



City of San Antonio

Agenda Memorandum

File Number:14-2964

Agenda Item Number: 14.

Agenda Date: 11/19/2014

In Control: Historic and Design Review Commission

HDRC CASE NO: 2014-376

ADDRESS: 700 W COMMERCE ST

LEGAL DESCRIPTION: NCB 299 BLK 24 LOT 1 THRU 14

ZONING: D H HS

CITY COUNCIL DIST.: 5

DISTRICT: Cattleman Square Historic District

LANDMARK: Toudouze Market & Buildings 2, 3, and #4

APPLICANT: STG Design

OWNER: Michael Wibracht/210 Developers

TYPE OF WORK: New construction of mixed-use development

REQUEST:

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.

APPLICABLE CITATIONS:

Historic Design Guidelines, Chapter 2, Guidelines for Exterior Maintenance and Alterations

10. Commercial Facades

B. ALTERATIONS (REHABILITATION, RESTORATION, AND RECONSTRUCTION)

ii. Historical commercial facades-Return non-historic facades to the original design based on photographic evidence. Keep in mind that some non-original facades may have gained historic importance and should be retained. When evidence is not available, ensure the scale, design, materials, color, and texture is compatible with the historic building. Consider the features of the design holistically so as to not include elements from multiple buildings and styles.

Historic Design Guidelines, Chapter 4, Guidelines for New Construction

1. Building and Entrance Orientation

A. FAÇADE ORIENTATION

i. Setbacks-Align front facades of new buildings with front facades of adjacent buildings where a consistent setback has been established along the street frontage. Use the median setback of buildings along the street frontage where a variety of setbacks exist. Refer to UDC Article 3, Division 2. Base Zoning Districts for applicable setback requirements.

2. Building Massing and Form

A. SCALE AND MASS

i. Similar height and scale-Design new construction so that its height and overall scale are consistent with nearby historic buildings. In residential districts, the height and scale of new construction should not exceed that of the majority of historic buildings by more than one-story. In commercial districts, building height shall conform to the established pattern. If there is no more than a 50% variation in the scale of buildings on the adjacent block faces, then the height of the new building shall not exceed the tallest building on the adjacent block face by more than 10%.

ii. Transitions-Utilize step-downs in building height , wall-plane offsets, and other variations in building massing to provide a visual transition when the height of new construction exceeds that of adjacent historic buildings by more than one-half story.

iii. Foundation and floor heights-Align foundation and floor-to-floor heights (including porches and balconies) within one foot of floor-to-floor heights on adjacent historic structures.

B. ROOF FORM

i. Similar roof forms-Incorporate roof forms-pitch, overhangs, and orientation-that are consistent with those predominantly found on the block. Roof forms on residential building types are typically sloped, while roof forms on non-residential building types are more typically flat and screened by an ornamental parapet wall.

C. RELATIONSHIP OF SOLIDS TO VOIDS

i. Window and door openings-Incorporate window and door openings with a similar proportion of wall to window space as typical with nearby historic facades. Windows, doors, porches, entryways, dormers, bays, and pediments shall be considered similar if they are no larger than 25% in size and vary no more than 10% in height to width ratio from adjacent historic facades.

ii. Façade configuration- The primary façade of new commercial buildings should be in keeping with established patterns.

Maintaining horizontal elements within adjacent cap, middle, and base precedents will establish a consistent street wall through the alignment of horizontal parts. Avoid blank walls, particularly on elevations visible from the street. No new façade should exceed 40 linear feet without being penetrated by windows, entryways, or other defined bays.

3. Materials and Textures

A. NEW MATERIALS

i. Complementary materials-Use materials that complement the type, color, and texture of materials traditionally found in the district. Materials should not be so dissimilar as to distract from the historic interpretation of the district. For example, corrugated metal siding would not be appropriate for a new structure in a district comprised of homes with wood siding.

ii. Alternative use of traditional materials-Consider using traditional materials, such as wood siding, in a new way to provide visual interest in new construction while still ensuring compatibility.

v. Imitation or synthetic materials-Do not use vinyl siding, plastic, or corrugated metal sheeting. Contemporary materials not traditionally used in the district, such as brick or simulated stone veneer and Hardie Board or other fiberboard siding, may be appropriate for new construction in some locations as long as new materials are visually similar to the traditional material in dimension, finish, and texture. EIFS is not recommended as a substitute for actual stucco.

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 terra-cotta 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 at 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 I.

CASE MANAGER:

Cory Edwards