

**HISTORIC LANDMARK COMMISSION
FEBRUARY 27, 2012
APPLICATION FOR A CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS
C14H-1994-0021
Brewer House
1108 Chicon Street**

PROPOSAL

Dismantle the remains of the Brewer House for re-use in a commemorative exhibit honoring the contributions and legacy of Professor Mason Brewer and his family to the literary and cultural heritage of Austin and Texas.

PROJECT SPECIFICATIONS

The City is proposing to dismantle the materials of the Brewer House, which has been cited as a dangerous building, and is too fragile to be moved in one piece. Without adequate roof protection for several years, the floor has fallen out and the house cannot now be restored. The City proposes to dismantle the remaining salvageable materials for future use in a permanent commemorative exhibit honoring the contributions of Professor Mason Brewer, the premier African-American folkloricist in Austin and Texas, as well as his extended family, who have been prominent in the cultural arts in Austin for many years.

STANDARDS FOR REVIEW

The Commission's Standards for Review of applications for Certificates of Appropriateness include:

- Do not destroy the distinguishing original qualities or character of a building, structure, or site and its environment. Avoid the removal or alteration of any historic material or distinctive architectural features.
- Repair, rather than replace deteriorated architectural features wherever possible. In the event replacement is necessary, the new material should match the material being replaced in composition, design, color, texture, and other visual qualities. Base the repair or replacement of missing architectural features on accurate duplications of features, substantiated by historical, physical, or pictorial evidence rather than on conjectural designs or the availability of different architectural elements from other buildings or structures.
- Reconstruct part or all of a property only when it is essential to reproduce a significant missing feature in a historic district or scene, and:
 - a. The reconstruction is essential for understanding the value of a historic district;
 - b. Documentation exists to ensure an accurate reproduction of the original; and
 - c. A contemporary design solution is not acceptable.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee made no recommendations.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff must recommend the approval of the Certificate of Appropriateness to dismantle the salvageable materials from the house for use in a future permanent commemorative exhibit on Mason Brewer, with the condition that the Commission retain the authority to review the plans for the proposed exhibit. Staff, City Council staff, and Code Enforcement staff

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have all visited the site with a professional structural engineer to determine the options for the house, and have all concluded the dismantling the house and salvaging sound materials for re-use in a non-structural mode is the best option for the continued physical heritage of the Brewer family.



The roof of the Brewer House has been gone for many years; what is shown here is the framework for a tarpaulin that had sheltered the building until a few years ago.