

HISTORIC LANDMARK COMMISSION
PERMITS IN NATIONAL REGISTER HISTORIC DISTRICTS
FEBRUARY 25, 2019
NRD-2019-0014
610 Brazos Street
Sixth Street Historic District

PROPOSAL

Remove the existing façade of the building and install a new glass-centric façade, exposing the concrete structural members of the building.

PROJECT SPECIFICATIONS

The applicant proposes to remove the existing façade, which has been modified since its original construction, and has narrow window openings that do not provide much natural light into the building, and replace it with a façade that contains much more glass and exposes the original concrete structural members. The non-historic arcaded entry will be removed and replaced with a flush entry module.

STANDARDS FOR REVIEW

The Sixth Street Historic District Design Guidelines provide:

Design any alterations to be compatible with the historic character of the property. Avoid alterations that would hinder the ability to interpret the design character of the original building. Avoid alterations that would damage historic features.

If the storefront is already altered, restoring it to the original design is preferred. The storefront should be designed to provide interest to pedestrians.

Alternative designs that are contemporary interpretations of traditional storefronts may be considered in limited cases. Where the original is missing and no evidence of its character exists, a new design that uses the traditional elements may be considered. However, it must continue to convey the character of typical storefronts, including the transparent character of the display window.

Preserve historic upper story windows. Historically, upper story windows had a vertical emphasis. The proportions of these windows contribute to the character of each commercial storefront. Do not block them up or alter their size.

Preserve original façade materials. Historically, brick and limestone have been the dominant building materials in the Sixth Street district. Do not cover or obscure original façade materials.

Contemporary interpretations of traditional buildings, which are similar in scale and overall character to those seen historically, are strongly encouraged. Infill should be a balance of new and old in design.

New construction should appear similar in mass and scale to historic structures found traditionally in the area. Buildings should appear similar in width to those seen historically.

Materials in new construction should appear similar to those used historically.

The ratio of window-to-wall should be similar to that seen traditionally on commercial buildings in the district.

Upper story windows with a vertical emphasis are encouraged. Windows and doors should be trimmed with painted wood or metal; this trim should have a dimension similar to that used historically.

STAFF COMMENTS

The building at 610 Brazos Street is the Ewell Nalle Building, built in the late 1920s as a professional office building by the Nalle family, prominent for their ownership of a large lumberyard and later plastics factory. The Ewell Nalle Building was comparable in prestige to the Scarbrough, Littlefield, and Norwood buildings for professional offices in downtown Austin in its heyday.

The nomination for the Sixth Street Historic District nomination does not identify whether the Ewell Nalle Building is contributing or non-contributing to the historic district, most likely due to the alterations to the façade of the building. Staff is treating the building as contributing because of its historical identity, however recognizing that the building has been significantly modified over the years. The basic form and design of the building remains intact even if all of the elements of the façade have been modified.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION

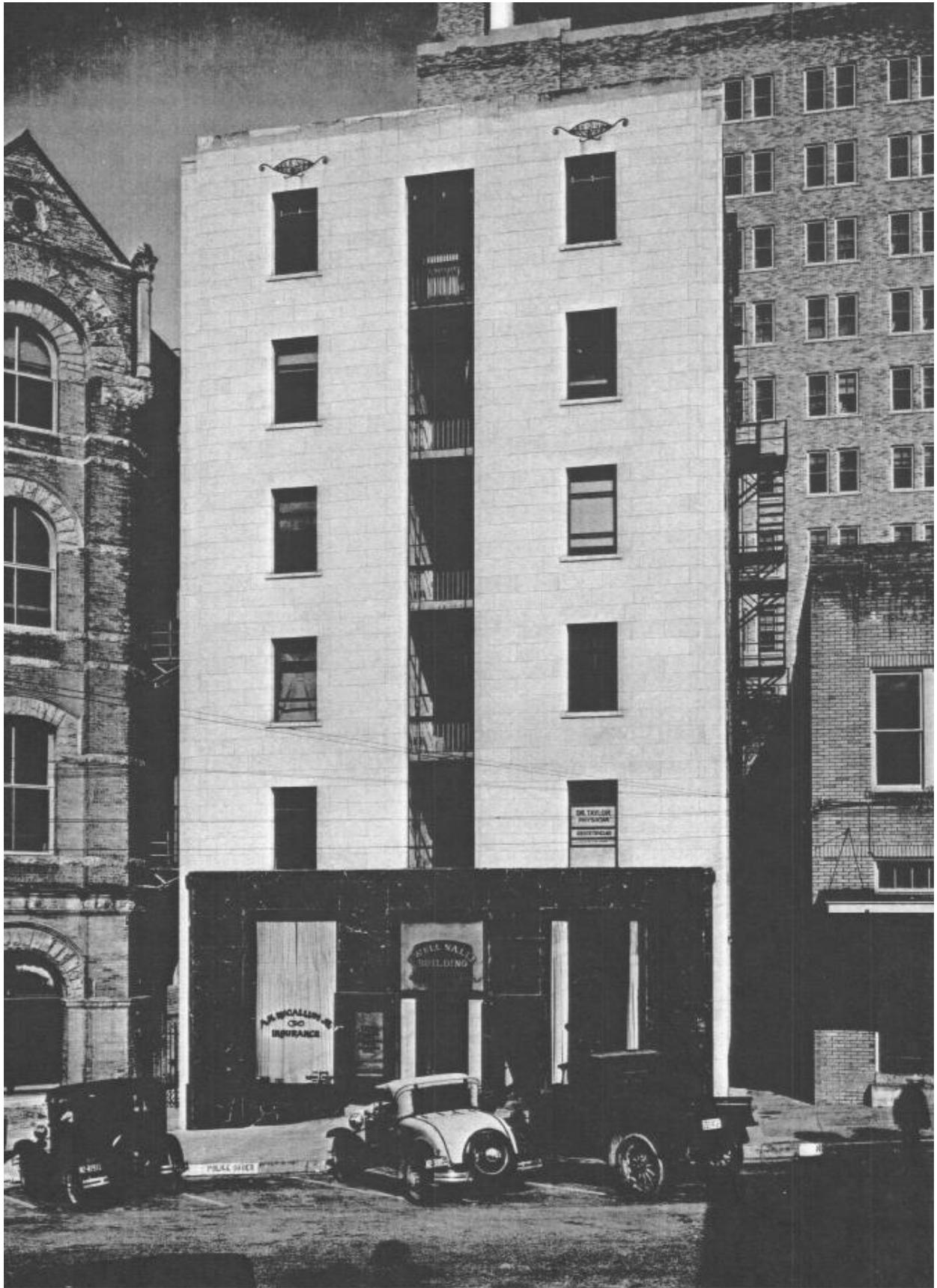
The applicant presented this proposal to the Certificate of Appropriateness Review Committee on February 11, 2019. The Committee stated that the proposed design is not historically appropriate but it was architecturally interesting, and recommended that the applicant simplify the window patterns and employ a design that emphasized the verticality of the existing façade.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Request that the applicant return to the Certificate of Appropriateness Review Committee for further study and evaluation of the proposal to allow for more conformance with the historic district design guidelines and emphasis on the vertical composition of the building.

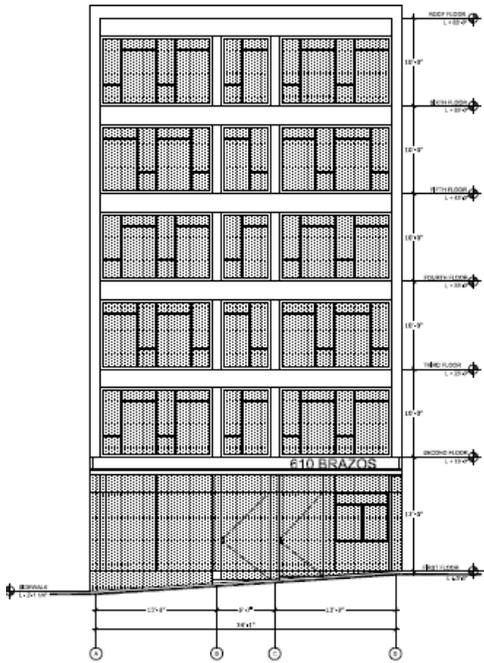
Current and historic photos:



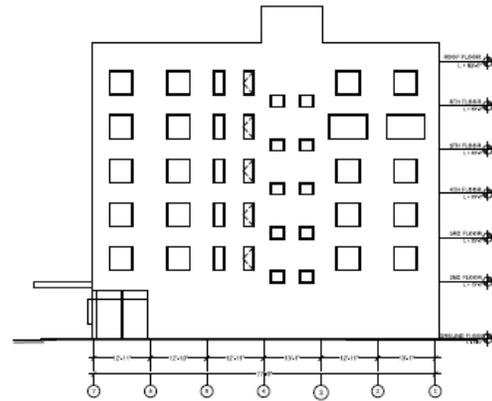




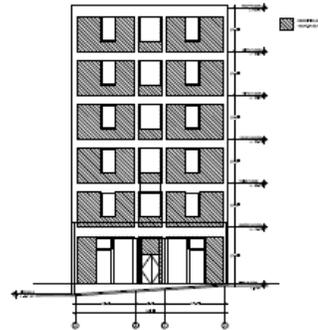




1 EAST ELEVATION @ BRAZOS ST.
SCALE 3/16" = 1'-0"



2 NORTH ELEVATION
SCALE 3/32" = 1'-0"



3 EAST ELEVATION - DEMOLITION ELEVATION
SCALE 3/16" = 1'-0"