HISTORIC LANDMARK COMMISSION
APPLICATION FOR A CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS
FEBRUARY 1, 2023
HR-2022-178783; C14H-1983-0007
TOWNSEND-THOMPSON BUILDING
718 CONGRESS AVENUE

PROPOSAL

Replace windows and doors and construct a skylight atop a ca. 1875 landmarked building.

PROJECT SPECIFICATIONS

1) Replace windows and doors in-kind.
   a. 1st floor, east (front) elevation: Replace existing full-height single pane glazing with 1" low-e clear glazing at storefront. Replace damaged wood fixed windows with new fixed G. W. Cernoch reproduction windows to match existing. Replace existing doors with new wood door to match style and finish of existing with clear low-E insulated glazing and bronze hardware.
   b. 2nd floor, east elevation: Replace damaged wood casement and 1:1 sash windows with G. W. Cernoch reproduction casement windows to match existing central window, with clear low-E insulated glazing. Paint exterior to match existing window colors.
   c. 1st floor, west (rear) elevation: Replace damaged wood frame windows with new fixed windows to match existing. Paint window exterior to match existing window colors. Apply translucent 3M privacy film on interior of windows. Existing door to remain, painted gloss grey to match existing.
2) Rebuild existing skylight. Steel structure, paint exterior white gloss, with clear anodized aluminum glazing frames and 1" insulated low-E glazing.
3) Replace TPO roof in-kind.

ARCHITECTURE

The 1983 application for historic designation describes the building as follows:

> 718 Congress Avenue is early Victorian in architecture, with three stone arche s in the second story front. These arches are surmounted by carved rosettes, and in early photographs of the buildings the cast-iron cornice can be seen with a globe atop its center arch.[1]

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 at historic landmarks. The following standards apply to the proposed project:

Repair and alterations

1. General Standards

1.1 Do not remove intact historic material from the exterior of a building.

The proposed project removes and replaces windows. While it appears that first-floor glazing has been replaced, the age of the second-floor windows was not provided. While it appears that windows were replaced during the 1982-83 restoration, with new glazing, it is unclear whether existing window frames are reinstallations of original frames or were wholesale replacements.

1.2 Always attempt repair first. Replacement should only be undertaken when absolutely necessary, and for the smallest area possible.

The proposed project does not address material age, deterioration, or potential for repair.

1.3 When historic material must be replaced due to damage or deterioration, replacement materials should look the same, perform reliably within the existing construction, and, in most cases, be made of the same material.

The proposed project replaces windows and doors in-kind, apart from substituting matching casements for sash windows at the second floor.

[1] Zoning Change Summary Sheet: Townsend-Thompson Building, C14-83-07. 1983.

1.4 Do not attempt to re-create an architectural detail or element without proof that it existed on the building historically. Documentation can be physical (traces on the building), written (such as building plans), or photographic.
While the proposed project substitutes casement for sash windows at the second floor, the substitution appears appropriate for the era; however, photographic evidence of the building pre-slipcover would confirm appropriateness.

1.5 When demolishing additions or features that were built after the building's period of significance, minimize damage to the building. a. Stabilize and repair building walls that are exposed when non-historic additions or features are removed. b. Avoid demolition that removes historic structural systems or compromises the structural integrity of a historic building.
The proposed project does not address the structural implications of removal and replacement of the skylight structure.

3. Roofs
3.1 When replacing roof material, use a material that is appropriate to the building's history and character.
The proposed project replaces roof material in-kind with TPO, which will not be visible beyond the parapet.

5. Windows, Doors, and Screens
5.1 Repair, rather than replace, historic windows, doors, and screens; and their trim, surrounds, sidelights, transoms, and shutters, unless they are deteriorated beyond the point of stabilization or restoration. Retain windows if 50% or more of the wood or metal sash members are intact. a. Using modern material in repairs and patches is a possibility if the material has proven appropriate and stable in similar uses.
The proposed project does not address whether windows retain 50% or more intact material.

5.2 Historic windows on non-street-facing walls may be replaced for energy efficiency if other high-impact energy efficiency upgrades have been completed or are included in the same project. All following standards for replacement windows apply.
The proposed project applies solar film to alley-facing windows, which will be replaced in-kind.

5.3 If historic windows must be replaced, match the size and details of the existing window, including configuration, profile, and finish. Take into account elements such as frames, sashes, muntins, sills, heads, moldings, surrounds, hardware, and shutters. a. If a window has divided lites, replacement windows must have true divided lites or simulated divided lites with dimensional muntins placed on the outside of the glass and corresponding spacers of an appropriate color, material, and thickness on the inside of the glass, so that the window appears to have true divided lites. b. Never use a replacement window with false muntins inserted inside the glass. c. In historic districts, there is more flexibility for windows not visible from a front or side street.
See 1.3.

5.4 If historic windows visible from a front or side street must be replaced, relocate historic windows from a non-street-facing wall, if sizes allow.
The building does not have size-appropriate windows at secondary façades.

5.5 Do not enlarge, move, or enclose historic window or door openings that are highly visible from a front or side street. It may be appropriate to restore historic door or window openings that have been enclosed.
5.6 If adding windows or doors is necessary, create new openings on a wall not visible from the front street.
The proposed project does not modify window or door openings.

5.7 If replacing a non-original door, identify the historic style of the door through research, or look to nearby similar properties to guide the choice of a replacement.
The proposed doors will match the existing doors.

5.8 If a historic window or door is missing, replace it with a new unit based on documentation of the historic feature. If no documentation exists, use a new design compatible with the historic opening and the historic character of the building.
No documentation was provided for second-floor window replacements; however, proposed replacements are compatible with the building's character.

Additional standards for historic landmarks: 5.15 Do not replace historic windows; repair them except in cases of extreme damage or deterioration. Replace in-kind if necessary.
The proposed project replaces existing windows in-kind; there is no indication if existing windows are original.

Commercial Additions
1. Location
1.1 Locate additions at the rear and sides of historic buildings to minimize visual impact.

1.2 Set back additions from the front wall at a distance that preserves the perceived massing of the historic building, considering the pedestrian view from the opposite side of the primary street. a. Additions must be set back at least 20' from the front wall of the historic building.
The proposed addition appears to be located at the center of the building, set back from the front wall. Setback calculations were not provided.

1.3 Minimize the loss of historic fabric by connecting additions to the existing building through the most noninvasive location and methods.
The proposed skylight addition appears to utilize part of the existing skylight opening.

Additional standard for historic landmarks:
1.4 Additions are not appropriate for all historic landmarks and will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.
While the proposed skylight appears outsized in elevation, perspective drawings from the opposite street and setback measurements may help to determine its overall visual impact to the building.

2. Scale, Massing, and Height
2.1 Design the addition to complement the scale and massing of the historic building.
2.2 Design the addition to appear subordinate to the historic building.
2.3 Minimize the appearance of the addition from the primary street(s). The historic building's overall shape as viewed from the opposite side of the primary street must appear relatively unaltered.
See 1.4.

2.4 Additions are subject to a 20' setback. They may be cantilevered 5' towards the front wall, but may not extend closer than 15' behind the front wall. The cantilevered portion must begin above the historic building's roof: a. At least 2 times the height of the historic building, for buildings that are one or two stories high. b. At least 1 time the height of the historic building, for buildings that are more than two stories high.
See 1.2.

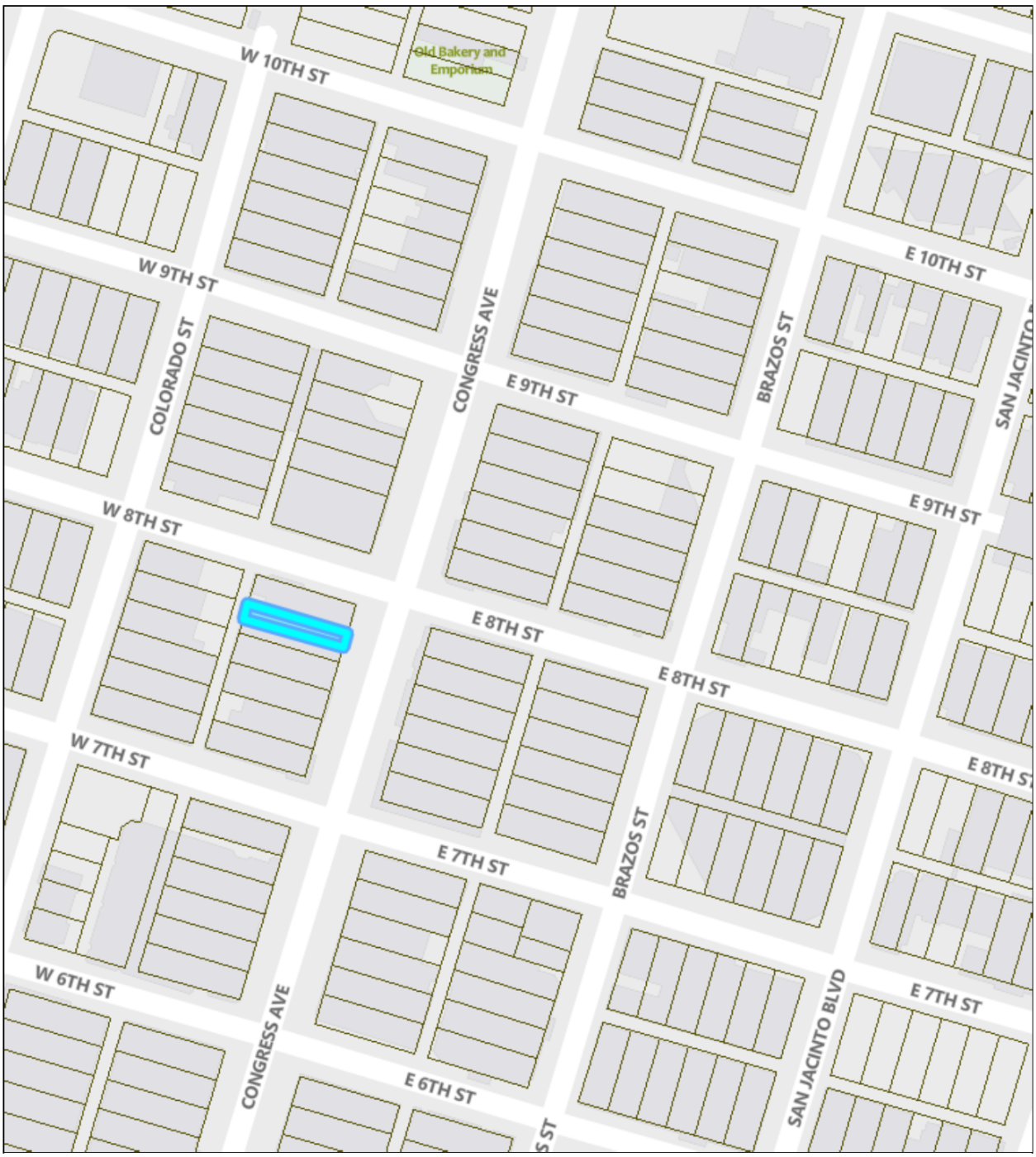
4. Roofs
These standards apply if the roof will be visible from the pedestrian level at the opposite side of the primary street.
4.1 Design the roof form and slope of the addition to complement the roof on the historic building.
4.2 Use roof materials that match or are compatible with the roof on the historic building.
4.3 Minimize the visibility of the roof.
See 1.4.

Summary
The project meets some of the applicable standards. Historic photos and/or images showing deterioration extent at windows (if historic age), setback calculations for the skylight, and perspective drawings would help to determine the extent of compliance. If existing windows are not historic age, the proposed fenestration replacements adequately meet the standards. If the proposed skylight is appropriately set back and is not visible or is minimally visible from the pedestrian level at the opposite side of the primary street, the proposed skylight adequately meets the standards.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Invite the applicant to the next meeting of the Architectural Review Committee and/or request additional project information outlined in the standards evaluation summary above.

LOCATION MAP



PROPERTY INFORMATION

Photos






FOR SA

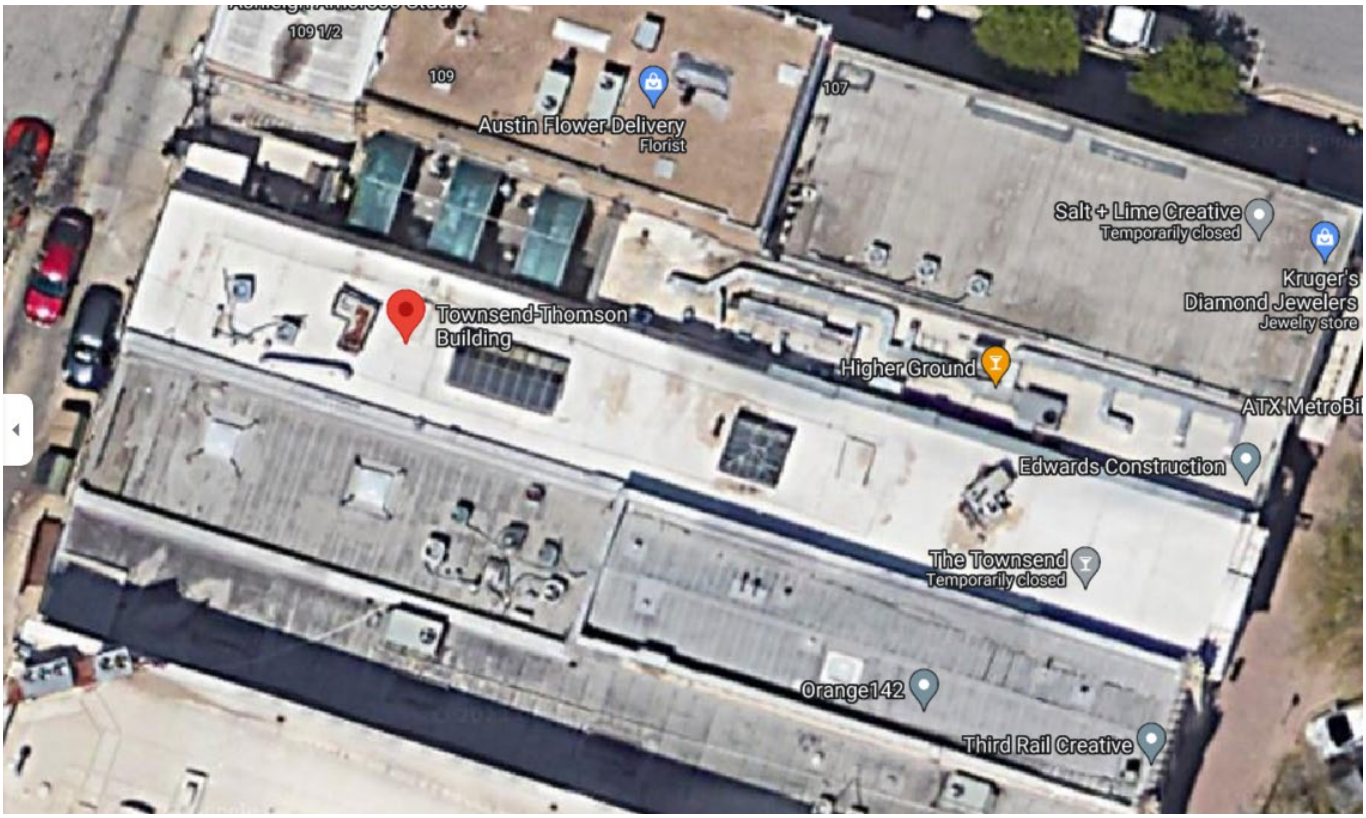


Showcase.com via https://thewhitfieldco.com/718-congress , 2022



Hardy, Daniel. [Congress Avenue Historic District, (Northeast oblique)], photograph, February 1978; (https://texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metapth677473/), University of North Texas Libraries, The Portal to Texas History, https://texashistory.unt.edu; crediting Texas Historical Commission.

718 Congress was restored in 1983 to remove the postwar stucco slipcover and incompatible storefront in this 1978 photo.[i]



Roof, Google Maps, 2022

[i] Texas Historical Foundation. Heritage, Volume 3, Number 4, Spring 1986, periodical, March 1, 1986; Austin, Texas. (https://texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metapth45441/: accessed January 24, 2023), University of North Texas Libraries, The Portal to Texas History, https://texashistory.unt.edu; crediting Texas Historical Foundation.