

HERITAGE PRESERVATION COMMISSION REPORT
Certificate of Appropriateness- Downtown Commercial Historic District.
Section 115-320(d)(2)

TO: Heritage Preservation Commission
FROM: Planning Staff
MEETING DATE: July 28, 2022

PROPOSAL: The applicant is proposing to replace the wall sign on the Main Street façade of the property located at 308 Main Street.

PROPERTY OWNER:
AIRAM Group LLC
2102 31st St S
La Crosse, WI 54601

APPLICANT:
La Crosse Sign Group
Aaron Foster

BACKGROUND: The Downtown Commercial Historic District was established by Ordinance in April 2016 along with design standards that are specific to the styles of architecture found within. The local district designation of the Downtown Commercial Historic District was created to encourage preservation of the historic resources of the district, which was named to the National Register of Historic Places in 1994. The design standards and review procedures are used to guide preservation, rehabilitation, new construction, relocation and demolitions. Plans or requests must be approved by the Heritage Preservation Commission prior to any building/demolition permit being issued. In determining whether to issue a Certificate of Appropriateness for Demolition, the HPC shall:

1. Consider factors such as whether the structure is of historical significance, the state of repair of the building, and whether denial of a permit would create a significant economic hardship for the owner.
2. Issue the certificate only if the owner can demonstrate that the building is structurally unsound and/or that denial of a demolition permit would create a significant economic hardship for the owner.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: The applicant is proposing to remove the existing sign art (coffee grinders) and lettering and install a wall sign constructed out of black aluminum panels with painted acrylic letters. The panels sign will span the length of the building and be mounted to the existing plywood backing that is located between the storefront and second story windows which is 44 inches in height.

SEE ATTACHED PLANS FOR MORE INFORMATION

Existing Sign



Proposed Sign



ANALYSIS:

Design standards for signs are:

Signs . In historic commercial buildings, signs were typically mounted above storefronts flush with the façade, or projected perpendicularly from the façade. Signs were also placed in windows and appeared on awnings. All of these sign types are appropriate if designed with suitable materials and dimensions. Signs shall be placed where they would have historically been placed, and shall not cover significant architectural features or ornamentation.

- a. Sign installation shall be reversible - that is, it should leave no trace on the building after the sign is removed.
- b. Sign colors shall be compatible with those of the building; a limited palette of no more than four colors should be used.
- c. Traditional materials (wood and metal) are appropriate, while plastic is not. Neon signs may be used with the approval of the HPC. Other composite material may be approved by the Heritage Preservation Commission.
- d. Modern back-lit fluorescent signs, animated signs, awnings, or electronic billboards and signs with changeable letters are prohibited.
- e. Small free-standing or wall-mounted signs may be used to identify rear entrances or parking areas.

- f. Wayfinding, directional, or upcoming event signs that maintain the historic character of the Downtown may be approved by the Heritage Preservation Commission.
- g. All proposed signs must receive a sign permit from the Fire Department - Division of Fire Protection and Building Safety in accordance with [section 111-36](#) of the Municipal Code

The proposed sign is proposed to be installed to an existing wood backing that will not physically impairing any significant architectural features nor visually impair any portion of the storefront. It is constructed of aluminum and acrylic which is a composite material. The sign is non-illuminated, it will be lit at night from existing light fixtures.

FINDING: The proposed sign is in conformance with the Downtown Historic District Design Standards.

RECOMMENDED ACTION BY STAFF: This Certificate of Appropriateness is recommended for approval with the condition that it is approved by the Community Risk Management Department.