

Downtown renewal faces further delay

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Redevelopment of the north side of the 600 block on Main Street in Rapid City faces further delay.

In a directive received Monday from the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) the city must take certain steps to preserve on film and in documents any historical significance of all the buildings in the block.

As part of the downtown urban renewal program, the city had planned to raze all the structures west from the old fire station and offer the land for redevelopment by private interests.

This block, however, had been considered historically significant because it faces the block between Sixth and Seventh and between Main and St. Joseph. This block has been declared historically significant and entered in the National Register. The property on all blocks facing this block has been declared eligible for entry in the National Register with the fire station and the building to the east entered.

This means federal money cannot be used to destroy or otherwise change the historically significant features of these buildings.

The Local Public Agency (LPA) for

urban renewal has been trying for several months to get some indication from HUD and from the several historical preservation agencies as to the terms that demolition of the "border line" buildings would be permitted.

The directive permits the demolition of the buildings from the fire station west, except for two, after professional photographs, architectural drawings and written documentation are preserved for the archives of the city, state and federal governments.

The two structures which are to remain until a developer decides whether or not he wants to use them are the former Mr. Beef buildings at 626 Main and the old Studio One building at 618 Main and the stores on each side which are considered one building.

In addition to the photos, taken under specific instructions established by the

Historical American Buildings Survey and the other documentation, each of the buildings must be surveyed to determine if there are any historical elements, such as doors, windows, hardware and so forth, that can be salvaged for use in the restoration or rehabilitation of other historic buildings in the city.

Although members of the LPA were obviously irked at further delay, the urban renewal office was authorized to get informal bids from professional photographers and to start the search for any historically significant elements.

Mayor Art LaCroix said he can't fault HUD for the intent to preserve historic structures and artifacts, "but when it's applied to these fire traps, it's a lot of baloney."