true and correct to the best of the signatory's knowledge.

DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED WORK AND / OR USE small events center, office space

Attach as many pages or supporting materials as necessary. The Commission and its staff cannot make a determination on your application without a complete description of the property's proposed appearance, materials, and/or function. An application is not complete until all applicable supporting materials have been submitted to staff. Electronic submittals (email, scanned documents, PDFs, digital images, etc) are welcome.

