



STAFF REPORT
City of Dripping Springs
PO Box 384
511 Mercer Street
Dripping Springs, TX 78620

Submitted By: [Keenan Smith, TIRZ Project Manager](#)

Commission Meeting Date: October 3, 2024

Agenda Item Wording: **Public hearing, discussion, and consideration of approval of a revised Certificate of Appropriateness for the rehabilitation and addition to the Stephenson Building located at 101 Old Fitzhugh Rd., in the Mercer Street Historic District.** *Applicant: City of Dripping Springs, Texas.*

Agenda Item Requestor: [Michelle Fischer, City Administrator](#)

Summary/Background: [The Historic Preservation Commission granted a Certificate of Appropriateness for the rehabilitation, adaptive re-use & addition of the Stephenson Building in April of 2023. At that time, the design was schematic, and an “Approval in Concept” was granted.](#)

[The project architects \(Architexas\) were commissioned to advance the schematic design through the Design Development \(DD\) and Construction Documents \(CD\) phases. This work was diligently accomplished through Fall 2023 and Spring 2024. The Historic Preservation Commission was given update presentations at each phase, and the advancing design work was found to remain consistent with the COA Approval in Concept.](#)

[In June 2024, the completed 100% Construction Documents, with an accompanying Estimate of Probable Cost \(EOPC\) were presented to City Council. The City Council accepted the CDs in principle but raised concerns about the overall cost of the project, budgets, and funding. A Stephenson Budget Subcommittee was formed and charged with reviewing project costs and exploring budget allocations.](#)

[The Stephenson Budget Subcommittee worked with Staff and the project team over the summer of 2024 to identify appropriate and acceptable cost reductions to the project that preserve its history and design, while maintaining functional uses and features of the City’s adaptive use program.](#)

[A recommended list of these “Value Engineering” \(VE\) reductions was presented to City Council on 9/3/24 and included some minor revisions to the exterior design of the building. These exterior design revisions are presented here in the “revised elevations,” and include changing the wall cladding of the new “Addition” element from all limestone masonry to](#)

corrugated metal panels over a limestone base or “wainscot.” This design option was actually presented to the HPC during the original COA presentation. At that time Staff expressed support for either the “all stone” or the “metal over stone” wall cladding option, since both meet the applicable Historic Preservation Goals and Design Guidelines. After deliberation, the HPC approved the COA with the “all stone” option, which became the basis of the advancing design and the Construction Documents.

At this time, Staff is requesting approval of a “Revised COA” which would allow the revised exterior design with the “metal over stone” cladding on the Addition to move forward, thus realizing the potential cost savings desired by City Council. Council has agreed to all the proposed VE changes and has approved the architect revising the Construction Documents, subject to the HPC approval of the revised COA.

**Recommended
Commission Actions:**

Staff finds the proposed exterior design changes to be consistent with all applicable Historic Preservation Goals and Design Guidelines, and “Approval as Submitted” is recommended.

Other possible actions: “Approve with Conditions, Deny, or Postpone to a Date Certain.”

Attachments:

Stephenson Building- Revised Elevations (Value Engineering Recommendations- by Architexas).

Next Steps/Schedule:

Complete Value Engineering revisions to the Construction Documents. Present “Permit Ready” documents to City Council (estimated completion November 2024) and request Council approval and Notice to Proceed for Architexas’ Task Order #3 Scope of Work- Permitting, Bidding and Construction Administration Phases, subject to project funding.