

HISTORIC LANDMARK COMMISSION
APPLICATION FOR A PERMIT WITHIN A NATIONAL REGISTER HISTORIC DISTRICT
AUGUST 24, 2020
HR-20-107348
319-323 E. 6TH STREET
SIXTH STREET NATIONAL REGISTER HISTORIC DISTRICT

PROPOSAL

Construct a two-story addition to three contributing buildings within the Sixth Street National Register Historic District.

PROJECT SPECIFICATIONS

The applicant proposes the construction of a continuous two-story addition across three one-story buildings that would be contributing to the Sixth Street National Register Historic District. The proposed addition will be L-shaped, with portion over what is 323 E. 6th Street will be set 11'-6" from the parapet wall, and will extend 23'-6" to the west from the east property line, at which point, the proposed addition will be recessed 27'-11" from the front wall; this will extend for 43'-6" along the western two-thirds of the building, and will be faced with a two-story deck structure facing the street, one foot in from the front wall of the shorter protruding section of the proposed addition (12'-6") for a more or less flush presence across the three buildings. The materials for the proposed addition include clear-sealed wood board and batten siding at the protruding section of the addition, and painted horizontal wood lap siding along the inset section of the addition, fronted with painted steel rails for the deck.

Exterior doors in the proposed addition will be aluminum and glass doors on the second story, and wood doors with glazing on the third floor. All doors will have transoms. The second story will also have aluminum and glass overhead doors leading out to the decks. The applicant proposes a series of divided-light wood windows on the third floor of the addition.

STANDARDS FOR REVIEW

The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation are used to evaluate projects in National Register historic districts. The following standards apply to the proposed project:

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.

Evaluation: These are three commercial buildings that have become bars and night clubs over the years. The proposed addition is for additional space for the bars and a private club space on the top floor. The use of the proposed addition is not incompatible with the long-standing use of the ground-floor buildings, and is set back over 12 feet from the wall to provide a visual distance between old and new.

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.

Evaluation: These three buildings are one-story commercial buildings. The proposed addition will be taller than the existing buildings, but will be set back from the front wall so as to not overly compete with the historic character of the existing buildings.

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.

Evaluation: The proposed addition to these three buildings is differentiated from the old; the height of each floor of the proposed addition relates to the height of the original one-story buildings at the street level.

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.

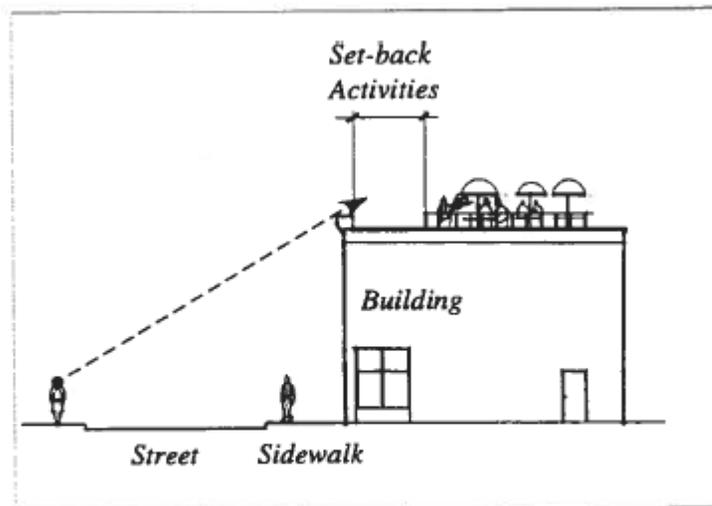
Evaluation: The essential form and integrity of the historic property will remain if the proposed addition is removed at some time in the future.

In addition, the Sixth Street Architectural Design Guidelines provide:

26. Minimize the visual impact of rooftop uses as seen from the street.
27. Set activities back such that they are not visible from the sidewalk below. At a minimum, they should be set back the height of a one-story building, and includes the placement of trees, umbrellas, and tables.
55. Preserve the historic character of the roof line. Altering an existing historic parapet line is inappropriate.
56. Set a new roof terrace back from the building front, allowing one to continue to perceive the historic character of the cornice line. Roof terrace railings and furniture should be placed well behind the parapet.

The following guidelines are for historic buildings (interpreted to be historic landmarks), but worth noting here:

63. An addition should be compatible in scale, materials, and character with the main building. Using a similar material is appropriate. In some cases, a simpler, less noticeable material may also be appropriate.
64. An addition should be set back from the primary, character-defining façade. A roof-top addition should be set back substantially, to preserve the perception of the historic scale of the building. If a roof-top addition is appropriate, a minimum set-back of 25 feet is recommended. An addition to a one-story building should be set back a greater distance than that of a two-story structure, to minimize its visual impact.
65. The addition should be subtly distinguishable in its design from the historic portion.
66. The addition should be designed to remain subordinate to the main structure. Its materials, finish, and details should not call attention to the addition. The addition should not alter, damage or obscure character-defining features. In general, an addition to a historic building front is inappropriate.



Set activities back such that they are not visible from the sidewalk below.

The proposed project does not conform to the applicable guidelines of the Secretary of the Interior nor the Architectural Design Guidelines in that it is too close to the front of the one-story buildings, and has high potential to be visible from the sidewalk across the street. However, the proposed addition is well-designed and compatible with the ground-story architecture in terms of scale, massing, and materials.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

Not reviewed.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Encourage the applicant to pull back the front of the addition and the decks to at least 15 feet, which will further minimize the visual impact of the proposed project on the historic one-story buildings at its base. Staff recommends that the Commission provide additional comments and release the permit upon completion of a City of Austin Documentation Package, consisting of photographs of the principal elevations.