

**STAFF REPORT
HISTORIC AND CULTURAL LANDMARKS COMMISSION
CITY OF FORT WORTH, TEXAS**

DATE: January 9, 2023

COUNCIL DISTRICT 2/FUTURE COUNCIL DISTRICT 2

GENERAL INFORMATION

REQUEST	Certificate of Appropriateness
APPLICANT/AGENT	Bennett Partners/US Energy Development Corp
LOCATION	601 E. Exchange Ave.
ZONING/ USE (S)	SY-HCO-55/HC
NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION	Stockyards

REQUEST

Applicant requests a COA for waivers from the Stockyards Form-Based Code and Design Guidelines for the following:

- Install a painted wall sign on unpainted masonry and;
- A 20' parking setback where the minimum setback is 30'.

APPLICABLE REGULATIONS

City of Fort Worth Zoning Ordinance
Section 4.401 – Historic Preservation Ordinance

- (d) Certificates of Appropriateness (changes to historic properties).
(2) Level of review
b) HCLC review. The HCLC has original jurisdiction to evaluate applications for appropriateness, or any portion thereof, and issue COAs for the following:
2.All waivers from applicable design standards.

APPLICABLE DESIGN STANDARDS

The subject property is located within the locally-designated Fort Worth Stockyards Historic and Cultural Landmark District (HC) and within the Historic Stockyards National Register District. The Fort Worth Stockyards Form-Based Code & Design Guidelines and the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties are to be used when evaluating any proposed change to the property.

FORT WORTH STOCKYARDS FORM-BASED CODE & DESIGN GUIDELINES

Historic District – Historic Preservation Principles
Adding Compatible New Features (p 2-25)

If a new feature (one that did not exist previously) or an addition is necessary, its design should minimize the impact on a historic structure. It is also important to distinguish new features on a historic structure from original historic elements, and to avoid adding features to primary building facades.

Div 2.3 Frontages

Section 2.3.1.c Pedestrian

- Parking setback 30' minimum

Sec. 2.4.3(S) – Sign Installation on a Historic Building

- a) A sign should not obscure character-defining features of a historic building.
 1. A sign should be designed to integrate with the architectural features of a building, not distract from them.
 2. No sign should be painted onto any significant architectural feature, including but not limited to a wall, window or door frame, cornice, molding, ornamental feature, or unusual or fragile material.

Article 7: Site Standards

Section 7.1.1 – Pedestrian Access

A. Access Required

All development must provide safe, direct and convenient pedestrian access connecting public streets and parking lots to primary building entrances, and to all other uses in the development that allow for public access.

Sec. 7.1.2 – Vehicle Parking

Vehicle parking spaces must be provided in accordance with § 6.201, Off-Street Parking Requirements, of the City of Fort Worth Zoning Ordinance.

Section 7.4.4

(A): Allocation Not Transferable

- Sign allocation must be used on the building facade used to measure the allocation, and may not be transferred to a different building facade.

(C): Awning, Canopy, Projecting and Wall Signs

1. Awning signs, canopy signs, projecting signs and wall signs are allocated a combined sign area of 36 square feet or 1.5 square feet per linear foot of building facade facing a Frontage included on the map in Div. 1.4, District and Frontage Map, whichever is greater.
2. Awning signs, canopy signs, projecting signs and wall signs are allocated a combined sign area of 0.5 square feet per linear foot of building facade not facing a Frontage included on the map in Div. 1.4, District and Frontage Map.

Section 7.4.1.3: Wall Signs*Description*

A sign attached to the wall or surface of a building or structure, the display surface of which does not project more than 1 foot from the outside wall of the building or structure.

General Provisions

1. A wall sign must be placed no higher than 24 feet above the sidewalk, measured from the top of the sidewalk to the highest point of the sign.
2. A wall sign must not extend above the roof line or above a parapet wall of a building with a flat roof.
3. A wall sign must not cover windows or architectural details.
4. A wall sign may be externally or internally illuminated in accordance with Sec. 7.4.15.

Dimensions:

- Area of individual sign (max): no max except total allocation
- Projection – measured from building façade (max): 1'

§ 6.201 Off-Street Parking Requirements (Zoning Ordinance)b) *Required off-street parking.*

3. *Exception.* Properties designated as historic and cultural landmark or highly significant endangered or listed on the National Register of Historic Places are not subject to the required off- street parking requirements set forth in this section.

THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR'S STANDARDS FOR THE TREATMENT OF HISTORIC PROPERTIES FOR REHABILITATION

General Standards- New Additions

9. New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction shall not destroy historic materials that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible with the massing, size, scale, and architectural features to protect the historic integrity of the property and its environment.

10. New additions and adjacent or related new construction shall be undertaken in such a manner that if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.

Masonry*Recommended*

- Identifying, retaining and preserving masonry features that are important in defining the overall historic character of the building (such as walls, brackets, railings, cornices, window and door surrounds, steps, and columns) and decorative ornament and other details, such as tooling and bonding patterns, coatings, and color.
- Applying compatible paint coating systems to historically-painted masonry following proper surface preparation.

Not Recommended

- Applying paint or other coatings (such as stucco) to masonry that has been historically unpainted or uncoated to create a new appearance.

New Signs and Historic Buildings

The following points should be considered when designing and constructing new signs for historic buildings:

- Signs should be viewed as part of an overall graphics system for the building and work with the building rather than against it.
- New signs should respect the size, scale and design of the historic buildings
- New signs should not obscure significant features of the historic building
- New signs should respect neighboring buildings
- Sign materials should be compatible with those of the historic building. Materials characteristic of the building's period and style, used in contemporary designs, can form effective new signs.
- New signs should be attached to the building carefully, both to prevent damage to historic fabric and to ensure the safety of pedestrians.

FINDINGS/RECOMMENDATIONS

The subject property is located in the northeast corner of the Stockyards Historic District and is one the few remaining buildings associated with the Armour Co meat packing plant. Known as the Blood Serum Albumin Plant, the International style building built circa 1940s is characterized by its smooth, unadorned surfaces and horizontal lines. This structure has undergone several alterations and additions throughout its history. Accessory buildings on the north side of the main building were demolished in 2010. The structure has suffered several years of deterioration due to neglect and water infiltration. The extensive rehabilitation of the building into an office includes adding window and door openings, small additions to the roof, creating surface parking and landscaping and a painted sign reading 'Armour and Company'.

The applicant is seeking a waiver to construct the surface parking with a 20' setback instead of the required 30' setback, and to install the painted sign on unpainted masonry.

Parking Setback

In the Stockyards Form-Based code, the building is located on the Pedestrian Frontage along Stockyards Blvd and E Exchange Ave which requires a 30' parking setback. The proposed office use would typically require 2.5 off-street parking spaces per 1,000 square feet of gross floor area according to the Zoning Code. However, since the structure is located in a local Historic and Cultural (HC) District and in a National Register of Historic Places district, the site is exempt from off-street parking requirements.

The building is located very close to Stockyards Blvd. The requested setback still allows for the creation of an outdoor space for the building users, and relief from the street to create a better pedestrian experience along Stockyards and E. Exchange Avenue. The applicant proposes to provide substantial screening of the parking lot using landscaping, trees, sidewalk and fencing to compliment the Old Swift Office Building across Exchange Avenue and continue the Exchange streetscape. The proposal also references traditional landscaping of the Armour Headquarters building, which is no longer extant, thereby reestablishing a traditional landscape at this important intersection. Given the proposed mitigation, the waiver is supportable. The applicant will need to finalize streetscape and pedestrian access plans with staff before final approval of all plans.

Painted Sign

Size and Scale:

The code also states that awning signs, canopy signs, projecting signs and wall signs are allocated a combined sign area of 36 square feet or 1.5 square feet per linear foot of building facade (whichever is greater) if they face a street with a designated frontage included (see Div. 1.4, District and Frontage Map) therefore, properties along this street are allocated a combined sign area of 36 square feet or 1.5 square feet per linear foot of building façade. The proposed sign measures 432 square feet. Given the length of the building façade along Stockyards Boulevard, a wall sign is allowed to be 410 square feet in size. The sign exceeds the square footage however, staff believes the sign is in scale with the building and can administratively approve an up to 20% increase in the allotted square footage. Therefore, the sign size and scale are supportable.

Design and Installation:

The Secretary of the Interior's Standards (Standard 9) calls on new additions to be "differentiated from the old" and to be designed and installed in such a way as to "protect the historic integrity of the property and its environment." Standard 10 also states that new additions do not impair the essential form and integrity if the work were removed in the future. It is also not recommended in the treatment of masonry to paint historically unpainted masonry surfaces. The Form-Based code also states no sign should be painted onto any significant architectural feature, including but not limited to a wall, that it is important to distinguish new features on a historic structure from original historic elements, and to avoid adding features to primary building facades.

The proposed sign does not detract from the architectural features of the building by featuring a horizontal orientation that follows the character of the building and simple colors and design that is not overwhelming to the facade. The sign associates the building with the historic Armour Co site where no other marker indicates on site aside from the staircase across Stockyards Blvd. However, the expanse of the historically blank wall at the front of the structure is also a significant architectural feature and the code states that no sign shall be painted onto any significant architectural feature. As a street-facing façade, the added painted sign is a significantly noticeable new feature, though the horizontal design and muted colors compliment the features of the building. The applicant also proposes a breathable paint that allows moisture to escape from the masonry which would maintain the structural integrity of the brick, however, it is unclear how or if it can be removed in the future.

Large painted wall signs that read 'Armour and Company' and later signs including a graphic were historically found on the original meat packing plant that is no longer extant. The Blood Serum Albumin Plant which was constructed in the 40s-50s does not show evidence of any signage in historic photographs. The addition of a painted wall sign that was not historically found on this structure creates a false sense of history, and though the sign is proposed to be painted with masonry paint that is breathable and would leave the form and integrity of the building intact, it is possible to create a sign of different materials that would not require a waiver from the code and Standards.

Having regard to the foregoing, Staff recommends the following:

That the request for a Certificate of Appropriateness for waivers from the Stockyards Form-Based Code and Design Guidelines for a 20' parking setback be approved with the following conditions:

1. That the applicant continue to work with staff on the treatment of the pedestrian and street requirements, and;
2. That any adjustments made to the drawings be submitted to the Development Services Department prior to the issuance of a Certificate of Appropriateness.

And that the request for a Certificate of Appropriateness for a waiver from the Stockyards Form-Based Code and Design Guidelines for a painted sign on unpainted masonry be denied without prejudice and that the applicant consider exploring other sign material options and installation methods that are compatible with the character and history of the structure.

SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIAL



Figure 1. Aerial View and location of subject property.



Figure 2. Existing building



Existing Elevation



Proposed Elevation

Figure 3. Existing and Proposed elevation facing Stockyards Blvd.



Figure 4. Proposed site plan

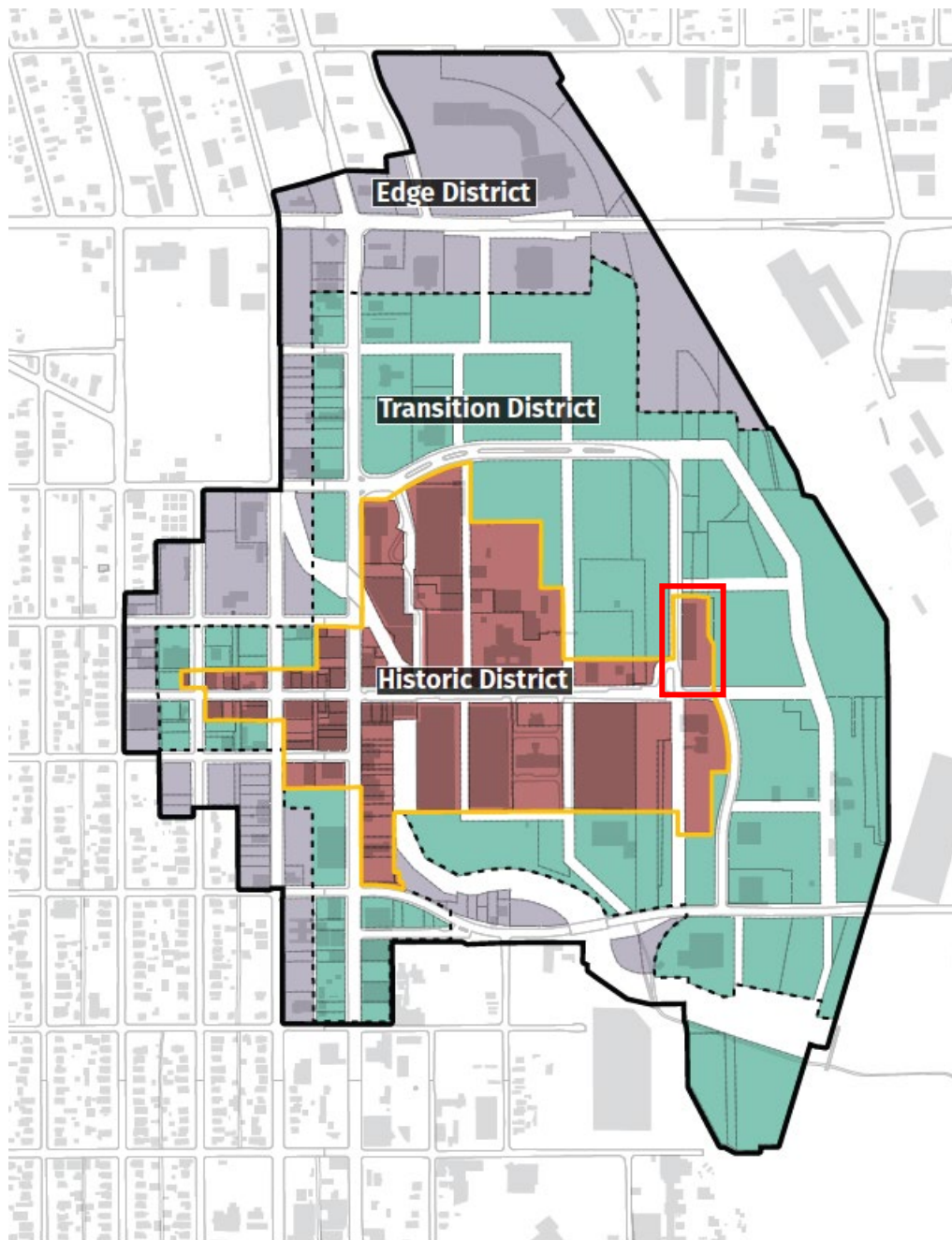


Figure 5. Location of site in Stockyards historic district.