

HISTORIC LANDMARK COMMISSION
APPLICATION FOR A CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS
OCTOBER 28, 2019
C14H-2000-0002
ROYAL ARCH MASONIC LODGE
311 W. 7TH STREET

PROPOSAL

Construct a multi-story addition to the building.

PROJECT SPECIFICATIONS

The applicant proposes to construct a 30+ story tower to the existing historic building. The proposed tower addition will be almost square in shape and will be set back approximately 3 feet from the street-side parapets of the existing building. The tower will be sheathed in a glass curtain wall that will be lightly tinted and lightly reflective, and will have as its base a 3-story structure referred to as the atrium; the atrium is approximately 32 feet tall and will be narrower than the tower, and will be set back approximately 13 feet from the north wall of the building and approximately 20 feet from the Lavaca Street (east) wall of the building.

To construct the tower addition, the applicant proposes to remove the roof and elevator penthouse of the existing building. The applicant has proposed bracing the existing walls during construction with an independent engineered structural system. Following completion of the tower addition, the existing building walls will be laterally supported by the new structure. The project no longer incorporates a new opening on the south end of the east wall (facing 7th Street) for vehicular access to the building after conversations with the Certificate of Appropriateness Review Committee.

The applicant further proposes repairs and restoration of the existing building, including cleaning and repointing all masonry, repairing damaged masonry, cleaning and repairing stone trim and decorative elements on the building, restoration of the original metal awning on the north elevation, and the restoration of existing windows and exterior doors. Interior elements of the building will be salvaged for re-use in the structure, and a new accessible route will be constructed.

STANDARDS FOR REVIEW

The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation are used to evaluate projects on historic landmarks. The following standards apply to the proposed project:

- 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.*

Evaluation: The existing building will continue to be used as a masonic lodge.

- 2) *The historic character of a property will be retained and preserved. The removal of distinctive materials or alteration of features, spaces, and spatial relationships that characterize a property will be avoided.*

Evaluation: The applicant proposes repairs and the restoration of damaged masonry elements on the building. The proposed new tower addition is set back from the existing walls; the applicants have worked with the Certificate of Appropriateness Review Committee and the Commission to receive comments and recommendations about how to best preserve the existing spatial relationships and integrity of the historic landmark building.

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

Evaluation: The applicant proposes the restoration of damaged architectural elements.

- 6) *Deteriorated historic features will be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature will match the old in design, color, texture, and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features will be substantiated by documentary and physical evidence.*

Evaluation: The applicant proposes restoration and repair rather than replacement.

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

Evaluation: The new addition is certainly differentiated from the existing historic structure, and will not destroy the existing walls of the building. The applicant has submitted a plan for bracing the historic masonry walls during the course of construction of the addition.

- 10) *New additions and adjacent or related construction will be undertaken in such a manner that, if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.*

Evaluation: The essential form of the historic building will be retained.

The project meets the applicable standards.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

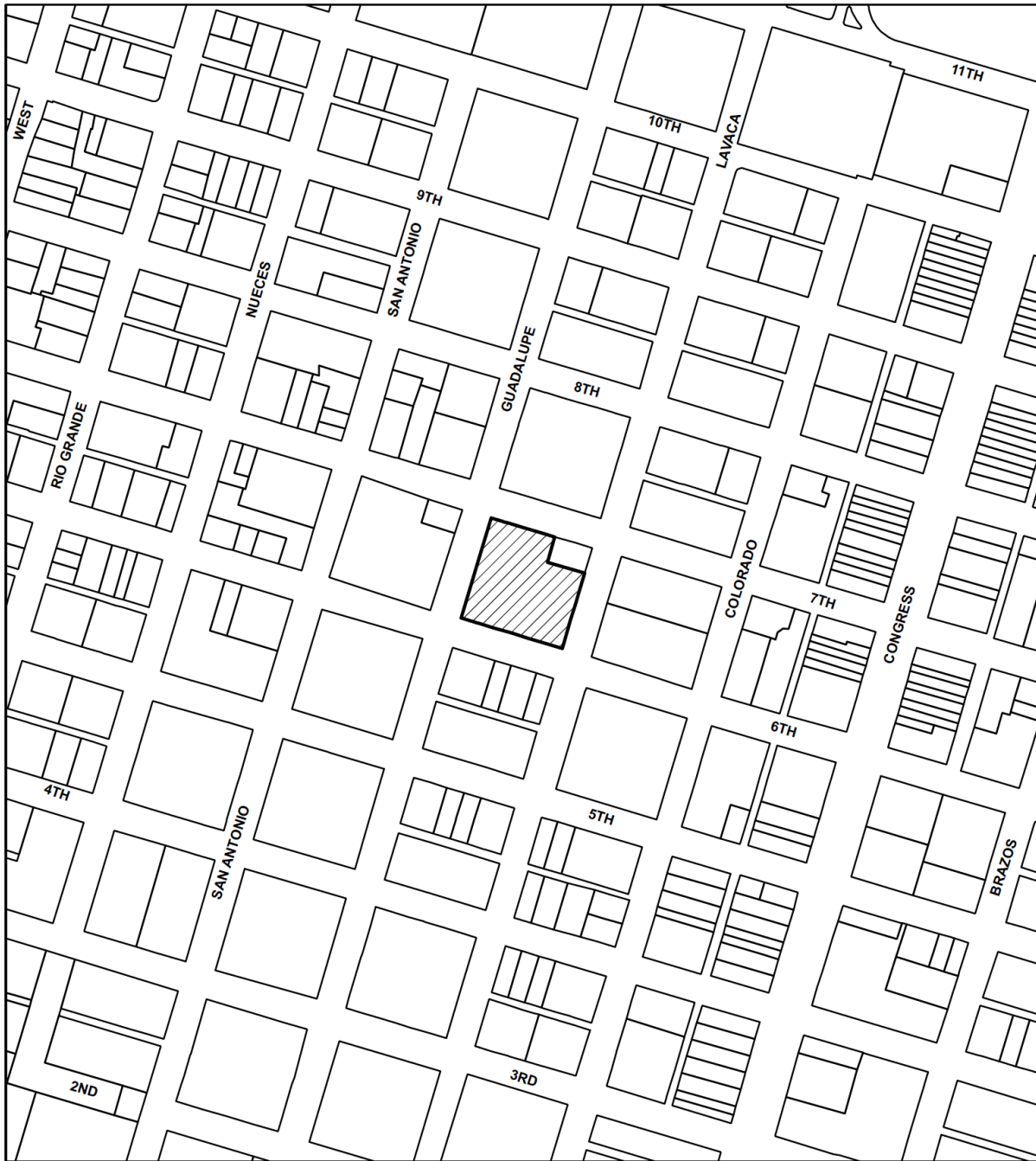
The Committee recommended that the applicant lighten the tower as much as possible with a more pronounced break between the existing building and the tower addition. The Committee also recommended that the applicant provide a detailed structural stability plan for bracing the historic masonry walls during the course of construction and when complete. The applicant has provided the bracing plan as well as modifications to the design of the tower addition as recommended by the Committee.

At two prior briefings to the Commission, the applicant has presented examples of precedents of similar types of projects and how the integrity of the historic building has been retained even with the construction of a tower above it. While certainly not obtaining a consensus of the Commission on the appropriateness of this proposal, the applicant has continued to modify the design of the proposed tower to better meet the recommendations of the Commission. The principal opposition to the proposal is based upon the proportional relationship of the proposed tower to the existing historic building and the size and height of the proposed tower.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Approve as proposed. The proposed addition is very large, but the applicant has worked with the Commission to refine the design and make the addition more compatible with the character and integrity of the historic building at its base. Staff does have concerns about the precedent that will be set for other historic landmarks upon approval of this proposal, and recommends that the Commission, if there is a vote for approval of the Certificate of

Appropriateness, to state clearly that this approval is based upon the unique conditions and sightlines at this property.



SUBJECT TRACT



PENDING CASE



ZONING BOUNDARY

NOTIFICATIONS

CASE#: C14H-2000-0002

LOCATION: 311 W 7TH STREET



1" = 333'

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