

## Commissioners Valenzuela, Myers and Koch,

Please deny a Certificate of Appropriateness for Item 8, the Royal Arch Masonic Lodge, 311 West 7th Street.

The applicant proposes to remove the roof and elevator penthouse of the existing building. The applicant has proposed bracing the existing walls with an independent engineered structural system. Following completion of the tower addition, the existing building walls will be laterally supported by the new structure.

A new opening on the south end of the east wall (facing **Lavaca Street**) is proposed for vehicular access to the building. The proposed new opening "will be..... similar to the existing trim on the building, but in a simpler pattern."

The Secretary of the Interior's standards are a guiding principal.

*1) A property will be used as it was historically or be given a new use that requires minimal change to its distinctive materials, features, spaces, and spatial relationships.*

Although the applicant proposes to continue use of the building as a Masonic Lodge, the tower proposal violates the spirit and probably the intent of the **Secretary of the Interior**. The majority of the property will not be used as a Lodge. There will be a car elevator in the historic building.

Maximal changes including changing spaces and spatial relationships to the Historic Lodge by surrounding the sides and top of the historic building with a huge glass tower are proposed.

Changing the **Lavaca Street** side to a vehicular entry is a change to spacial relationships.

*5) Distinctive materials, features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property will be preserved.*

The removing the roof and opening the **Lavaca Street** side vehicular entrance is not preservation.

Destruction: The walls will not longer support the Masonic Lodge after the construction of the tower.

Roof will be removed, not preserved

*2) The historic character of a property will be retained and preserved.*

The character of the Historic Lodge will be drastically changed, not preserved, with the addition of a huge tower.

*The removal of distinctive materials or alteration of features, (removal of the roof and part of the **Lavaca Street** side for a vehicle entrance is proposed) *spaces, and spatial relationships that characterize a property will be avoided.**

The character of the Historic Lodge will be drastically changed not preserved. The spacial relationships of the Historic Lodge to its setting and surroundings will be overwhelmed with the new tower, not preserved.

The Lavaca Street vehicular entrance and adding something similar is in opposition to the Secretary of the Interior's standards.

The walls of the Historic Lodge will no longer support themselves without the tower. That is not preservation. The integrity of the Historic Lodge might be endangered if the the walls will no longer support the building if the tower is removed.

*9) New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction will not destroy historic materials, features, and spatial relationships that characterize the property.*

In the proposed construction of a new tower, the Historic Lodge's roof will be destroyed, the integrity of the building removed, and the iconic **Lavaca Street** side will be changed.

*The new work will be differentiated from the old and will be compatible with the historic materials, features, size, scale and proportion, and massing to protect the integrity of the property and its environment.*

The Tower's new glass curtain and glass is not compatible with the Historic Lodge masonry. There is no compatibility of the massing, size scale and proportion between the Historic Lodge at present and the plans for a **future tower** .

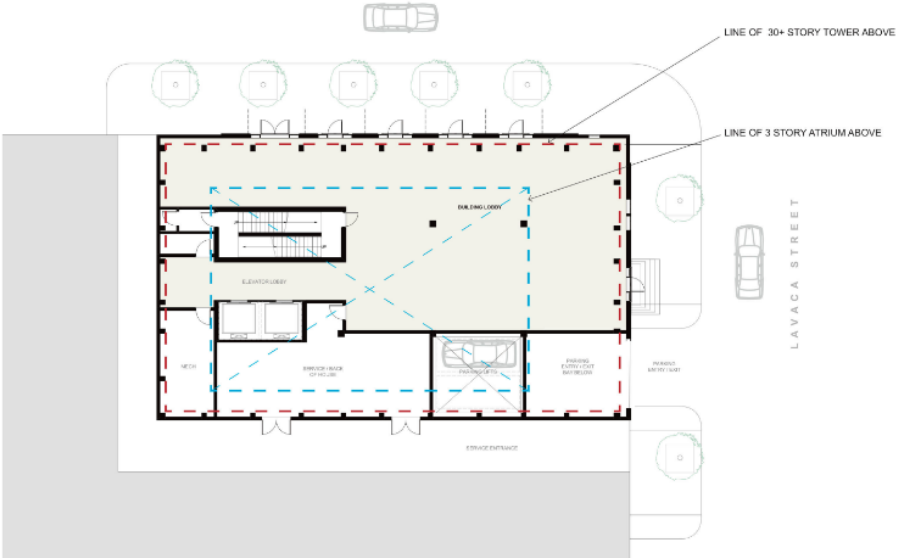
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Sincerely,



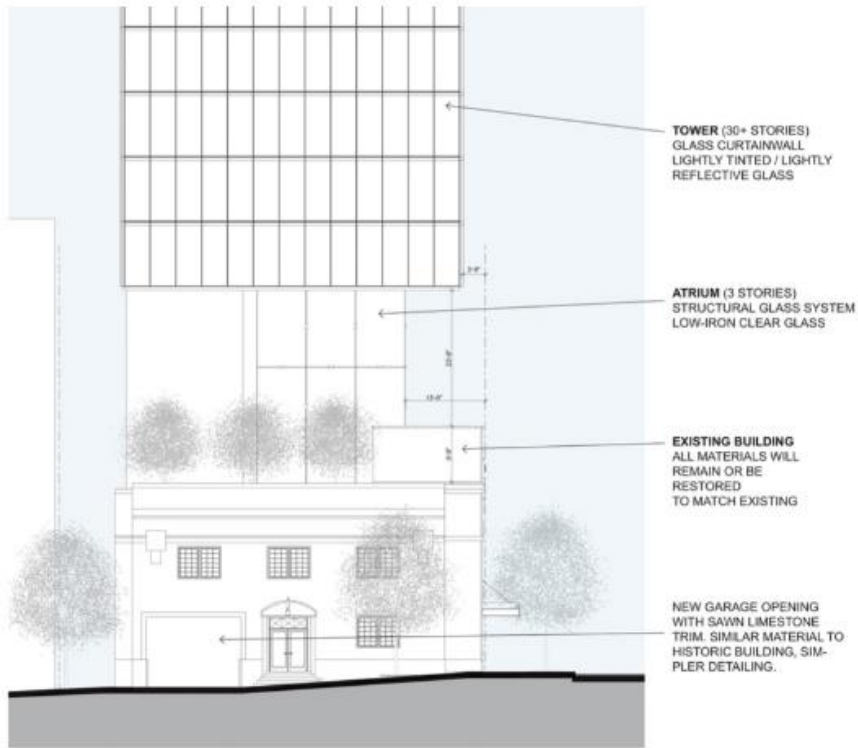


However, some details on its site plan seem to imply a residential use for the building — how many office buildings do you know with a car elevator? You can see this feature near the parking entrance on Lavaca Street labeled “parking lifts” in the image below, so if this is an office building, it’s certainly an interesting one.



See the car lift above. Where would the Masonic Lodge be?

Megan Meisenbach  
the Landmark Matsen House



EAST ELEVATION