

HISTORIC LANDMARK COMMISSION
PERMITS IN NATIONAL REGISTER HISTORIC DISTRICTS
APRIL 24, 2017
NRD-2017-0012
721 Congress Avenue
Congress Avenue Historic District

PROPOSAL

Construct a high-rise multi-family residential building on the site of a non-contributing structure that will be demolished.

PROJECT SPECIFICATIONS

The applicant proposes the construction of a high-rise multi-family residential building on the southeast corner of 8th Street and Congress Avenue. The proposed building will be 31 stories tall (436') and will have a street presence of panels of printed glass on the Congress Avenue façade. This printed glass section will be recessed from the street line and will be approximately 3 stories tall. Above the printed glass section will be a projecting section of the high-rise, rising another 4 stories, with a roof deck. The main body of the building will then rise to its full height, with a 40 foot setback from Congress Avenue. The materials for the building, including the printed glass entry section wrapping the corner of 8th Street, will be unitized glass and metal panels of varying widths, with decorative metal panels on the ground floor on the 8th Street side of the building. The building will have metal awnings at the principal entries on Congress Avenue and 8th Street.

STANDARDS FOR REVIEW

The Congress Avenue Historic District has no design guidelines for new construction. General design principles for historic districts emphasize compatibility with the contributing structures within the district in terms of materials, size, scale, and fenestration patterns. There are no design guidelines for new high-rise construction in the historic district, so the Commission should focus on the presence of the building at the human level.




Other new high-rise projects on Congress Avenue have taken the rhythm of the street into greater account than this project seems to do. The new hotel at 7th Street and Congress Avenue has a greater articulation of the three-bay rhythm of the street within the 23-foot wide facades common on the avenue.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

While recognizing the high quality and innovation in the design and materials of this building, staff must disagree with its compatibility in the historic district. Congress Avenue is noted for its rhythm of three bays at the street level, and this is the pattern that new construction should reference for compatibility. The street-level presence of this building appears monolithic in comparison in its height, choice of material, and set-back from the flush line of the street. There does not appear to be sufficient reference to the typical bay width, and the printed glass, while innovative, delivers the impression of a sheer 3-story wall without the undulation and piercings typical of the historic patterns along the avenue. Staff therefore recommends that the applicants consider a modification to the street-level façade on Congress Avenue that lessens the impact of the monolithic aspect of the entry and reflects greater compatibility with the traditional bay divisions and patterns in the historic district. A building of this size should do its best to blend in, rather than stand apart from the contributing buildings in the historic district, at least on its street level.

LOCATION MAP



-  SUBJECT TRACT
-  PENDING CASE
-  ZONING BOUNDARY

1" = 333'

NOTIFICATIONS

CASE#: NRD-2017-0012
LOCATION: 721 Congress Ave

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