

HISTORIC LANDMARK COMMISSION
APPLICATION FOR A PERMIT WITHIN A NATIONAL REGISTER HISTORIC DISTRICT
SEPTEMBER 28, 2020
HR-20-107348
319-323 E. 6TH STREET
SIXTH STREET NATIONAL REGISTER HISTORIC DISTRICT

PROPOSAL

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

PROJECT SPECIFICATIONS

The applicant proposes the construction of a continuous one-story addition across three one-story buildings that would be contributing to the Sixth Street National Register Historic District. The proposed addition will be set back 15 feet back from the front wall of the existing buildings, with an open deck in front. The applicant proposes to remove an existing deck cover from the building, giving the proposed addition a clean look from the street. The existing metal railing on the building will be painted in a muted tone to lessen its visibility. The addition will have painted horizontal lap siding, a wooden cornice treatment that takes its cue from the one-story buildings on the street, aluminum and glass overhead doors; aluminum and glass single leaf doors opening onto the deck will have transoms, keeping the fenestration line even and clean.

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 use of the proposed addition is not incompatible with the long-standing use of the ground-floor buildings, and is set back 15 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 is one story with a taller cornice, but the height of the fenestration on the addition comports to the height of the fenestration and storefronts on the ground story. The proposed addition is recessed and fades into the background; it is very compatible with the historic character of the existing building.

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 but takes its architectural cues from the existing buildings; 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.

The proposed project conforms to the applicable guidelines of the Secretary of the Interior nor the Architectural Design Guidelines, and is a very sensitive and elegant design that complements the historic character of the ground-story facades.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee advised to set the addition back (from the original design), to simplify the materials proposed for the elevation and to minimize the height of the building. The applicant has revised the plans for this project in conformance with the committee's recommendations.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Approve as proposed. This is an excellent design for a second-story addition to the modest buildings on Sixth Street.

E-mail from the applicant:

Steve,

- We have reduced the height so that we are substantially below the 45' maximum allowable
- We do not project past the 15' setback
- Per comments from the A.R.C., we have removed the canopy lighting at the cornice to not call attention to the height
- Per comments from the A.R.C., we have painted the existing railing dark gray to not call attention to it
- Per comments from the A.R.C., we have painted the second floor main doors green in lieu of orange to not call attention to them
- During the A.R.C. meeting, it was suggested that we reduce the height of the front facade by using a gable roof with the ridge parallel to the street, so that the eave would be lower than for the single shed roof that we are showing, as well as to get the eave height closer to the height of the adjacent buildings. We looked at that, but are concerned that the rainfall from this roof on the second floor deck does not have a good place to go. Currently the roof deck drains through the open courtyard in the center, but this will no longer be the case.