



STAFF REPORT

MEETING DATE: November 4, 2021

AGENDA ITEM TITLE: The Cowen Farms - Major Certificate of Approval for Demolition

AGENDA SECTION: Public Hearing

REQUEST: The request is for a certificate of approval for demolition of the historic barn at The Cowen Farms, local landmark located at 701 E. Highway 50.

APPLICANT:

The applicant is Southwest Conservation Corps, represented by Anna Hendricks, 701 E. Highway 50, Salida, CO 81201.

LOCATION:

The property is located at Lots 3 and 4, John's Subdivision, City of Salida and is also known as 701 E. Highway 50.

PROCESS:

It is the intent of the City to preserve the historic districts and historical and architectural resources of the City through limitations on the demolition and relocation of landmark and contributing buildings, structures or sites to the maximum extent feasible, and to regulate the demolition and relocation of nonlandmark and

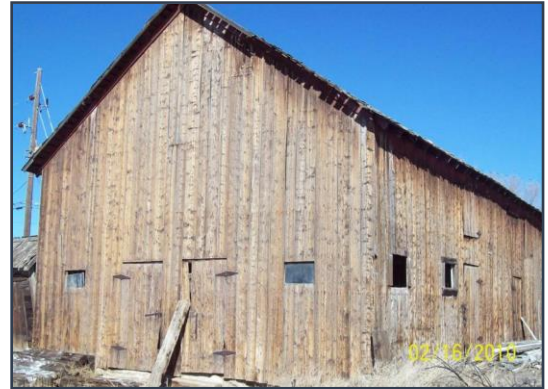


noncontributing structures within historic districts. The demolition and/or relocation of landmark and contributing buildings, structures and sites are to be discouraged in favor of preservation, renovation, adaptive reuse or relocation within a historic district. Notwithstanding the foregoing, it is recognized that structural deterioration, economic hardship and other factors not within the control of a property owner may cause or require the demolition or relocation of a landmark or contributing building, structure or site.

Demolition of a local historic landmark shall be reviewed by the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) at a regular or special meeting to be conducted within thirty-one days from the date the application was determined complete, or within a longer time period as necessary to reasonably accommodate the application on an HPC agenda. The HPC shall conduct a public hearing to review the conformance of the demolition application with all applicable provisions of the Municipal Code.

OBSERVATIONS:

1. The subject property is located at 701 East Highway 50 and is within the Commercial (C-1) zone district. In 2013 the Historic Preservation Commission and the Salida City Council designated the property as a Local Historic Landmark with Ordinance 2013-07.
2. The proposal includes the demolition of the historic barn. The barn is a contributing structure to the Local Historic Landmark site.
3. In August of 2018 the applicant applied for certificate of approval for a partial rehabilitation of the historic barn but was unable to complete the renovations due to the condition of the structure and the costs to renovate.
4. The applicant then returned to the Historic Preservation Commission for a work session on October 8, 2020 explaining the constraints and challenges to rehabilitate the barn. At that meeting it was determined that it was reasonable to demolish the barn and build a structure that meets the needs of the Southwest Conservation Corps.
5. The barn is currently not a usable structure and poses a hazard as shown in the application materials. They are now having problems with squatters within the barn which is a liability to the SCC.
6. The Architectural Inventory statement of significance for this property states: "The farmhouse is significant in the area of Architecture as a good representative of the Late Victorian/Queen Anne style as applied to small farm dwellings. The style is reflected most notably in the prominent front porch with turned wood spindle supports, brackets, and a spindled frieze; tall segmental arch double-hung sash windows with lintels of contrasting brick; and segmental arch entrances with elaborately ornamented paneled and glazed doors and transoms. The barn is an important example of a rapidly disappearing resource type and is notable for its large size, cedar board construction, and wood shingle roofing. It is an excellent example of the barns once found along Highway 50. The other remaining outbuildings are evidence of the types of construction found on a successful agricultural operation in the early twentieth century, including sheds, an outhouse, and chicken coop.



The farm is important in the area of Agriculture as one of the few remaining examples of the agricultural community that existed along Highway 50. The land was included in some of the earliest homestead efforts in the county and developed into a farming and ranching area that prospered for many years. The farm was developed by brothers Clifford and Arthur Cowen, who lived here with their families and worked the land until their deaths. Another brother, Cecil Cowen then inherited the farm and had a dairy here. Under the Cowen family ownership, the land stayed in agricultural use for almost 50 years. Few of the historic properties associated with the historic agricultural community of this area remain today due to growing commercial development along the highway, including both sides of this property.”

7. The applicant has included a narrative and photographs describing the immediate need to demolish the declining barn due to safety and liability.

REVIEW STANDARDS, SECTION 16-12-90(d): The following criteria shall be used in determining whether a certificate of approval should be issued for the demolition or relocation of a landmark or a building, structure or site within a historic district:

1. The historic, social or architectural significance of the building, structure or site.

- A historical background of the structure is provided in the attached architectural inventory form.
- The barn structure is considered contributing to the Local Landmark property and the architectural inventory form explained: “The barn was constructed in 1905 and is one-and a half story, gabled roof, rectangular (59’x27’), frame barn has a shed roof projection on the north wall. Stone and concrete are found along the foundation. The walls are clad with cedar vertical boards, and the gable faces display short lengths of vertical board. The barn has wood shingle roofing, overhanging eaves, and exposed rafter tails; the roof is approximately 25’ high. The front (east wall) of the north shed roof wing has an entrance extending the width of the wing and vertical boards above the entrance. The main wing of the barn features from the north end: a short metal-hinged door; a vertical board door with metal hinges; a vertical board hinged door with a short hinged door above; and two rectangular, unglazed, window openings with plain surrounds. The south wall displays small, glazed, rectangular windows flanking two vertical board doors with metal hinges. A small shed with vertical beadboard walls, a paneled door at the center of the south wall, and an originally flat roof modified to a shed roof is leaning against the south wall of the barn. The west wall of the barn is clad with vertical boards and no openings. The west and north walls of the shed roof wing are blank.”

2. The structural soundness and safety of the building, structure or site.

- A letter from G/T Structural Engineers is attached to the application. The Engineers assessed the structural integrity of the barn on February 16, 2011. The letter highlights the concerns regarding the structural integrity of the barn and states that because of design requirements of current building codes the building is

structurally inadequate and bringing the existing building to current code would be difficult. The Engineers suggested modifications to make the building structurally adequate would exceed the cost of removing the building and replacing it.

- It is cost prohibitive for the applicant to rehabilitate the barn and meet current building codes.

3. In the case of a landmark or contributing building, structure or site, whether the same can be rehabilitated, renovated or restored at its current location as part of an economically feasible and beneficial use of the property.

- In 2018 the applicant submitted a certificate of approval application to rehabilitate a portion of the barn and use it for a new meeting space. The condition of the barn and the costs associated with the renovations proved to be too extensive to rehabilitate the structure.
- Constructing a new structure for a meeting space in place of the barn is more beneficial to the Southwest Conservation Corps.

4. In the case of a landmark or contributing building, structure or site, whether the same has been properly maintained and/or been subject to disrepair, deterioration and/or demolition by neglect.

- The building has not been maintained for a number of years and there is extensive damage in the entire building which poses a safety issue for the owners and visitors of the property.

5. In the case of a landmark or contributing building, structure or site, whether the same can be relocated to a historically appropriate alternative location in a manner that will protect and insure its structural integrity.

- There is little possibility that this large structure could be successfully relocated but the applicant has stated that they will salvage as much of the materials as feasible and reuse them in the construction of the building.

6. The impacts of the proposed demolition or relocation of the building, structure or site, and the planned redevelopment of the site, on the historical character of the existing neighborhood.

- The application is for demolition of the barn which is located behind the little house and not highly visible from Highway 50. Redevelopment plans include rebuilding a structure in the same location as the barn, to fit the needs of the Southwest Conservation Corps.

RECOMMENDED FINDINGS:

1. That the barn has been extensively damaged to the point that it is not economically viable to rehabilitate.

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

Based upon the observations and review standards outlined above, staff recommends **Approval** of the request for the demolition of the barn, a local landmark, located at 701 E. Highway 50 with the following conditions.

1. That the applicant salvage as much of the materials as possible from the demolition of the barn to be used in the proposed new building.
2. That the applicant submit a certificate of approval application for the construction of the new building that will replace the historic barn.

RECOMMENDED MOTION:

That the recommended findings be made and the recommended action be taken.