

HISTORIC LANDMARK COMMISSION
STAFF REPORT

Royal Crest Apartment Building
Legalization of Major Alterations Petition 470-07-44
830 East Sixth Avenue in the Avenues Historic District
January 16, 2008



Planning and Zoning
Division
Department of Community
Development

Applicant:

Ray Morris

Staff:

Janice Lew
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Tax ID:

09-32-329-007

Current Zone: SR-1A (Special
Development Pattern
Residential District)

Council District:

Three, Council Member
Jergensen

Acres:

.31 acres

Current Use:

Multi-family

**Applicable City Code Land
Use Regulations:**

- Section 21A.34.020
- Chapter 21A.24

Attachments:

- A. Photographs
- B. Elevation Drawings

REQUEST

The applicant is requesting that the Historic Landmark Commission legalize alterations to the front façade of the non-contributing apartment building located at 830 East Sixth Avenue in the Avenues Historic District. The work was initiated without either a Certificate of Appropriateness or building permit. The Planning Staff elected to refer the administrative approval request to the Historic Landmark Commission because of the extent of the modifications to a principal façade as viewed from the street.

PUBLIC NOTICE

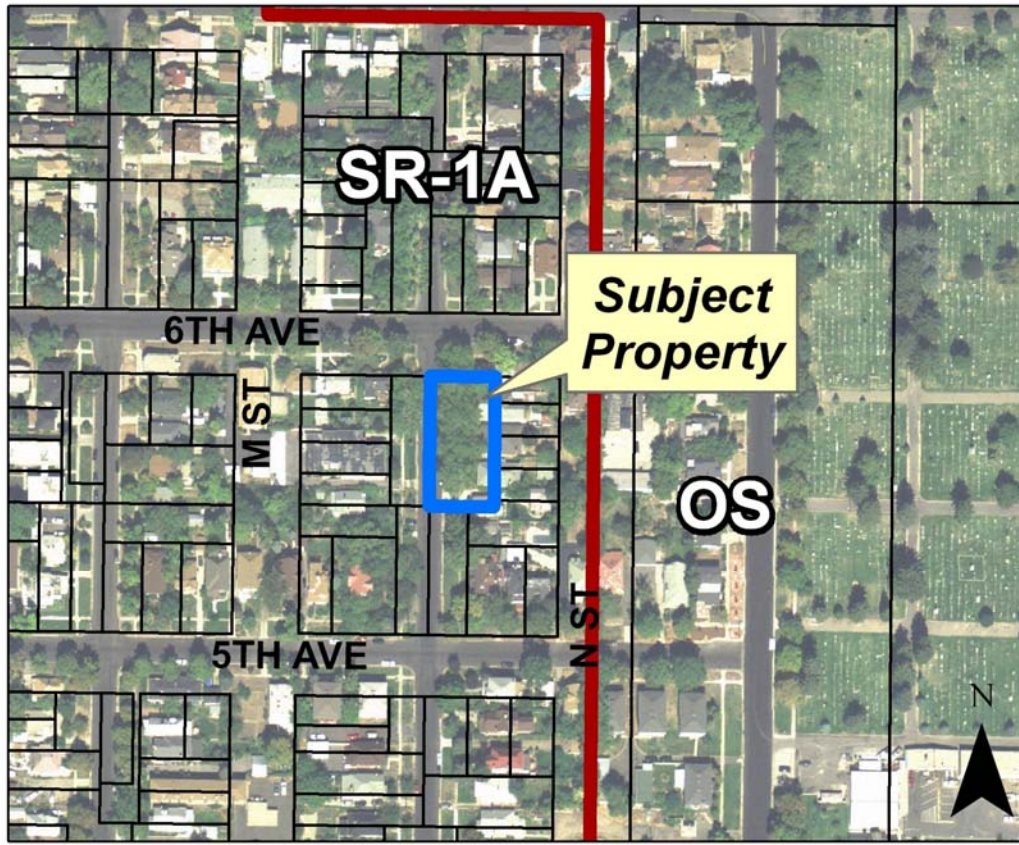
Public notice was mailed on December 31, 2007 to all property owners within eight-five feet (85') of the subject property which satisfies the fourteen (14) day notification requirement of the Zoning Ordinance. It was also sent to interested parties on the Historic Landmark Commission's e-mail listserve and posted on the Planning Division's Web site. Community Council review is not required by the City Code for permitted uses within a locally-designated historic district.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff finds that the alterations to the building located at 830 East Sixth Avenue significantly change important character-defining architectural features of the building and fails to substantially comply with all of the standards as stated in this staff report. Therefore, staff recommends that the Historic Landmark Commission deny the request to legalize the work initiated without a Certificate of Appropriateness. Staff recommends the following:

1. That the applicant obtains the appropriate City permits to re-establish the missing architectural features on the principal façade of this building including the decorative concrete block screen and panel.
2. The project must meet all other applicable City requirements, unless otherwise modified within the authority of the Historic Landmark Commission, Administrative Hearing Officer, or Board of Adjustment.

VICINITY MAP



BACKGROUND, ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS:

BACKGROUND/PROPOSAL

This three-story brick apartment building was constructed in 1961. It contains fifteen (15) units with parking located to the rear of the property. A carport is located along the southern property boundary. The front façade is symmetrical with a centrally located entrance. The main character-defining feature of the building is a centrally placed decorative concrete block wall located above the glass entrance door with sidelights. A popular building material of the 1960's, the openwork pattern of the blocks provides a vertical element in contrast to the horizontal orientation of the window configuration. The flat roof of the building is emphasized by a metal coping. A decorative concrete block panel that once screened the front entry was recently removed.

Upon notice of violation, the applicant ceased work on the remodeling and contacted the City to acquire the appropriate approvals. At that time, Planning Staff determined that an administrative approval could not be issued because of the extent of the changes to the principal façade of the building which are highly visible from the street. Planning Staff has applied the standards for the issuance of a Certificate of Appropriateness involving alterations to a noncontributing structure to this project because of its age (less than fifty (50) years old). Furthermore, the building does not appear to be of **exceptional** importance and thus achieved significance within the past fifty years. But in the larger context of Salt Lake City's history, the urban character the city took on may in fact play a very important role in the way in which the city continued to develop throughout the remainder of the twentieth century.

The mid-block property is located on the south side of Sixth Avenue. The applicant intends to convert the apartment complex to condominium ownership. The applicant proposes to replace the decorative concrete block entry screen and construct a two-story porch element on the front of the building. The proposed addition would have a stucco finish with concrete steps. The dominate features of the balcony are a flat roof, square posts and a steel guardrail. Access to the upper level balcony requires cutting a new opening in the existing decorative block wall.

ZONING DISTRICT CONSIDERATIONS

All proposed work must comply with height, yard and bulk requirements of the SR-1A Zoning District which includes:

SR-1A Zoning District

- **Maximum height of a flat roof building:** Sixteen feet (16'). The existing building measures approximately thirty feet (30') to the cornice at the front wall of the building.
- **Maximum exterior wall height:** Sixteen feet (16') for exterior walls placed at the building setback established by the minimum required yard. The existing exterior wall height at the front of the building measures approximately thirty feet (30') from grade.
- **Front yard setback:** The minimum depth of the front yard for all principal buildings is equal to the average of the front yards of existing buildings within the block face.

Finding: The building is a noncomplying building in the SR1-A Zoning District for height and exterior wall height. The applicant is not proposing to change these dimensions or modify the existing front yard setback with this proposal. Final site and building designs must comply with all other code requirements of the Zoning Ordinance which will be verified prior to building permit issuance.

OVERLAY DISTRICT AND DESIGN GUIDELINE CONSIDERATIONS

H. Standards for Certificate of Appropriateness Involving New Construction or Alteration of a Noncontributing Structure, which states: In considering an application for a certificate of appropriateness involving new construction, or alterations of noncontributing structures, the historic landmark commission, or planning director when the application involves the alteration of a noncontributing structure, shall determine whether the project substantially complies with all of the following standards that pertain to the application, is visually compatible with surrounding structures and streetscape as illustrated in any design standards adopted by the historic landmark commission and city council and is in the best interest of the city.

1. Scale and Form.

a. Height and Width. The proposed height and width shall be visually compatible with surrounding structures and streetscape;

b. Proportion of Principal Facades. The relationship of the width to the height of the principal elevations shall be in scale with surrounding structures and streetscape;

c. Roof Shape. The roof shape of a structure shall be visually compatible with the surrounding structures and streetscape; and

d. Scale of a Structure. The size and mass of the structures shall be visually compatible with the size and mass of surrounding structures and streetscape.

Analysis: The multi-family development consists of one three-story building with its associated parking provided toward the rear of the property. The width of the principal facades of the buildings as seen from the streetscape (Sixth Avenue) will not change, nor will the height of the building.

Finding: The proposed improvements to the building do not affect the existing scale, mass or roof shape of the development as viewed from the streetscape.

2. Composition of Principal Facades.

a. Proportion of Openings. The relationship of the width to the height of windows and doors of the structure shall be visually compatible with surrounding structures and streetscape;

b. Rhythm of Solids to Voids in Facades. The relationship of solids to voids in the facade of the structure shall be visually compatible with surrounding structures and streetscape;

c. Rhythm of Entrance Porch and Other Projections. The relationship of entrances and other projections to sidewalks shall be visually compatible with surrounding structures and streetscape; and

d. Relationship of Materials. The relationship of the color and texture of materials (other than paint color) of the facade shall be visually compatible with the predominant materials used in surrounding structures and streetscape.

Analysis: A series of spaces between the street and a building, including walkway, steps, landings and porches, is typical of most residential properties. This progression of entry elements is important because it contributes strongly to the character of a site and creates a sense of visual continuity on the block and within an historic district. Entrances and porches are quite often the focal point of buildings, particularly when they are located on primary elevations. Their functional and decorative elements are important in defining the overall character of a property. The character of this multi-family residential building, however, was compromised when the decorative concrete block screen was removed and the second-floor block panel altered with a new opening. Square columns now support a porch covering with an upper-level balcony on the front façade. In this case, staff is of the opinion that the character-defining architectural features of the building should be respected.

Historically, masonry and wood building materials characterized the district. The Design Guidelines include the following recommendations with respect to the composition of a principal facade:

Standards for New Construction

11.4 Construct a new building to reinforce a sense of human scale. A new building may convey a sense of human scale by employing techniques such as these:

- Using building materials that are of traditional dimensions.
- Providing a one-story porch that is similar to that seen traditionally.
- Using a building mass that is similar in size to those seen traditionally.
- Using a solid-to-void that is similar to that seen traditionally, and using window openings that are similar in size to those seen traditionally.

11.16 New materials that are similar in character to traditional materials may be acceptable with appropriate detailing. Alternative materials should appear similar in scale, proportion, texture and finish to those used historically. They also must have a proven durability in similar locations in this climate. Metal products are allowed for soffits and eaves only.

11.18 If they are to be used, design ornamental elements, such as brackets and porches to be in scale with similar historic features. Thin, fake brackets and strap work applied to the surface of a building are inappropriate uses of these traditional details.

11.19 Contemporary interpretations of traditional details are encouraged. New designs for window moldings and door surrounds, for example, can provide visual interest while helping to convey the fact that the building is new. Contemporary details for porch railings and columns are

other examples. New soffit details and dormer designs also could be used to create interest while expressing a new, compatible style.

Design Standards for the Avenues Historic District

Materials

13.9 Use primary materials on a building that are similar to those use historically. Appropriate building materials include: brick, stucco, and wood. Building in brick, in sizes and colors similar to those used historically, is preferred. Jumbo, or oversized brick is inappropriate. Using stone, or veneers applied with the bedding plane in a vertical position, is inappropriate. Stucco should appear similar to that used historically. Using panelized products in a manner that reveals large panel modules is inappropriate. In general, panelized and synthetic materials are inappropriate for primary structures. They may be considered on secondary buildings.

Finding: Failing to preserve architectural features on a principal façade which are important in defining the overall character of a site results in alterations that diminish the integrity of the property and its context. The proposed work is not consistent with this standard.

3. Relationship to Street.

a. Walls of Continuity. Facades and site structures, such as walls, fences and landscape masses shall, when it is characteristic of the area, form continuity along a street to ensure visual compatibility with the structures, public ways and places to which such elements are visually related;

b. Rhythm of Spacing and Structures on Streets. The relationship of a structure or object to the open space between it and adjoining structures or objects shall be visually compatible with the structures, objects, public ways and places to which it is visually related;

c. Directional Expression of Principal Elevation. A structure shall be visually compatible with the structures, public ways and places to which it is visually related in its orientation toward the street; and

d. Streetscape-Pedestrian Improvements. Streetscape and pedestrian improvements and any change in its appearance shall be compatible to the historic character of the landmark site or H historic preservation overlay district.

Analysis: This is a remodel of an existing building that is out-of-period from the historic district. The walls of continuity and rhythm of spacing and structures on streets would not change from the current configuration.

Finding: The orientation and footprint of the building have not changed and are consistent with the typical alignment of the surrounding buildings on the block.

4. Subdivision of Lots. The planning director shall review subdivision plats proposed for property within an H historic preservation overlay district or of a landmark site and may require changes to ensure the proposed subdivision will be compatible with the historic character of the district and/or site(s).

Finding: The proposed balcony addition will affect the common area as currently defined by the record of survey map for the condominium development. Thus, the condominium plat would need to be revised to reflect the proposed change.

Exhibit A Photographs

Exhibit B

Elevation Drawings

Exhibit C