

**ORDINANCE NO. 20230720-160**

**AN ORDINANCE AMENDING CITY CODE SECTION 25-2-643 RELATING TO MAXIMUM BUILDING HEIGHT IN A PORTION OF THE EAST SIXTH/PECAN STREET COMBINING DISTRICT AND ESTABLISHING DESIGN STANDARDS FOR THIS AREA IN THE 500 BLOCK AND 600 BLOCK OF EAST SIXTH STREET BETWEEN NECHES STREET AND SABINE STREET.**

**BE IT ORDAINED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF AUSTIN:**

**PART 1.** Subsection (C) of Section 25-2-643 (*Congress Avenue (CA), East Sixth/Pecan Street (PS), Downtown Parks (DP), and Downtown Creeks (DC) Combining District Regulations*) is amended to read:

- (C) This section applies to the PS overlay district.
  - (1) Except as otherwise provided in this subsection, a structure may not exceed a height of 45 feet.
  - (2) A structure located west of Brazos Street is subject to the height limit of the base zoning district.
  - (3) An exterior sign must comply with the standards adopted by the Landmark Commission for the Sixth Street Historic District.
  - (4) A structure may develop to a maximum height of 140 feet if:
    - (a) located on the 500 block or 600 block of East Sixth Street between Neches Street and Sabine Streets; and
    - (b) complying with the design standards established in Ordinance No. 20230720-160, as determined by the Historic Landmark Commission.

**PART 2.** Council adopts the design standards set forth in the attached **Exhibit "A"** for structures developing pursuant to Part (C)(4) of City Code Section 25-2-643 (*Congress Avenue (CA), East Sixth/Pecan Street (PS), Downtown Parks (DP), and Downtown Creeks (DC) Combining District Regulations*).

**PART 3.** This ordinance takes effect on July 31, 2023.

**PASSED AND APPROVED**

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July 20\_\_\_\_\_, 2023

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*Kirk Watson*  
Kirk Watson  
Mayor

**APPROVED:** \_\_\_\_\_  
*A. L. Morgan*  
Anne L. Morgan  
City Attorney

**ATTEST:** \_\_\_\_\_  
*Stephanie Hall for*  
Myrna Rios  
City Clerk

## **Exhibit "A"**

### **Design Standards**

Buildings located on the 500 and 600 blocks of Sixth Street between Neches and Sabine Streets are subject to the following design standards, notwithstanding the Citywide Historic Design Standards.

- 1) Rehabilitate and adaptively reuse contributing buildings, including at least the first 15 feet of historic façades.
- 2) Additions to Contributing Commercial Properties and Historic Landmarks
  - a) Location: Locate additions at the rear and sides of historic buildings to minimize visual impact. Set additions back from the front wall of the existing building at least 15 feet. Minimize the loss of historic fabric by connecting additions to the existing building through the most noninvasive location and methods possible. Additions are not appropriate for all historic landmarks and must be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.
  - b) Scale, Massing, and Height: Design an addition to complement the scale and massing of the historic building and to appear subordinate to the visible portions of the historic building. Minimize the appearance of the addition from Sixth Street so that the historic building's overall shape as viewed from the opposite side of Sixth Street appears relatively unaltered. Additions may be cantilevered up to 5 feet towards the front wall but may not extend closer than 10 feet behind the front wall. The cantilevered portion must begin above the historic building's roof at least 2 times the height of the historic building, for buildings that are one story high; or at least 1 time the height of the historic building for buildings that are two or more stories. If the Capitol View Corridor restricts the maximum allowable height to less than 1 time the height of a multi-story historic building, the top floor of the addition may be cantilevered 5 feet towards the front wall but may not extend closer than 10 feet behind the front wall.
  - c) Design and Style: Design proportions and patterns such as window-to-wall area ratios, fenestration patterns, and bay divisions to be compatible with the historic building. Take cues for design elements and patterns from the historic building, but do not replicate the design or details of the existing building to a degree that the addition might be mistaken as historic. No particular architectural style is required for addition design; both traditional and contemporary styles can successfully achieve compatibility and differentiation with historic buildings. The historic primary entrance must remain the most prominent.
  - d) Roofs: These standards apply if the roof will be visible from the pedestrian level at the opposite side of the primary street. Design an addition's roof form and slope to complement the roof on the historic building. Use roof materials that match or are compatible with the roof on the historic building. Minimize roof visibility.
  - e) Materials: If an addition will be visible from street level, use exterior wall, window, and door materials that are compatible with those on the historic building. Glass on the first floor must be transparent.
  - f) Balconies: Do not add balconies to the front of an existing building unless physical or archival evidence shows that they existed historically. If reconstructing balconies, replace them based on documentation of the historic feature. Design new balconies on secondary elevations or additions to be compatible with both the historic building and the addition in terms of size, style, materials, and proportions.
  - g) Rooftop Patios: These standards apply to rooftop shade structures, railings, lighting, mechanical equipment, and plantings. Design and locate rooftop patio structures to be



## Exhibit "A"

subordinate to the historic building; to minimize visibility from the street; and to be compatible with the historic building in terms of design, size, style, materials, and proportions. Design rooftop patio structures to be differentiated from the historic building so they do not appear part of historic-age construction. Set back rooftop structures, railings, lighting, and mechanical equipment from the front wall by 15'. Use a visually light railing that does not distract from the historic building. Install rooftop patio structures so that they can be removed without irreversible damage to the historic building. Keep rooftop plantings low so that they are not visible over the parapet from the opposite side of the street. Do not add a permanent rooftop patio structure to a historic landmark; temporary structures may be approved for a finite length of time determined by the Historic Landmark Commission.

- h) The Historic Landmark Commission may make exceptions to these standards in cases where an addition will not compromise the status of a historic landmark.

### 3) Commercial New Construction

- a) Location: Maintain the rhythm of contributing buildings on the street. Orient a new building consistently with the predominant orientation of contributing buildings on the same block. Set back a new building from the street at least: 15 feet, or the distance of the median setback of all historic buildings on the same block face, or in line with at least one adjacent historic building.
- b) Scale, Massing, and Height: Design new building facades to reflect the massing of nearby historic building facades. Visually divide wider building facades into vertical bays that reflect typical widths of historic buildings on adjacent properties or the same block. Construct lower stories to appear as equal in height as possible to the story heights of adjacent historic buildings. Use vertical and horizontal design articulation techniques such as shifts in wall planes and differentiating materials to reduce a building's apparent scale and massing. Use step-downs in building height, wall-plane offsets, and other massing variations to provide a visual transition when the height of new construction exceeds that of adjacent contributing buildings by more than one story.
- c) Design and Style: Design new buildings to be compatible with the character of the historic district in terms of proportions, patterns, materials, and architectural features. Design new buildings to be differentiated from historic buildings; do not use a replica style to create a false sense of history.
- d) Materials: Use building materials that are compatible with the historic district and the style of the building. Use materials on lower floors to visually divide larger buildings into modules that reflect typical widths of historic buildings on adjacent properties or the same block. Glass on the first floor must be transparent.
- e) Storefronts: Prioritize the pedestrian experience at the lower floors of commercial buildings through large windows, prominent entrances, and pedestrian-scale detailing. Design storefronts to be a similar width to storefronts on nearby historic buildings.
- f) Parking Structures: Prioritize the pedestrian experience at the street level. If possible, design the building to include ground-floor storefronts facing the street; if storefronts are not possible, provide visual interest through other means such as architectural detailing, public art, and/or landscaping. Design parking structures' facades to be compatible with the massing and scale of nearby buildings. Screen the upper stories of parking structures using architectural screens or other design elements.
- g) The Historic Landmark Commission may make exceptions to these standards.

### 4) Sites and Streetscapes

- a) Retain contributing streetscape elements and public infrastructure, where present. Construct new streets, sidewalks, planting strips, curbs, ADA ramps, lighting, and alleys to be compatible with the

## **Exhibit “A”**

style, scale, materials, and configuration of the historic district.

- b) Do not block pedestrian-level views of historic buildings with streetscape elements.
- c) The Historic Landmark Commission may make exceptions to these standards.