



Columbia Historic Preservation Commission

September 2, 2021

To: Historic Preservation Commission

From: Staff Liaison Rusty Palmer

Re: 910/912 E. Walnut Property – HPC Recommendation

Commissioners,

I was contacted recently by Steve Hunt, Columbia's Solid Waste Utility Manager, regarding next steps in reference to the recommendation made by the Commission in 2019 for preservation of the structures located at 910 and 912 E. Walnut. Many of you were not with the Commission at that point, but you may have heard about the City's acquisition of the property by other means.

If not, here's a quick history. The Solid Waste Utility purchased the property for the purpose of placing a trash compactor and dumpster(s) on the rear parking area, adjacent to the alley. They intended to subdivide the property and sell the structures, which front on Walnut Street. Solid Waste is now in the process of platting the property to divide the parking area from the structures, and will be in a position to market the structures once the plat is approved by Council. The timeline for this is still to be determined.

In 2019, Council requested a recommendation from the Commission asking for best management practices for the City to undertake before selling the property to ensure the preservation of the structures. Our Chair at the time, now Council Member Fowler, drafted a letter recommending listing the property on the National Register of Historic Places.

Due to costs and time consuming nature of the process associated with listing on the NRHP, the City would like to pursue alternative methods of preserving and protecting the property. Additionally, it is unclear if the property would be eligible for listing. There are some alternatives that offer similar protections for the property that City Staff believes could be more resourceful stewardship of community resources. One such option is listing as a local landmark and/or historic preservation overlay zoning district. This offers the same protections as listing on the NHRP. Another option is to provide for deed restrictions or covenants in the sale documents requiring HPC review and approval of certain alterations to the structures.

These are the topics Mr. Hunt and I would like to discuss with you at your meeting on September 7, 2021. We hope to have an idea of what the Commission values about the structures and would like to protect. We hope to have a productive discussion on Tuesday evening. Thank you.