



Louisville Metro Government

Legislation Text

File #: R-021-21, Version: 1

RESOLUTION NO. _____, SERIES 2021

A RESOLUTION OVERTURNING THE DECISION OF THE LANDMARKS COMMISSION DESIGNATING THE PROPERTY LOCATED AT 211-215 WEST MUHAMMAD ALI BOULEVARD (CASE NO. 20-LANDMARK-0001) IN LOUISVILLE METRO AS A LOCAL LANDMARK.

**SPONSORED BY: COUNCIL PRESIDENT DAVID JAMES AND
COUNCIL MEMBER JECOREY ARTHUR**

WHEREAS, the Legislative Council of the Louisville/Jefferson County Metro Government (the "Council") has considered the evidence presented at a public hearing on case 20-LANDMARK-0001 held by the Landmarks Commission (the "Commission") on November 19, 2020 and reviewed the record at a public meeting held by the Council's Planning and Zoning Committee on March 2, 2021; and

WHEREAS, the Commission found that the petition did partially meet two of the six criteria (LMCO 32.260(O)(2)(a), and (d)), and also found that the petition did not meet three of the six criteria (LMCO 32.260(O)(2)(b), (c), and (e)), and also did not apply one of the criteria (LMCO 32.260(O)(2)(f)); and

WHEREAS, this designation petition was approved over the objection of the property owner; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to LMCO § 32.260(Q), the Council disagrees with the decision of the Commission dated November 19, 2020 designating 211-215 West Muhammad Ali Blvd. as a local landmark and makes the following findings of fact:

(1) The Odd Fellows organization, like all fraternal organizations, played a role in development and investment in our community and certainly is a part of the community's collective heritage.

However, as indicated in the Commission's own report, there are no specific individuals or events identified with this building and site. In addition, the Odd Fellows Organization not removing its "whites only" clause until 1971 (as noted on page 21 of the Designation Report) calls into question the value of preserving this vague legacy.

(2) In order to be eligible for designation as a local landmark, a building must possess "sufficient integrity" per LMCO 32.260(O)(1). However, the Commission's own Designation Report states that, "given the destructive fire and subsequent loss of interior fabric during a remodel in the 1980s, it is unlikely to qualify for an individual listing" on the National Register of Historic Places. The Commission's Designation Report goes on to state that, due to removal of the storefront, windows and interior fabric, the building has a "diminished" integrity. Furthermore, the Designation Report ranks the structure as "Low" in the Setting element of Integrity, "Low to Moderate" in Feeling and Association, and Moderate in Design and Materials and Workmanship. The structure is only ranked "High" in Location, but the fact that a building has not been moved is hardly enough to warrant landmark status. The criteria of "sufficient" integrity has not been met based on the number of alterations to the building's exterior and interior.

(3) With respect to LMCO 32.260(O)(2)(a), the Commission found that the Odd Fellows building was an important architectural type of a lodge building. However, as stated in the Commission's own report the building was associated with multiple fraternal organizations and that the building had lost a great deal of the elements of its original function as a public hall due to fire and remodeling.

(4) In addition to LMCO 32.260(O)(2)(a), the Commission found that the Odd Fellows building only met item LMCO 32.260(O)(2)(d). LMCO 32.260(O)(2)(d) consists of three sub-categories which might, when paired with sufficient integrity to meet LMCO 32.260(O)(2)(a), warrant a building being landmarked. Those sub-categories are the "embodiment of distinguishing characteristics of an

architectural type or specimen; or its embodiment of a significant architectural innovation; or its identification as the work of an architect, landscape architect, or master builder whose individual work has influenced the development of the city, the Commonwealth, or the nation.” The Commission did not find that the building embodied a significant architectural innovation, leaving two remaining categories.

(5) The Commission did find that the Odd Fellows building embodies the distinguishing characteristics of an architectural type in spite of its recognition of the significant damage and subsequent remodeling that were the result of the 1987 fire. While other designation criteria may hold up despite significant interior and exterior alteration to a building, this sub-criteria is based *solely* on the embodiment of an architectural type. The extent of the renovations of to the Odd Fellows building have resulted in a structure which is a far-cry from a well-preserved architectural specimen and thus do not warrant designation under this sub-criteria.

(6) The Commission also found with respect to LMCO 32.260(O)(2)(d) that the building has a “potential” association with a master builder. No factual evidence was found by the Commission’s staff nor was any presented at the public hearing. Instead, the Commission made this finding based on testimony that the building was “more than likely” the work of William Dodd. In that same testimony it was presented that “exhaustive” research was conducted and the Mr. Dodd’s participation could not be confirmed. Further, it is not uncommon for buildings from this era to contain elements from construction kits that replicate distinctive features used by famous architects. As such, the Council finds that there is not sufficient evidence to satisfy these criteria.

(7) The Council agrees with and accepts the finding of the Commission that the property/structures do not meet Guidelines 32.260(O)(2)(b), (c), and (e), and therefore the Council finds that, on balance, the property/structures did not satisfy any additional criteria to meet the standards for designation as a local landmark as required by LMCO 32.260(O).

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL OF THE LOUISVILLE/JEFFERSON COUNTY METRO GOVERNMENT AS FOLLOWS:

SECTION I: The November 19, 2020 decision of the Commission designating the property at 211-215 West Muhammad Ali Blvd. in Louisville Metro as a local landmark is overturned and set aside.

SECTION II: This Resolution shall take effect upon its passage and approval.

Sonya Harward
Metro Council Clerk

David James
President of the Council

Approval Date

APPROVED AS TO FORM AND LEGALITY:

Michael J. O'Connell
Jefferson County Attorney

By: _____

R-021-21 Oddfellows Overturn.docx (TF)