Staff Brief

This document is the staff’s comparison of the Secretary of the Interiors Standards for Rehabilitation, Design Guidelines for Denver Landmark Structures and Districts, the Landmark Preservation Ordinance (Chapter 30, Revised Municipal Code) and other applicable adopted area guidelines as applied to the proposed application. It is intended to provide guidance during the commission’s deliberation of the proposed application. Guidelines are available at www.denvergov.org/preservation

Project: #2023-COA-479
Address: 910 15th St (Denver Gas & Electric Building)
Historic Dist/DLM: Downtown Denver Historic District
Year structure built: 1910 (Contributing Structure)
Council District: #10 – Chris Hinds
Applicant: Scott Higa, G3 Architecture

LPC Meeting: February 6, 2024
Staff: Krystal Marquez

Project Scope Under Review:
Addition of a new rooftop mechanical chiller unit with surrounding metal platform

Structure Footprint and Height: 49'-11" (long) x 7'-4" (wide) x 8'-4" (high).

Staff Summary:
910 15th Street is a contributing structure built in 1910 in the Downtown Denver Historic District and is known as the Denver Gas & Electric Building. The structure is currently used as a data center; due to the heat generated by the data center large chillers and cooling equipment are required for the building.

The applicant is proposing to add a new rooftop mechanical chiller unit with a platform for access surrounding the unit near the corner of Champa Street and 15th Street. The unit will be setback 12’ – 6 ½” from the front façade facing towards 15th Street and 15’ – 3” from the Champa Street façade. The platform surrounding the unit will stand approx. 4’ – 6” up to 5’ off the rooftop surrounding the unit and the chiller unit will be approx. 8’ – 3” taller than the platform.

The applicant has provided a letter detailing why this exact location is necessary for the chiller unit along with the surrounding platform. The unit weighs 29,556 pounds and is located to be placed over existing columns inside the structure to hold its weight. Much of the structure’s roof is already covered in mechanical equipment, some of which is taller than the current unit proposed. Staff originally had concerns about the visibility; however, the applicant did provide prospective views showing the structure to not be highly visible from public vantage points therefore staff is supportive of the chiller unit location.

Excerpted from Design Guidelines for Denver Landmark Structures and Districts, January 2016

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Guideline</th>
<th>Meets Guideline?</th>
<th>Comments</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.63 Place mechanical, utility and communications equipment to minimize visual impacts on a historic building.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>The proposed rooftop chiller unit will be setback a minimum of 15’ from the Champa Street façade and approx. 12’ – 6 ½” from the 15th Street façade. The applicant has provided prospective views that should that the unit will be minimally visible from public vantage points.</td>
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<tr>
<td>a. Install roof-mounted, and other mechanical/HVAC equipment, such as air conditioners and center towers to be</td>
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Guideline

2.63 Place mechanical, utility and communications equipment to minimize visual impacts on a historic building.

a. Install roof-mounted, and other mechanical/HVAC equipment, such as air conditioners and center towers to be
inconspicuous when viewed from public streets and public vantage points.

d. Incorporate mechanical equipment with matte or non-reflective finishes that blend with building colors if the equipment will be visible from the street or sidewalk.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2.64 Install communications, utility and mechanical equipment to minimize damage to historic building fabric.</th>
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<tr>
<td>a. Install mechanical equipment in areas and spaces that require the least amount of alteration to the historic materials and elevations of the building.</td>
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<td>b. Avoid cutting holes in important architectural features, such as cornices, decorative ceilings and paneling.</td>
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<td>c. Avoid cutting into a masonry wall to install conduit.</td>
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<tr>
<td>d. Do not install mechanical equipment on a primary façade.</td>
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The rooftop unit appears to be painted with a non-reflective color that will blend with the other existing rooftop equipment.

Yes

The proposed chiller unit is being installed on the roof of the structure where it will be the least visible location from public vantage points.

The location avoids cutting holes in to important architectural features or into street facing façade walls.

Basis: The proposed mechanical equipment will be installed on the roof and minimizes visual impacts at the street and will minimize damage to the historic structure (Guidelines 2.63-2.64).

APPROVAL: I move to APPROVE application #2023-COA-479 for the rooftop mechanical equipment at 910 15th St, as per design guidelines 2.63-2.64, presented testimony, submitted documentation and information provided in the staff report.
Downtown Denver Historic District – 910 15th St outlined in red

All individual landmarks and properties within historic district boundaries are subject to design review.
1904-25 Sanborn Map with 910 15th St outlined in red