

**SAN ANTONIO HISTORIC AND DESIGN REVIEW COMMISSION
OFFICIAL MINUTES
DECEMBER 3, 2014**

- The Historic and Design Review Commission of the City of San Antonio met in session at 3:00 P.M., in the Board Room, Development and Business Services Center, 1901 S. Alamo
- The meeting was called to order by Commissioner Connor and the roll was called by the Secretary.

PRESENT: Judson, Laffoon, Salas, Rodriguez, Feldman, Connor

ABSENT: Cone, Guarino, Zuniga, Valenzuela

- Chairman’s Statement
- Citizens to be heard
- Announcements

The Commission then considered the Consent Agenda which consisted of:

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| 1. Case No. 2014-381 | 112 W. Gramercy Place |
| 2. Case No. 2014-393 | Alta Vista St. – Between S. Trinity St. and S. Navidad St. |
| 3. Case No. 2014-377 | 614 N. Palmetto |
| 4. Case No. 2014-397 | 2822 N. Flores St. |
| 5. Case No. 2014-390 | 226 N. Hackberry St. |
| 6. Case No. 2014-389 | 632 Leigh St. |
| 7. Case No. 2014-396 | 1426 Napier Ave. |
| 8. Case No. 2014-395 | 229 E. Houston St. |
| 9. Case No. 2014-391 | 202 E. Park Ave. |
| 10. Case No. 2014-388 | 817 Nolan |
| 11. Case No. 2014-394 | 111 W. Jones Ave. |
| 12. Case No. 2014-392 | 135 E. Commerce St. |

Item 12 was pulled from the Consent Agenda to be heard under Individual Consideration.

COMMISSION ACTION:

The motion was made by Commissioner Feldman and seconded by Commissioner Judson to approve the remaining cases on the Consent Agenda based staff recommendations.

AYES: Judson, Laffoon, Salas, Rodriguez, Feldman, Connor

NAYS: None

THE MOTION CARRIED.

12. HDRC NO. 2014-392

Applicant: Andrew Douglas

Address: 135 E. Commerce

The applicant is requesting Conceptual Approval to:

Install a public/private elevator located in the southwest corner of the Witte Building property. The proposed elevator will serve visitors to the San Antonio Riverwalk as well as Witte Building patrons. The applicant has stated that the owner is pursuing continual public access to the elevator.

FINDINGS:

a. The applicant has previously received conceptual approval to rehabilitate the existing structure at 135 E Commerce, known as the Witte Building, construct new metal balconies on the north and west sides of the building, construct one small, projecting balcony, install a flat canopy at street level on the south façade of the structure facing E Commerce and to remove the existing Hugman retaining wall and cantilevered walkway which runs along the west side of the existing building and connects the existing pedestrian bridge across the main river channel with E Commerce. Within that request, the applicant also received conceptual approval to construct new stairs extending into the City-owned portion of the Riverwalk as well as to construct a new river level terrace on the west side of the building extending to the point where the wall currently sits. The terrace will wrap the west and south sides of the building and will be elevated

from the Riverwalk path level.

b. The current request of the addition of a public/private elevator located in the southwest corner of the Witte Building property is a separate request and is outside of the scope of work previously given conceptual approval by the Historic and Design Review Commission.

c. Currently, pedestrians are able to walk to from E Commerce Street north on the Hugman cantilevered walkway to a vantage point at which the flood channel and the San Antonio River diverge. According to the UDC Section 35- 672 a.1, pedestrian access shall be provided among properties to integrate neighborhoods. In conjunction with the previous conceptually approved removal of the existing cantilevered walkway, the proposed elevator would reinstate and provide pedestrian access in the public right of way from the street level at E Commerce to the Riverwalk level below. While the proposed elevator would allow pedestrian access from E Commerce to the Riverwalk level below, staff has concerns that if the elevator is not accessible to the public at all times, the public right of way will be impeded. Currently there are six elevators along the Riverwalk that provide uninterrupted 24-hour public access as well as two additional elevators that provide public access during their hours of operation (generally 10:00am to 10:00pm).

d. The UDC Section 35-672 a.5.A states that queuing is prohibited along the Riverwalk pathway. The City of San Antonio's Downtown Operations Division has recommended a six foot landing to prevent queuing which might harm the flow of pedestrian traffic.

e. According to the UDC Section 35-673 1.1.A, properties adjacent to the river are to provide a connection to the publicly owned pathway along the river. A stair, ramp or elevator connecting the publicly owned pathway at the river to private property along the river is allowed by right at all street and vehicular bridges crossings over the river. The proposed elevator at 135 E Commerce is consistent with the UDC.

f. The applicant has indicated per the application documents that the proposed new entrance onto the private property from the publicly owned pathway at the river will include both architectural and landscape elements to provide a definitive gateway. This is consistent with the UDC Section 35-673 1.3.A

g. According to the Historic Design Guidelines Chapter 3, Guidelines for Additions section A, additions should be designed to be kept within the existing historic context of the block, be placed at the side or rear of the building, utilize a similar roof form, be designed to feature a subordinate principal façade and contain a distinguished look that is not to be confused with the original structure. Generally, the proposed addition of an elevator to 135 E Commerce is consistent with the Guidelines, however, staff has concerns with the proposed location of the elevator which currently blocks the view westward from the third floor window of 135 E Commerce as well as how the elevator will address E Commerce in regards to its materials and their context in relationship to those of the neighborhood.

h. At a height of approximately 45 feet, the proposed elevator is subordinate to that of the original structure at 135 E Commerce. This is consistent with the Guidelines for Additions 3.B.i.

i. According to the Guidelines for Additions 3.A.i, complementary materials that match in type, color and texture should be used. The applicant has stated that the final materials for the proposed elevator have not been chosen.

j. Per the application documents, the proposed elevator will include a canopy on E Commerce. The applicant is responsible for complying with the UDC Section 35-674 g in regards to the design of awnings, canopies and arcades.

k. The UDC Section 35-675 states that an HDRC application for commercial development projects within a river improvement overlay district shall be reviewed by the city archaeologist to determine if there is potential of containing intact archaeological deposits. The applicant is responsible for complying with this section of the UDC.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends conceptual approval as submitted based on findings a through k with the following stipulations:

1. The owner and operator of the proposed elevator offer continual elevator access to the public in order to facilitate pedestrian traffic from E Commerce to the Riverwalk level below.
2. The applicant address and provide more information regarding the proposed elevator entrance at the River level to prevent any queuing which may block pedestrian traffic along the Riverwalk.
3. The applicant explore alternatives regarding the overall design and materials to mitigate the blocked view from the Witte Building's third story window, the use of complementary materials and the inclusion of a canopy.

COMMISSION ACTION:

The motion was made by Commissioner Feldman and seconded by Commissioner Judson to grant conceptual approval with staff recommendations based on findings a through k.

AYES: Judson, Laffoon, Salas, Rodriguez, Feldman, Connor
NAYS: None

THE MOTION CARRIED.

13. HDRC NO. 2014-387

Applicant: Pedro Ayala

Address: 606 Nolan

Postponed per the applicant.

14. HDRC NO. 2014-376

Applicant: STG Design

Address: 700 W. Commerce St.

The applicant is requesting conceptual approval to:

Construct a mixed-used development at the 700 block of W Commerce to include 242 residential units, ground floor retail and podium parking. The historic Maureaux Building which housed the Toudouze Market will be partially demolished to retain the south and east facades of the building. The ground floor storefront and canopy is proposed to be replaced / reconstructed.

FINDINGS:

- a) The 700 block of W Commerce is historically known as the Toudouze Market. The remaining historic building at the southeast corner of the block is known as the Maureaux Building, is one of the oldest buildings in the area and first appears on Sanborn maps in 1896. It was purchased by A.C. Toudouze in 1929, remodeled and expanded upon for the market. While the original storefront and canopy appear to have been removed, the second floor features ornate terracotta detailing and cornice. Once a dense commercial block, the Maureaux Building is the only remaining historic building at this location. A one-story addition to the west of this building collapsed after heavy rains in 2013 and was subject to an emergency demolition.
- b) This request was reviewed by the Design Review Committee on May 13, 2014. At that meeting, it was noted that any designs for the storefront of the Maureaux building should be based on photographic evidence. The committee requested that an engineering report be provided to substantiate the proposal to only retain the building southern and eastern facades of the Maureaux building. Concern was also expressed over the amount of structured parking along the street edge. While some areas of first floor retail space have been introduced, remaining portions of exposed parking were recommended to be screened.
- c) This request was reviewed a second time by the Design Review Committee on November 13, 2014. At that meeting, the committee members present commended the applicant for introducing much needed housing at this location. Concern was expressed over the extent of the removal of the Maureaux Building. Including a reveal between the old and new construction was recommended in order to distinguish the original building. Concern was also expressed regarding the treatment of the historic façade. Although the original storefront has been removed, the committee was interested to see a functioning entry and canopy maintained on the façade. Wood windows on the second floor were recommended to be repaired where possible. It was noted that the podium level parking was not consistent with the spirit of the Downtown Design Guide, but that the applicant was successful in focusing retail space along W Commerce which was noted as the primary corridor. Staff indicated that the use of brick as an exterior material should be explored further in addition to the proposed fenestration pattern. Additional screening at the first floor parking areas has been explored by the applicant.
- d) This request was reviewed a third time by the Design Review Committee on November 25, 2014, upon referral by the HDRC. The applicant provided a number of updated drawings to address concerns raised at the November 19 HDRC hearing. Items revised include the addition of a hardie panel band along the parapet in order to create a building "cap", added articulation at the ground level, extension of the corner masses to the ground level, additional screening and plantings for parking areas, modification of fenestrations at the ground/2nd levels, and additional options for exterior materials. The changes generally address concerns raised at the November 19 hearing.
- e) The proposed building footprint maintains the existing and historic building setback line that exists at this location, consistent with the Guidelines for New Construction 1.A.i. f) According to the Guidelines for New Construction, 2.A.i., the height of new buildings should conform to the established pattern found within the district. Buildings within the Cattleman's Square Historic District are typically 2-3 stories tall. However, due to a low concentration of historic buildings as this location, there is not a strong, established pattern for building height on this block of W Commerce. The proposed five-story height may be appropriate provided that the new construction

respects the façade of the Maureaux Building. Taller, non-historic infill has occurred in areas closer to the highway, including the UTSA Downtown Campus and Bexar County Vista Verde Plaza.

- g) The first floor podium height appears to generally align with the first floor of the Maureaux Building, consistent with the Guidelines for New Construction 2.B.iii.
- h) The proposed new construction predominately features a flat roof which is consistent with precedent established within the Cattleman's Square Historic District. This conforms to the Guidelines for New Construction 2.B.i.
- i) According to the Guidelines for New Construction 2.B.ii., when the height of new construction exceeds the adjacent historic building, a variation in building massing should be implemented to provide clear a visual transition between the old and the new. The applicant has provided a detail that maintains a reveal between the Maureaux building and the proposed new construction.
- j) According to the Guidelines for New Construction 2.C.i., fenestration patterns should be similar to those found in nearby historic buildings. The Maureaux Building features traditional, paired window openings. Through consultations with the Design Review Committee and staff, there is a consensus that the proposed openings are appropriate due to a lack of a consistent pattern at this location. The applicant has modified openings at the ground floor / 2nd level that are more in keeping with traditional openings.
- k) According to the Guidelines for New Construction 2.C.ii., horizontal façade elements should align with those found in nearby historic buildings. A base, middle and cap should be established to conform to the established precedent. In elevation drawings submitted, there appears to be an established base articulated by an overhead canopy. A cap has been articulated by a change in materials along the parapet and at the corners of the building. The middle of the façade is further articulated by projecting bays featuring an alternate material.
- l) According to the Guidelines for New Construction 3.A.i., new materials should complement the type, color and texture of materials traditionally found in the district. Brick masonry is the most common material found in the Cattleman's Square Historic District. Exterior materials specified in the request include hardie panel and metal siding. These materials have no historic context within the district and should be used in limited quantities. The applicant has presented additional options for exterior cladding materials, including hardie panel, hardie plank, stucco and metal siding. While stucco does have precedent at this location, staff finds that opportunities to incorporate traditional brick masonry should continue to be explored.
- m) The City of San Antonio has adopted a Downtown Design Guide for infill projects zoned as "D" Downtown Business District. While this property has a "D" base zoning, the Downtown Guide is not directly applicable to this site as the Historic Design Guidelines supersede. However, all projects are strongly encouraged to meet the intent of the Downtown Guide which requires off-street parking to be concealed at the ground level. In response to this concern, the applicant has provided a method for screening the parking areas and has reduced the length of exposed parking areas along the building facades.
- n) In general, staff encourages the reuse and rehabilitation of historic buildings where feasible. The applicant has provided an engineer's report which recommends demolition due to the severity of the deterioration of the building's wood frame. While interior and structural work is not subject to HDRC review, the proposal to partially demolish the Maureaux Building to support new construction should be a last resort. The City offers a tax incentive for the substantial rehabilitation of historic properties which may help to offset the cost of repairs. State and Federal tax incentives are also available for properties listed on the National Register of Historic Places and provide substantial incentives for rehabilitation projects. Furthermore, while the current proposal does not necessitate review as a demolition under UDC Section 35-614, the Maureaux building shall not be demolished or partially demolished until all plans for the proposed development have been approved and permitted.
- o) According to the Guidelines for Exterior Maintenance and Alterations 10.B.ii., commercial storefronts should be restored based on photographic evidence. The proposal reintroduces a canopy to the storefront. Additionally, at the suggestion of the HDRC, the applicant has indicated that the columns at the ground level will be restored using matching brick. The ground level storefront has been modified, so the current proposal will be an improvement consistent with the Guidelines. Further restoration of the historic storefront based on photographic evidence could serve to mitigate the partial demolition of the structure.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends approval with the stipulation that the applicant continue to explore ways to incorporate brick masonry as an exterior material based on finding l.

COMMISSION ACTION:

The motion was made by Commissioner Feldman and seconded by Commissioner Salas to approve with stipulation that the applicant continue to explore ways to incorporate brick masonry as an exterior material based on finding l.

AYES: Judson, Laffoon, Salas, Rodriguez, Feldman, Connor

NAYS: None

THE MOTION CARRIED

- Executive Session: Consultation on attorney – client matters (real estate, litigation, contracts, personnel, and security matters) as well as the above mentioned agenda items may be discussed under Chapter 551 of the Texas Government Code.
- Adjournment.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 3:45 P.M.

APPROVED



Tim Cone
Chair

