

HISTORIC LANDMARK COMMISSION
PERMITS IN NATIONAL REGISTER HISTORIC DISTRICTS
JANUARY 24, 2022
C14H-1986-0008; HR-2021-200636
CONGRESS AVENUE HISTORIC DISTRICT
522 CONGRESS AVENUE

PROPOSAL

Install a sculpture at the southwest corner of 6th St. and Congress Ave. in an existing street patio within the right-of-way.

PROJECT SPECIFICATIONS

The proposed sculpture will be located within an existing street patio along Congress Ave. adjacent to the Scarbrough Building, a historic landmark. The sculpture is approximately 12' tall and reads "Keep Austin Weird" depending on the angle of view.

The sculpture will be located in the right-of-way for Congress Ave. The map in the historic zoning file for the Scarbrough Building indicates that only the building footprint is designated; the designation does not extend into the right-of-way. See the map on page 3 below. As such, this review does not require a Certificate of Appropriateness, and the Commission's comments are advisory.

Installation of the sculpture requires a [license agreement](#) with the City of Austin. A license agreement is for a temporary encroachment on the right-of-way, requires annual renewal, and can be revoked by the City with notice. The sculpture will be securely installed, though it is in three pieces and is ultimately moveable.

DESIGN STANDARDS

The City of Austin's [Historic Design Standards](#) (March 2021) are based on the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and are used to evaluate projects within National Register districts. However, provisions for review of public art are not included in the Historic Design Standards. Standards for new streetscape elements reference compatibility of style, design, and materials with the surrounding historic district. These factors may not apply in evaluating artistic expression; sculptures may be site-specific and designed to respond to their environment or may be purposefully distinct. The Commission should focus solely on impacts to the setting of the Congress Avenue Historic District and not comment on the artistic merit of the proposed art piece.

While there is not a historic precedent for public art within the Congress Avenue Historic District, multiple sculptures currently are installed within the district, and the impact of this additional piece will be minimal on the overall character of the district. Within the streetscape, the 12' sculpture is not of a scale that competes with the substantial height of the 8-story Scarbrough tower. At the pedestrian level, while larger than human scale, the sculpture will be aligned with the street trees and of a lower height than the trees or light posts.

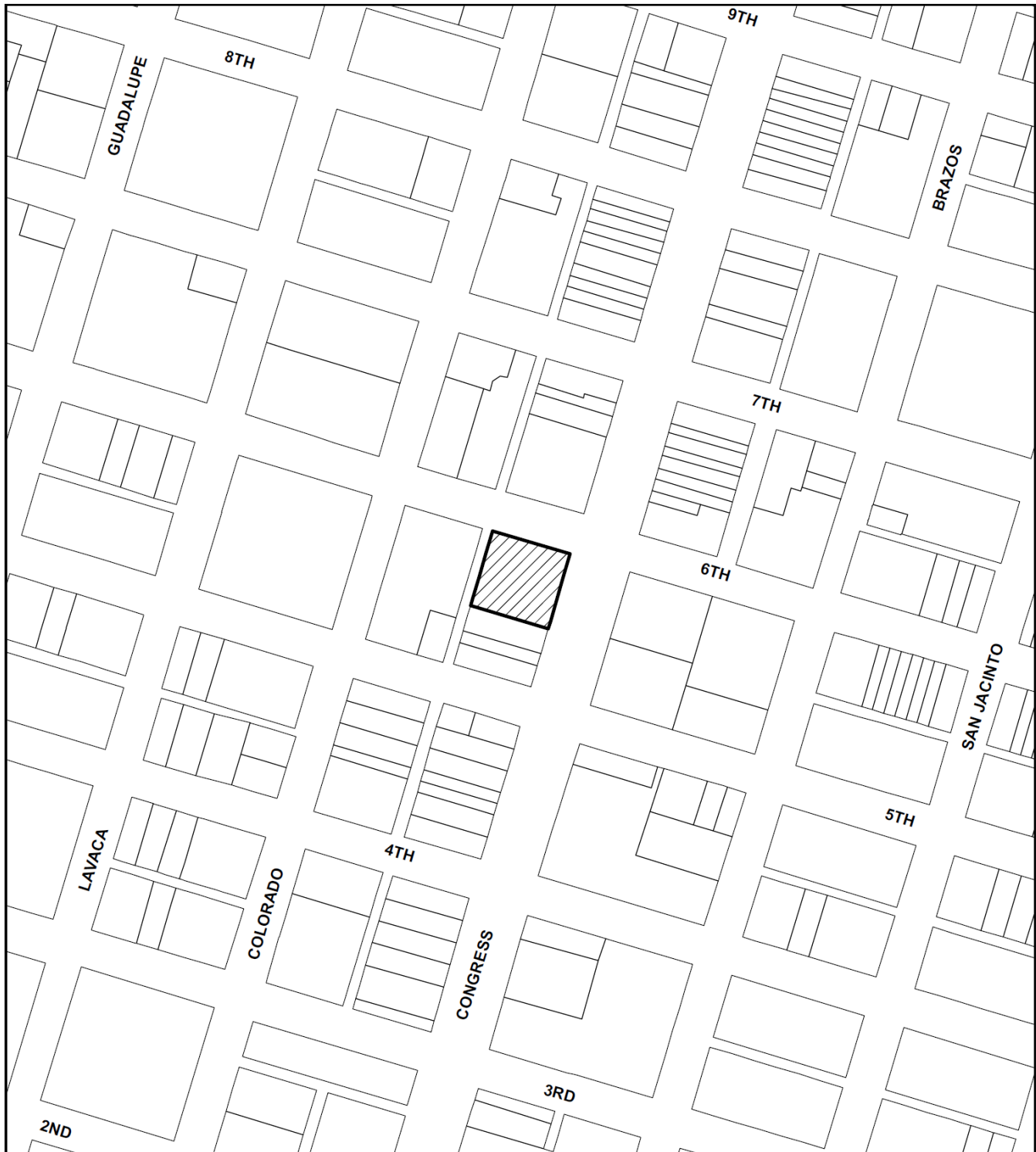
COMMITTEE FEEDBACK




When the proposal was previously reviewed in 2018 in conjunction with creation of the street patio, the Committee did not recommend installation of the sculpture. The Commission postponed consideration of the sculpture on [May 21](#) and [June 25](#), 2018, at which point the applicant focused on construction of the street patio that received Commission approval. See also the prior [staff report](#). At the time, the case was presented to the Commission as an application for a Certificate of Appropriateness; however, as noted above, that level of review is unnecessary.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Comment on and release the plans.

LOCATION MAP



-  SUBJECT TRACT
-  PENDING CASE
-  ZONING BOUNDARY

1" = 250'

NOTIFICATIONS

CASE#: C14H-1986-0008

LOCATION: 522 CONGRESS AVENUE

This product is for informational purposes and may not have been prepared for or be suitable for legal, engineering, or surveying purposes. It does not represent an on-the-ground survey and represents only the approximate relative location of property boundaries.

This product has been produced by CTM for the sole purpose of geographic reference. No warranty is made by the City of Austin regarding specific accuracy or completeness.



[illegible]

ZONING LINE

CYCLE 3 1/8 INTLS Lj

SUBJECT ACREAGE

CASE NO.

C 14h-86-008

GRID

J 22

4TH