

HISTORIC LANDMARK COMMISSION
PERMITS IN NATIONAL REGISTER HISTORIC DISTRICTS
SEPTEMBER 24, 2012
NRD-2012-0093
416 East 6th Street
Sixth Street

PROPOSAL

Install a new metal guardrail at the parapet to extend the roof deck.

PROJECT SPECIFICATIONS

The building currently has a roof deck; the wooden guard wall is currently approximately 10 feet back from the front parapet. A large air conditioning unit occupies the left front corner of the roof. The applicant proposes to help hide the air conditioner by constructing a painted metal guardrail at the parapet line, which will extend the roof-top deck by approximately 200 square feet.

STANDARDS FOR REVIEW

The Sixth Street Architectural Design Guidelines address roof-top decks and mechanical equipment:

Mechanical equipment:

- 19. Minimize the visual impact of mechanical equipment. Screen equipment from view.
- 57. Avoid clutter on roofs that will be visible from the public way. Locate mechanical equipment away from view.

Rooftop decks:

- 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.. This includes trees, umbrellas, and tables.
- 56. Set a new roof terrace back from the building front. This will allow one to continue to perceive the historic character of the cornice line. Roof terrace railings and furniture should be placed well behind the parapet.

In addition, the Downtown Austin Plan, approved by the City Council in December, 2011, provides the following design guidelines for rooftop additions, including rooftop terraces:

HP-2.3: Introduce setback provisions and other design standards for building additions within the East 6th Street National Register Historic District.

East 6th Street is one of the largest concentrations of 19th and 20th century mercantile buildings in the State of Texas and is Austin's (and perhaps Texas') most celebrated entertainment district. Many buildings along this historic street between IH 35 and Lavaca Street, are designated city historic landmarks. The area is part of the East 6th Street National Register Historic District (NRHD), most of which is subject to a 45-foot height limit established by code as the Pecan Street Overlay District. In 1994, a set of architectural design guidelines was adopted for use by the CHPO and the Historic Landmark Commission in their project reviews to determine the appropriateness of new construction or modifications within the District.

The City should maintain these as design standards, but also require rooftop additions on historic buildings to be stepped back from the front façade of the original, historic structure by approximately 15

feet. This would help maintain the original building's distinct form, silhouette and prominence, while allowing for compatible roof terraces and/or additional stories.

The *Sixth Street Austin* Public Improvement District (PID) should be tasked with developing appropriate rooftop terrace and signage standards and with enforcing these.

STAFF COMMENTS

At the July, 2012 HLC meeting, staff recommended denial of the permit and asked that the applicant consider alternatives to their current plans. While the applicant has explored ways to hide or move the air conditioning unit, there do not appear to be any feasible or prudent alternatives to the current proposal. However, the current proposal violates the Sixth Street Architectural Design Guidelines as well as the approved policy statements of the Downtown Austin Plan, so staff must still oppose approval of the applicant's proposal.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

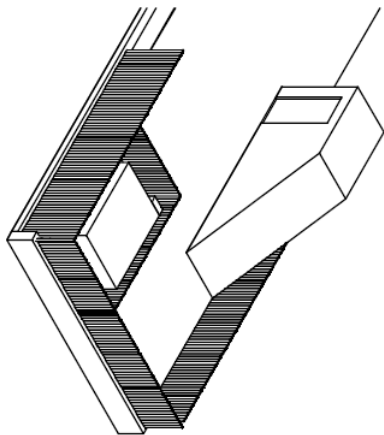
Staff recommends denial of the application, although staff is sympathetic with the applicant, who is seeking to improve an eye-sore on the roof of the building by hiding an air conditioning unit. However, while staff appreciates the applicant's efforts, his proposal violates the Sixth Street Architectural Design Guidelines and the confirmation thereof by the Downtown Austin Plan, so staff cannot recommend approval of the application.



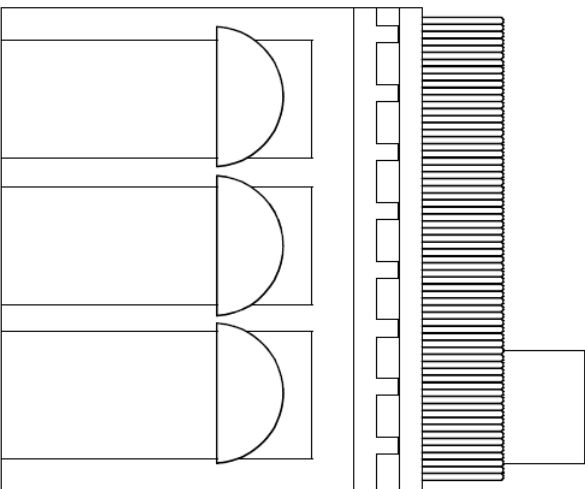
○ Existing
Picture 1 - HVAC on roof



○ Existing
Picture 2 - HVAC on roof - front view



○ Proposed
Guardrail around HVAC



○ Proposed
Guardrail from street view



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Cheers deck extension

REVISION - 1
DATE - 8/2/22
SHEET -
Elevations