



Legislation Text

File #: 21-4081, **Version:** 1

HLC#21-004: Consideration of a Request to Demolish the Branson-Curry House, 1895, located at 101 E. Kimball Street

Staff met with the owners of the Branson-Curry House and their architect regarding the conversion of the house into the Crescent Moon Drink Café, a wine and coffee bar. The project was approved by the City Council in January 2019. The architect reports that the house is in poor condition, including wood rot and termite damage, and would be very expensive to restore. The house is not a designated landmark.

Staff received the attached letter from Terry Hawkins, the project architect. The letter describes the condition of the house, together with photographs of the damage.

Although the house is not a landmark, the Commission may temporarily delay a demolition permit for a historic resource to consider alternatives to demolition. In deciding a delay, the condition of the building and economic resources available to the property owner should be considered. Unlike the Man House, where the majority of the historic building materials were still intact or could be restored, the Branson-Curry House will require the following:

- Substantial replacement of the interior paneling and exterior siding due to termite and water damage;
- Installation of proper piers for the foundation. One of the photographs shows a section of floor that has detached from the wall;
- Water damage from the roof; and
- Rot in the window sills and frames.

In view of the damage and the owner's lack of funding for proper repairs, Staff believes that building qualifies for demolition. If the Commission wishes to discuss this property in more detail, a discussion item can be added to the May agenda.

The house is listed on the Historic Resources Survey update as a **Medium** priority resource. **Medium** priority resources usually have less architectural and physical integrity than High priority or Selected Medium priority properties. They are almost always characterized by alterations or deterioration of materials that removed, changed or obscured original design features, or by less significant associations with the historic context. They are not usually eligible for listing as an RTHL. If included in a National Register historic district, they are almost always considered contributing resources to the district.

The house is described in the 1990 Tarrant County Historic Resources Survey as follows:

W.G. Branson had this house built for himself around 1895, the year after his father, Alfred P. Branson, purchased the Mansfield Milling Company. Isaac Curry, a partner in the Curry Bros. Grocery, purchased it in 1908 and lived there until his death in 1925. The house, with hipped central mass and projecting gabled wings, is largely intact. Two porches have been enclosed and an attached garage projects to the east.

Based on the poor condition of the house, Staff recommends that the demolition be allowed to proceed with the following requests:

- 1) That Staff be allowed to document the house prior to demolition; and
- 2) That the owners donate such architectural elements, fixtures, windows, doors and other historic materials that can be reasonably removed from the Branson-Curry House prior to demolition for use in other historic homes.

Attachment

Architect Letter and Photographs