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Staff Report

Meeting Date: March 18, 2024
Planner: Jesse Sheets, Planner I

APPLICATION SUMMARY:

Project Name: Coffee Shop and Workforce Development Center
Case Number: COA24-0001
Application Types: Certificate of Appropriateness (COA)
Location: 2506 W Alamo Ave

Applicant: John Matthews, Architect, M-A Architects
Owners: Roots Colorado, doing business as DIRT
Applicant Request: Coffee

Request for a Certificate of Appropriateness to allow for a coffee shop and workforce development center site improvements.

HISTORIC DISTRICT SUMMARY:

Historic Building Name: The Gill Residence
Individual Landmark Designation:
Historic District: No
Applicable Design Guidelines: Yes
Downtown Littleton Historic Preservation Design Guidelines

PROCESS:

Per Section 10-9-8.1 of the Unified Land Use Code (“ULUC”), titled Certificate of Appropriateness (COA), before carrying out any new construction, alteration, relocation, or demolition involving the exterior of any designated landmark or property in a historic district (including non-contributing properties), the owner(s) shall submit the proposed work to the Director, as well as apply for any other required permits.

The ULUC distinguishes between Major Changes and Minor Alterations. Projects that qualify as Major Changes must obtain a COA from the historical preservation board. As this application includes “new construction in a historic district [and] modification of or to the front or side façade of a principal structure,” it qualifies as a Major Change. As such, the final determination for this Certificate of Appropriateness must be approved by the historical preservation board in a public hearing.

LOCATION:

2506 W. Alamo Avenue is located at the SW corner of the intersection of W. Alamo Ave. and S. Nevada Street and is zoned Downtown Transition Area (DTA).



Figure 1: Aerial photo of 2506 W. Alamo Ave. with property designated by red arrow.

PUBLIC NOTICE REQUIREMENTS AND PROCESS:

Pursuant to Section 10-9-3.5 of the ULUC, notice of public hearings shall be given in accordance with Table 10-9-3.9.1, which states, in part, for the relevant applications before the Board:

Table 10-9-3.9.1 Development Review Summary							
Development Application	Pre-App Required	Neighborhood Meeting	Review and Decision		Public Notice	Expiration (10-9-3.8)	Applicable Standards
			Review/Recommend	Decide			
CDD = Community Development Director; PC = Planning Commission; CC = City Council; HPB = Historical Preservation Board; BOA = Board of Adjustment; BBoA = Building Board of Appeals; [] = Public Hearing Required							
Historic Preservation Applications							
Certificate of Appropriateness (Sec. 10-9-8.1)	✓		CDD	[HPB]	M Po	1 year	Chapter 8

Pu = Published in newspaper 10 days prior to public hearing in accordance with Section 10-9-3.5

Po = Sign posted on property 10 days prior to public hearing in accordance with Section 10-9-3.5

M = Mailed notice to adjoining property owners or property owners within a specified distance of the subject property 10 days prior to public hearing in accordance with Section 10-9-3.5

Section 10-9-3.5 of the ULUC requires that any notice provided by mail, shall be provided through the United States Postal Service to all addresses, units, and property owners located within 700 feet of the property. If there are any homeowner's or other owner associations within 700 feet of the property, then notification need only be sent to the association's designee.

In accordance with the ULUC provisions regarding public notice, staff notified all addresses, units, and individual property owners and residents within 700 feet of the site at least ten (10) days in advance of the March 18, 2024 hearing date.

PROPERTY HISTORY:

1880s	Approximate date of home's construction (historic survey has no specific date)
1893	Home appears on Sanborn Map
2023	Previously converted home sold to current owner
Late 2023	Applicant met with Planning staff to discuss proposed modifications (PREAPP23-048)
1/2024	DIRT Coffee applies for Certificate of Appropriateness (COA)
3/2024	COA Board hearing

BACKGROUND:

The Assessor's records indicate that the building was built in 1901, but the historical survey of the building notes that it was constructed in the late 1880s (as it appears on the 1893 Sanborn Map). Regardless of the original construction date, the building was originally built as a home and the 1905 Littleton City Directory lists the occupants as Robert F. Gill and his wife, Mary. Between 1900 and 1908, the full width porch on the north of the property was added. At some point, a very large rear addition was also added to the home. After the 1997 Historic Survey was conducted, a front deck addition with railings was added. In contemporary times, the structure has been modified into its current use as commercial/office space.

The structure is a cross-gable roofed frame dwelling with a large gabled rear addition, overhanging eaves, and brick and metal chimneys. The walls are clad with lap siding with corner boards and there are variegated decorative shingles on the gable face. There is a projecting, hipped roof porch with turned spindles, stick balustrade, and a shingled gable above the center of the porch, which has concrete steps. There is an off-center historic front door with transom 1/-light double-hung sash windows, in addition to another historic door located on the eastern side entrance. Gable face features center horizontal window flanked by tall, narrow, double-hung windows, all with shared lintel. A deck addition has been built along the western portion of the northern façade as an extension of the front porch.

In late January of 2024, Roots Colorado, doing business as DIRT Coffee, applied for a certificate of appropriateness to modify the existing site. The proposal is to turn the site into a coffee shop and workforce development center.



Figure 2: Historic photo of home at 2506 W. Alamo Ave.



Figure 3: View of existing north facing façade at 2506 W. Alamo Ave.

APPLICATION DETAILS:

A new internal elevator will be added to the south portion of the building, providing accessibility, in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), to the 2nd floor Workforce Development Center. This new lift will only be minimally visible from the rear exterior of the building underneath a new roof extension that references the existing roof line. A new covered porch will be added to the 1st floor south entrance of the Workforce Development Center underneath this extension. This will allow the upper floor to accommodate the elevator as well. New accessible ramps and stairs will be added to the north, east, and southern elevations bringing the facility to modern ADA compliance. New metal security doors have been proposed along with new storm doors. Two historic doors would be removed under the applicant's proposal.

There are some improvements included in this COA that the Board will not need to review, however Planning staff felt it was appropriate to include these proposed upgrades in a planning document or process to record these changes to the site. These include the following:

The front and side yards will be improved to provide a public gathering area with outdoor seating and an activity space with landscaping and artificial turf. A new brick and wrought iron fence will be installed on the north and the east side of the property. The main level will be completely renovated for the new DIRT Coffee Shop. The 2nd floor will be renovated, becoming the Workforce Development Center. A new monument sign will be incorporated into the proposed brick and wrought iron fence that will run along the north and east sides of the property. The exterior of this existing historic house will be painted with a fresh color scheme reinforcing the historic character of the structure. Any internal changes proposed will require a building permit after completion and approval of the COA process.

Below are ADA accessibility proposals and building elevations with included proposed changes:

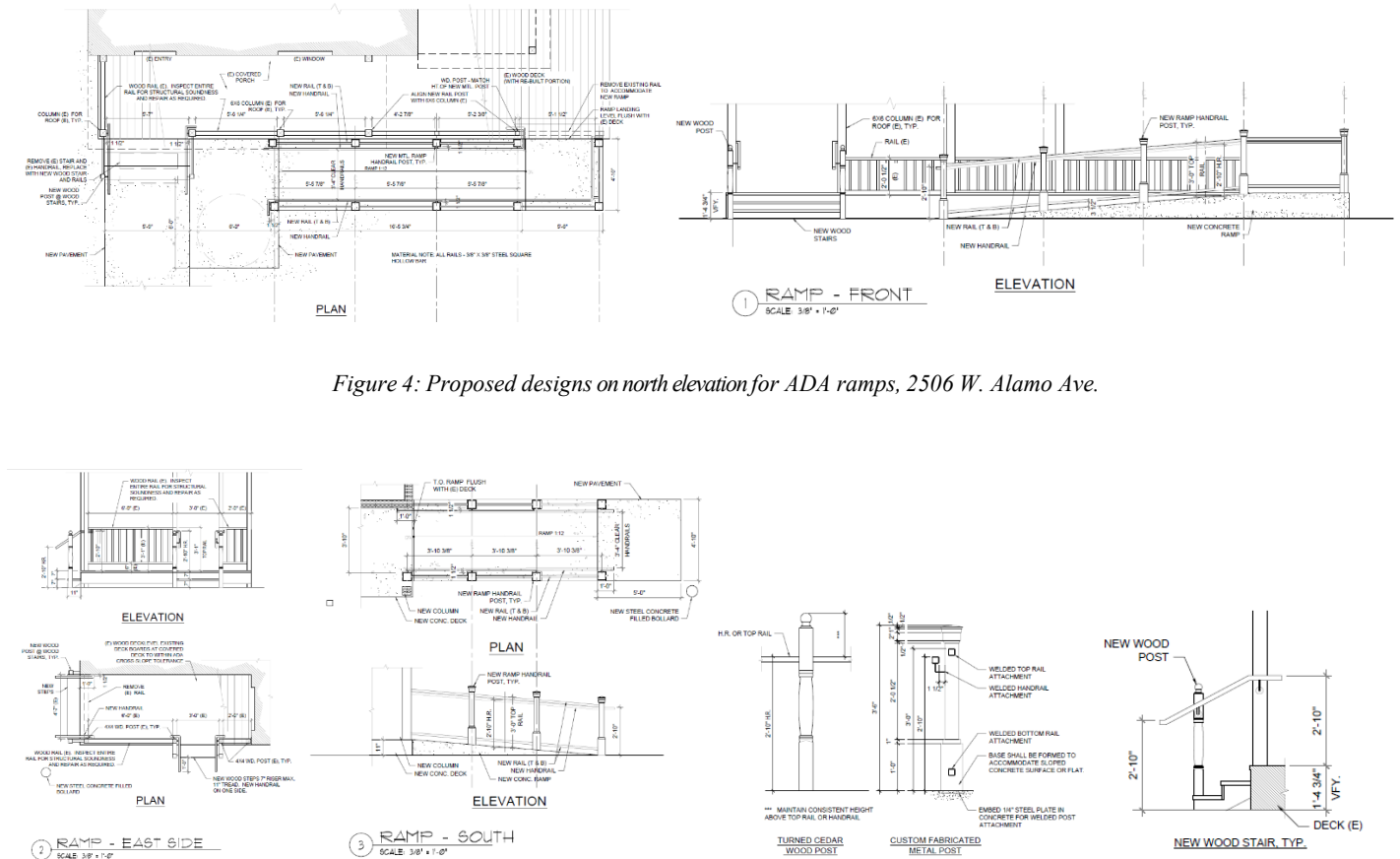


Figure 4: Proposed designs on north elevation for ADA ramps, 2506 W. Alamo Ave.

Figure 5: East and south ramp details at left with stair and post details at right, 2506 W. Alamo Ave.

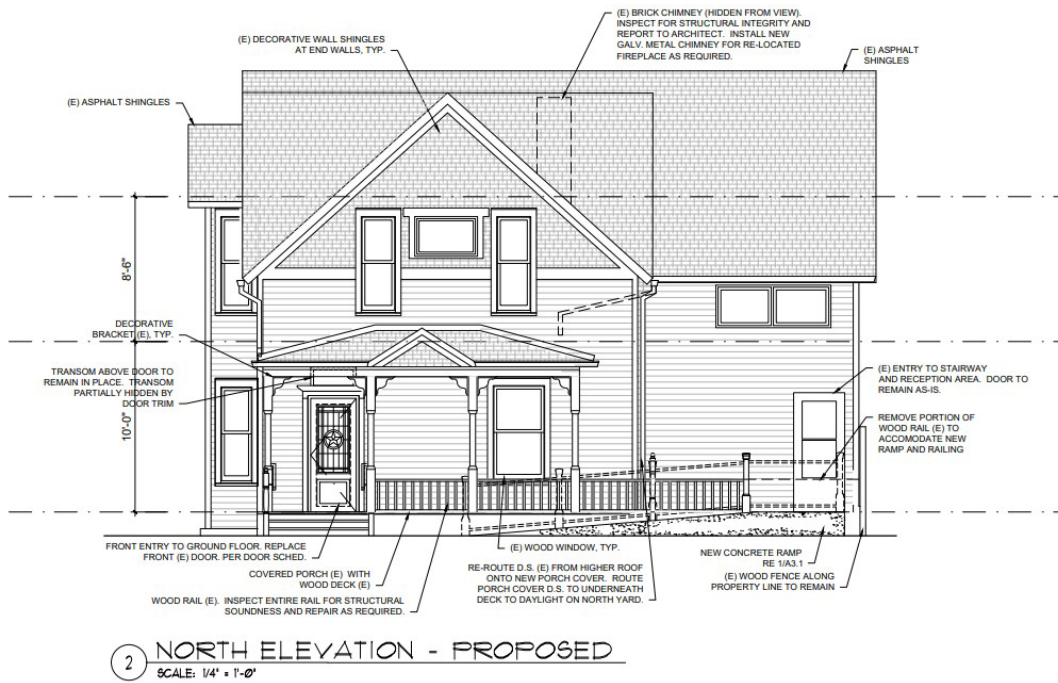


Figure 6: Proposed designs on north elevation highlighted, 2506 W. Alamo Ave.

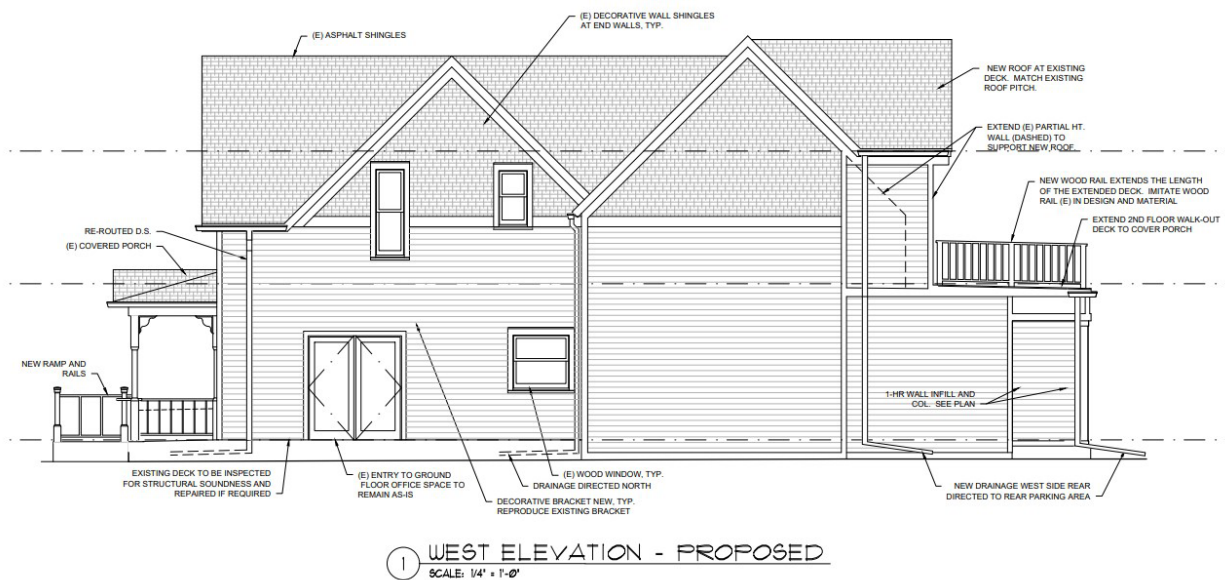


Figure 7: Proposed designs on west elevation highlighted, 2506 W. Alamo Ave.



Figure 8: Proposed designs on east elevation highlighted, 2506 W. Alamo Ave.

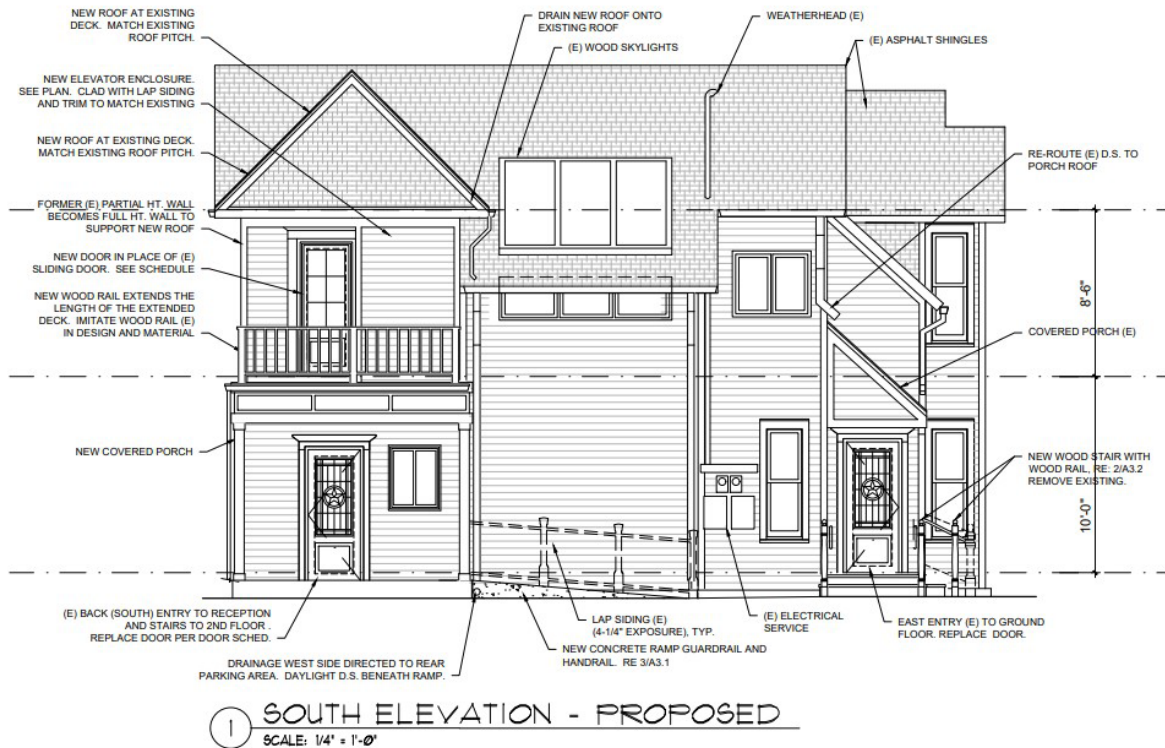


Figure 9: Proposed designs on south elevation highlighted, 2506 W. Alamo Ave.

In the elevations referenced above, the proposals show the proposed exterior improvements and additions to the existing structure. The majority of the improvements are related to providing ADA accessibility throughout the site to enable its use as a workforce development center and coffee shop. The proposed ramp on the front façade of the structure would minimally obscure the historic railing portion on the eastern edge of the existing front porch. This proposed ramp would require altering the non-historic deck and railing towards the west.

HISTORIC DOORS:

There are two historic doors that the applicant is proposing to remove. As outlined below, staff is recommending repair of the historic doors, rather than removal and replacement.



Figure 10: Historic front door located on the north façade of the Gill Residence at 2506 W. Alamo Ave.



Figure 11: Historic side door located on the east façade of the Gill Residence at 2506 W. Alamo Ave.

DECISION CRITERIA AND ANALYSIS:

Eligibility

Pursuant to Section 10-8-1.2 of the ULUC, prior to beginning work on a designated historic landmark or property in a Historic District, the property owner shall consult with the Director and submit materials for a certificate of appropriateness. Additionally, per Section 10-9-8.1(A) of the ULUC, the Certificate of Appropriateness “provides for the preservation of historic resources and establishes criteria for the proposed alterations to designated landmarks and buildings in historic districts.” The Gill Residence is a contributing building in the Littleton Downtown Historic District, and as such any proposed work must be approved through a COA process.

Approval Criteria & Analysis

10-9-8.1(C). General Decision Criteria. A Certificate of Appropriateness may be approved, approved with conditions, or denied based on the following criteria:

1. **Federal Standards.** The proposed changes are in compliance with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties with Guidelines for Preserving, Rehabilitating, Restoring, & Reconstructing Historic Buildings as adopted by the National Park Service:

Secretary of Interior Standards

Standard #1. A property shall be used for its historic purpose or be placed in a new use that requires minimal change to the defining characteristics of the building and its site and environment.

This building has served as a commercial/office space in contemporary times before its inclusion in the Downtown Historic District, and the application before HPB anticipates this continued use. This standard appears to be met.

Standard #2. The historic character of a property shall be retained and preserved. The removal of historic materials or alteration of features and spaces that characterize a property shall be avoided.

The work under review with this COA will not include the removal of historic materials. The proposal will affect mainly the front and rear façades. The impact of the proposed ADA ramp to allow direct front access will have minimal impact on the historic front facing façade. The sections of railing that will be removed are not historic and are only to accommodate the ramp and landing area at the western edge of the existing non-historic deck. Small steps will be rebuilt due to safety concerns. The new materials will be used in a similar fashion that will not diminish the building's character. This standard appears to be met.

Standard #3. Each property shall be recognized as a physical record of its time, place, and use. Changes that create a false sense of historic development, such as adding conjectural features or architectural elements from other buildings, shall not be undertaken.

None of the proposed changes create a false sense of historic development or include conjectural elements or architectural elements from other buildings. The options for proposed work are modern and not conjectural. The applicant worked with staff to provide a design for the rear porch addition that would be consistent with the design of the building without mimicking any historical features. The addition will allow the upstairs to have complete public access and enable its renovation into a workforce development center and provide a covered entry way at the rear. This standard appears to be met.

Standard #4. Most properties change over time; those changes that have acquired historic significance in their own right shall be retained and preserved.

Historically significant elements to the building will be retained and preserved. This COA aims to provide ADA accessibility to the property, which is essential for its intended use as a workforce development center and coffee shop. The attached survey notes that changes made to the building over time have diminished its integrity, especially the large rear addition. The front deck was added after this 1997 survey. The proposed changes are found not to eliminate elements that have acquired significance. This standard appears to be met.

Standard #5. Distinctive features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property shall be preserved.

The Gill Residence is a former single-family residence. The proposed work includes new doors and the addition of storm doors. There are two existing historic doors that, in staff's opinion, include character defining elements. The applicant has proposed removal and replacement of the historic doors; however, Planning staff recommends that HPB consider keeping, repairing, and restoring the doors as a condition of approval, and in lieu of replacement. **Based on the information provided above and in Section (2)(1) below, this standard appears NOT to have been met.**

Standard #6. Deteriorated historic features shall be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive features, the new feature shall match the old in design, color, texture, and other visual qualities and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features shall be substantiated by documentary, physical, or pictorial evidence.

Rebuilding existing deteriorated steps and replacing (if necessary) any unsafe railing spindles does not diminish the building's character. This standard appears to be met.

Standard #7. Chemical or physical treatments, such as sandblasting, that cause damage to historic materials.

The applicant is aware that no harsh treatments, such as sandblasting or corrosive chemicals may be used. The options before HPB in this application for a COA do not anticipate inclusion of any harsh treatments. This standard appears to be met.

Standard #8. Significant archaeological resources affected by a project shall be protected and preserved. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measure shall be undertaken.

There are no known archaeological resources on the property. No excavation is expected with these alterations. This standard appears to be met.

Standard #9. New additions, exterior alterations or related new construction shall not destroy historic materials that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible with the massing, size, scale, and architectural features to protect the historic integrity of the property and its environment.

There are proposed additions with this alteration. The options before HPB related to the proposed additions are not expected to destroy historic materials that characterize the property; the rear addition and porch to accommodate an elevator, ADA accessible ramps, and small porch reconfiguration on the eastern side elevation will have a minimal impact on the historic character of the building. Additions were designed to be compatible with the historic structure in a way that will delineate them as new construction. This standard appears to be met.

Standard #10. New additions and adjacent or related new construction shall be undertaken in such a manner that if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.

The additions proposed are sensitive to this standard. This standard appears to be met.

2. ***Littleton Design Standards and Guidelines.*** The proposed changes are in compliance with the adopted design standards and guidelines documents, such as the Downtown Littleton Historic Preservation Design Guidelines, as outlined in the Design Requirements section on the city's Envision Littleton webpage:

Downtown Littleton Historic Preservation Design Guidelines

As a part of the Littleton Downtown Historic District, this application is subject to the *Downtown Littleton*

Historic Preservation Design Guidelines. These guidelines establish solutions and standards for the restoration, preservation, and treatment of historical buildings. The specific guidelines are separated into six categories: commercial facades and storefronts; windows; doors; roofs; building materials; cornices, moldings, and other architectural features. The Design Guidelines also establish solutions for additions to historic buildings, including commercial and residential properties and historic site features. Relevant guidelines to this proposal are outlined and evaluated below:

1. Doors

- i. 3.23 Preserve the decorative and functional features of a primary entrance.
 - 1. *Proposal is requesting replacement of the historic front door.*
- ii. 3.25 Repair a damaged historic door.
 - 1. *Proposal is requesting replacement, rather than repair, of the historic front door as well as a historic side door on the eastern façade.*
- iii. 3.26 When replacing a door, use a design that has an appearance similar to the original
 - 1. *Notwithstanding Planning staff's recommendation for repair in accordance with subsections 3.23 and 3.25 listed above, the proposed replacement doors are compatible with historic design of building.*

2. Roof

- i. 3.27 Preserve the original roof form of a historic structure.
 - 1. *Proposal includes changes to the roof form of the rear of the structure, which will not be easily visible from the street and has been modified in the past. The angles of the roof line reference the existing home and do not add inappropriate architectural elements to the structure.*

In staff's opinion, the criteria listed within 3.23 and 3.25 have NOT have been met.

Window Replacement Design Guidelines

No historic windows will be replaced or affected by this proposal. As such, staff finds that the application is consistent with the intent of these guidelines as the proposed improvements will not alter, remove, or replace any historic windows that may exist.

- 3. ***Original Features.*** The proposed work preserves, rehabilitates, or reconstructs the original architectural features, and proposed new features are visually compatible with designated historic structure(s) located on the property in terms of design, finishes, material, scale, mass, and height.

Staff finds that the proposed work does not impact the building's scale, mass, or height. The proposal does not affect the original or restored architectural features. This criterion appears to be met.

- 4. ***Compatibility.*** If property is in a designated historic district, the proposed work is visually

compatible with the development on abutting properties and those on the same block. The HPB shall consider characteristics such as setbacks and building scale.

Staff finds that the proposed work is compatible with the surrounding historic district insofar as the current building exemplifies the Littleton Downtown Historic District. This criterion appears to be met.

- 5. *Character, Interest, and Value.* Aside from changes that do not require a Certificate of Appropriateness, as set out in paragraph B.3.a, above, the proposed work does not adversely affect the special character or historical, architectural, or aesthetic interest or value of a landmark or property in a historic district.**

Staff finds that the proposed work does not adversely affect the special character or historical, architectural, or aesthetic interest or value of the building. The special character of the building, as it relates to its historic significance, will not be impacted. The proposed material changes are consistent with the historical character of the building. The options presented in the COA for the additions will not alter the historic significance of the building. This criterion appears to be met.

- 6. *Color and Materials.* The architectural style, arrangement, textures, paint colors especially if applied to brick or stone, and arrangement of colors and materials used on existing and proposed structures are compatible with the character of the existing landmark or property in a historic district; and**

Staff finds that the exterior colors and materials, and their arrangement, are compatible with the character of the existing building. This criterion appears to be met.

- 7. *Exterior Features.* The proposed work preserves, enhances, or restores, and does not damage or destroy the exterior architectural features of a historical landmark or property in a historic district.**

Staff finds that this COA application aims to enhance the exterior architectural features of the historic building and does not damage or destroy the primary features of the building. This criterion appears to be met.

HISTORICAL PRESERVATION BOARD OPTIONS:

Pursuant to Section 10-9-8.1.E, the historical preservation board shall approve, approve with conditions, or deny the certificate of appropriateness. The board may also issue an order to continue the application process if the board determines that additional information is necessary to make a decision.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff finds that the Certificate of Appropriateness for 2506 W. Alamo Ave., the Gill Residence, does not meet all the approval criteria in the ULUC Section 10-9-8.1. As such, Planning staff recommends approval with conditions, as outlined in HPB Resolution 01-2024. The condition being requested is that the applicant repair and retain the two existing historic doors, rather than replace them.