



Landmarks & Urban
Conservation Commission



Agenda No.
Case No. 10-LUCC-50054
Project No. 1000026

February 9, 2011

SUPPLEMENTAL STAFF REPORT

Agent	Edgar Boles Planning Department
Applicant	Cultural Services Department Betty Rivera, Director
Request	Approval of design and color revisions
Legal Description	Lots 22, 23,24, Block 11, Original Townsite
Address/Location	423 Central Avenue NW
Size	Less than ½ acre
Zoning	SU-3
Historic Location	KiMo Theater

Staff Recommendation

APPROVAL of neon sign colors and details in Case No. 10-LUCC-50054, Project No. 1000026, to satisfy the only condition of the Certificate of Appropriateness approved on November 10, 2010.

Edgar Boles
Historic Preservation Planner

Summary of Analysis

The Commission approved a Certificate of Appropriateness for this request on November 10, 2010. That approval came with one condition -- that the proposed neon sign's design details and color selections be reviewed and approved by the Commission at a subsequent hearing.

The proposed alterations – neon sign and treatment of decorative features -- are appropriate visually, historically, and technically, so they preserve the character of the KiMo Theatre and meet applicable guidelines and standards. The replacement neon sign will complete the ensemble of major façade features that characterized the building during its early years as a commercial theater. At the same time, it will help implement goals of the Downtown 2010 Sector Development Plan.

Primary References

Landmarks and Urban Conservation Ordinance; Development Guidelines for the KiMo Theater, Photos.



SUMMARY OF REQUEST

Approval to satisfy Condition 1 of the Certificate of Appropriateness of 11/10/2010:

New neon sign to replicate original – design details and color selections.

Historic Location – KiMo Theater, 423 Central Avenue NW

Background & Commentary

The KiMo architectural design produced by Boller Brothers for the Bachechi Amusement Company showed no neon sign, leaving some doubt about whether one was installed by the building's completion and opening in September of 1927.

Since the LUCC hearing on November 10, 2010, we have found an early exterior photo of the KiMo, open for business but not yet fitted with a neon sign. Clearly then, the sign was an early alteration of the original KiMo design.

Since we lack definitive information on the original sign's colors (at least one person remembers it being red), and the sign colors and details were apparently changed through the years, staff consulted the American Sign Museum in Cincinnati about typical paint color schemes on neon signs of the late 1920s. Tod Swormstedt, founder and president of the museum wrote,

“If the sign is late 1920s, you're in the late art deco period when colors were very vivid – not understated: Blues with oranges and yellow was not uncommon. The more classic combination might be green, maroon or dark red and cream. It is also a good chance the signs were porcelain enamel, but not necessarily. There was even a marble-like porcelain enamel finish available if the background on the b/w images of the signs looks “mottled.” As far as the neon tubing, the coated glass we see primarily today was not yet available. You had clear glass with either neon or argon (orange-red or blue) or colored glass (ruby red, bromo blue, noviol gold).”

The Cultural Services and Planning departments have worked with Zeon to refine the sign colors, dimensions, and details. Appendices H and J to this report show subtly different signs in maroon (one purplish, one brownish) with raised yellow letters and a raised blue bird-image. The letters also vary in color in Appendices H and J. In both the “lightning bolts” along the long edges of the sign are black with yellow outline based on a historic photo, Appendix D-2.

Staff finds that the brownish maroon in Appendix K is a more appropriate choice. It seems more compatible with the subtly colored, existing façade ornaments than the Appendix H maroon.

The sign length is now shown as 24' – 0,” based on façade measurements and photo studies by Cultural Services and Planning Department staff. Letter sizes and spacing have been adjusted.

Key to Appendices to this Report

Appendix A Photo of KiMo façade c. 2005 by Marble Street Studio

(Appendices B through E to the November 10, 2010 Staff Report are not included, except D-2)

Appendix D-2 Black-and-white photo of historic KiMo sign

Appendix F Photo simulation shown to LUCC on November 10, 2010

Appendix G Elevation and photo simulation – Green

Appendix H Elevations w/dimensions – purplish Maroon w/ bright Yellow letters

Appendix J Elevation w/photo simulation – brownish Maroon w/Ochre letters
(LUCC Staff recommendation)

Appendix K Photo simulation showing proposed w/existing façade ornament

ANALYSIS

The table below provides evaluations of the submittal relative to pertinent parts of the [KiMo Theatre Development Guidelines](#) adopted by the LUCC on August 1, 1990.

Development Guidelines	Analysis	Does the design meet the guidelines?
The initial building analysis conducted for the KiMo Theatre identifies the following significant architectural features:	NA	NA
1. Design details of the south and west facades	NA	NA
2. Design details and fixtures of the entryway, lobby, mezzanine, auditorium and stage areas.	NA	NA
Since the completion of its National Register of Historic Places nomination and its original designation as a City Landmark, the KiMo Theatre has been carefully renovated. In any future rehabilitation of the KiMo:	NA	NA
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interior and exterior design details and fixtures should be preserved. The colors, materials and motifs used in the 1982 renovation should be retained and any new work should be compatible with the features already in place. 	Colors used in the 1982 renovation will be used in color selections for all proposed work, including the neon sign. The motif atop the sign face was changed during its years on the building from a cloud design to a bird. The Commission should review the two motifs and comment, at least, on using the bird on the new sign.	Yes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The proportions and shape of the marquee, which closely match those of the original, should also be retained. 	The marquee is not to be changed.	Yes
Any alterations to this property should retain these significant features. Where necessary, these elements should be repaired rather than replaced; any replacement should utilize materials and design matching the original. In addition	All such features are retained, and a missing feature is replaced with materials and design matching the original, minus unnecessary structural elements.	Yes

to these guidelines, The Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Historic Preservation Projects should be utilized in reviewing proposed changes to the property.		
Additions to the building could be allowed if necessary to facilitate reuse of the property. Additions should be compatible in scale, massing and exterior material with the original structure and should be designed so that it is possible to clearly distinguish the original structure from the later addition.	NA	NA

Landmarks and Urban Conservation Ordinance

The table below provides an evaluation of the submittal as it relates to the LUC Ordinance and the specific development guidelines as analyzed above.

LUC Ordinance (§14-12) Guidelines for New Construction	Analysis	Does the application satisfy the ordinance criteria?
§14-12-8-B-(1) The change is consistent with the designation ordinance and specific development guidelines for the historic overlay zone		Yes.
§14-12-8 (B) (2) The architectural character, historical value, or archaeological value of the structure or site itself or of any historic zone in which it is located will not be significantly impaired or diminished		Yes.
§14-12-8 (B) (3) The change qualified as a “certified rehabilitation: pursuant to the Tax Reform Act of 1976		No.
§14-12-8 (B) (4) The structure or site’s distinguished original qualities or character will not be altered. Original shall mean at the time of initial construction or developed over the course of history of the structure.		Yes.
§14-12-8 (B) (5) Deteriorated architectural features should be repaired rather than replaced, if		Yes.

possible. If replacement is necessary, the new material shall match the original as closely as possible in like material and design;		
§14-12-8 (B) (6) Additions to existing structure and new construction may be of contemporary design if such design is compatible with the historic zone in which it is to be located		Not applicable.
§14-12-8 (B) (7) Demolition shall only be permitted. . . .	Not applicable	Not applicable.

Conclusion

The sign design and color refinements made since the Commission approved a Certificate of Appropriateness are consistent with that decision. The revised dimensions are more accurate than before. They will be checked once more and adjusted slightly before the City gives notice to proceed on the sign.

FINDINGS for Approval of changes for Case No. 10-LUCC-50054 / Project No. 1000026 (February 9, 2010)

1. This is a request for approval of neon sign colors, design, and dimensions for a replica of the missing historic sign at the KiMo Theater, a City Landmark at 423 Central Avenue NW.
2. The work proposed meets all applicable KiMo development guidelines, the controls in the Landmarks and Urban Conservation Ordinance, and The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation.

RECOMMENDATION - Case No. 10-LUCC-50054/ Project No. 1000026 (February 9, 2010)

APPROVAL of Case No. 10-LUCC-50054/Project No. 1000026, an application for a projecting sign at the KiMo Theater. This property is a City of Albuquerque Landmark, zoned SU-3, and the approval is based on the two Findings listed above and comes with the following direction:

1. The neon sign paint colors and neon colors shown on Appendices H and J to this Report are appropriate and should guide color specification by the applicant and Landmarks and Urban Conservation Commission staff, whom the Commission authorizes to approve the final choices.
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Edgar Boles, Senior Planner

CITY OF ALBUQUERQUE AGENCY COMMENTS

ZONING CODE SERVICES DIVISION

BUILDING & SAFETY SERVICES DIVISION

HISTORIC PRESERVATION/LONG-RANGE PLANNING

PNM

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH DEPARTMENT

SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT DEPARTMENT

FIRE DEPARTMENT/Planning

COMMENTS FROM OTHER AGENCIES, WHEN APPLICABLE:

TRANSIT DEPARTMENT

POLICE DEPARTMENT

PARKS AND GENERAL SERVICES

OPEN SPACE DIVISION

BERNALILLO COUNTY

ALBUQUERQUE FLOOD CONTROL AUTHORITY

ALBUQUERQUE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

MIDDLE RIO GRANDE COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS