



CITY OF ST. LOUIS  
**PLANNING & URBAN  
 DESIGN AGENCY**  
 CULTURAL RESOURCES OFFICE  
 FRANCIS G. SLAY, Mayor

**A.**

---

DATE: November 28, 2016  
 ADDRESSES: 2301-2335 S. Kingshighway Blvd.  
 ITEM: Preliminary Review:  
 JURISDICTION: Reber Place National Register Historic District  
 Preservation Review District — Ward 8  
 STAFF: Daniel Krasnoff, Cultural Resources Office



2301-2337 S. KINGSHIGHWAY

**OWNER/APPLICANT:**  
 BMO Harris Bank of St. Louis – Owner

**DEVELOPER/APPLICANT**  
 Draper & Kramer

**RECOMMENDATION:**  
 That the Preservation Board conditionally approve:

- Rehabilitation of Merit Buildings/section at 2301 and 2335 South Kingshighway;
- Demolition of Merit Building/sections at 2307 & 2319 South Kingshighway; and a non-contributing building, 2327 South Kingshighway;
- Construction of a commercial building at 2319 S. Kingshighway which preserves and incorporates the original façade on the South Kingshighway frontage;
- Construction of a commercial building fronting Southwest Avenue.



The proposal preserves two Merit Buildings and a Merit storefront while returning active street front commercial/retail activity to this portion of South Kingshighway.

## **THE PROJECT**

---

The Preservation Board has the authority to review the proposal because it is within a National Register Historic District and included within a Preservation Review District. At its August, 2016, meeting, the Preservation Board took no action on a proposal regarding this location by the same applicant. The applicant amended their proposal, so, the revised proposal is under consideration at the November meeting. The developer of a single 2.3 acre parcel at 2301 S. Kingshighway, with five buildings/sections seeks preliminary approval to demolish and renovate commercial buildings at the intersection of Southwest Avenue and South Kingshighway. These buildings are owned by Southwest (BMO Harris) Bank. The some aspects of the proposal remains the same as the one in August, while other aspects are new:

- Rehabilitation of two Merit corner buildings
- The proposal calls for demolition of the side and rear facades of the 2319 South Kingshighway building/section
- The rehabilitation of the 2319 South Kingshighway building/section storefront and its incorporation within the design of a retail pharmacy. (New to this proposal)
- The complete demolition of the building/section of 2327 South Kingshighway
- The use of the site of the former building/section at 2327 South Kingshighway as a driveway/curb cut
- The proposal calls for demolition of the side and rear facades of the 2307 South Kingshighway building/section
- The proposal calls for the retention of the façade of the 2307 South Kingshighway building/section as a screen for surface parking (New to this proposal)
- An additional commercial building (with no drive-through) is proposed front on Southwest Avenue (The location is new to this proposal)
- A newly constructed bank drive-through would be located on the west end of the parking lot. The existing drive through is to be demolished

## **RELEVANT LEGISLATION AND POLICIES**

---

St. Louis City Ordinance #64689 as amended by Ordinance #64932

SECTION FORTY. Preliminary design review of proposed construction or Exterior Alterations: Demolition, Construction, Alteration – Historic District or Landmark/Landmark Site. The Preservation Board may establish procedures for preliminary design review by the Cultural Resources Director and the staff of the Cultural Resources Office of proposed construction or Exterior Alterations where Landmark or Historic District standards may be expected to apply. If, after a preliminary design review as above, an application for permit is received by the building commissioner which conforms to the plans and specification as approved by at the preliminary design review, the Building Commissioner may issue the permit.

St. Louis City Preservation Board  
Preliminary Review Policies and Procedures

Adopted March 24, 2014

Possible Preliminary Review: Demolition

The Preliminary Review of demolition is recommended when a building is protected by its status by law as set forth in St. Louis City Ordinances. These properties include those on the National Register of Historic Places or within districts in the National Register, as well as those located in Preservation Review Districts, which are afforded this level of demolition review. The Cultural Resources Office Director's office approval of the demolition of Merit and High Merit buildings, as defined by Ordinance 64689, is limited by that ordinance and criteria in the Local Historic District Standards.

The consideration of subsequent construction is a demolition review criteria in Ordinance 64689 and 64832, and shall be considered for all properties in Preservation Review Districts at the time of demolition review. Nevertheless, the ranking of criteria in the ordinance by significance indicates that the significance of the building and other factors must be considered as much or more significant than subsequent new construction.

St. Louis City Ordinance #64689

PART X - DEMOLITION REVIEWS

SECTION FIFTY-EIGHT. Whenever an application is made for a permit to demolish a Structure which is i) individually listed on the National Register, ii) within a National Register District, iii) for which National Register Designation is pending or iv) which is within a Preservation Review District established pursuant to Sections Fifty-Five to Fifty-Six of this ordinance, the building commissioner shall submit a copy of such application to the Cultural Resources Office within three days after said application is received by his Office.

St. Louis City Ordinance #64832

SECTION ONE. Preservation Review Districts are hereby established for the areas of the City of St. Louis described in Exhibit A.

SECTION FIVE. Demolition permit - Board decision.

All demolition permit application reviews pursuant to this chapter shall be made by the Director of the Office who shall either approve or disapprove of all such applications based upon the criteria of this ordinance. All appeals from the decision of the Director shall be made to the Preservation Board. Decisions of the Board or Office shall be in writing, shall be mailed to the applicant immediately upon completion and shall indicate the application by the Board or Office of the following criteria, which are listed in order of importance, as the basis for the decision:

A. Redevelopment Plans. Demolitions which would comply with a redevelopment plan previously approved by ordinance or adopted by the Planning and Urban Design Commission shall be approved except in unusual circumstances which shall be expressly noted.

**Not applicable.**

B. Architectural Quality. Structure's architectural merit, uniqueness, and/or historic value shall be evaluated and the structure classified as high merit, merit, qualifying, or noncontributing based upon: Overall style, era, building type, materials, ornamentation, craftsmanship, site planning, and whether it is the work of a significant architect, engineer, or craftsman; and contribution to the streetscape and neighborhood. Demolition of sound high merit

structures shall not be approved by the Office. Demolition of merit or qualifying structures shall not be approved except in unusual circumstances which shall be expressly noted.

**Because four of the five buildings/sections are contributing buildings to the Reber Place National Register Historic District, these structures are Merit Buildings per the definitions of the ordinance. The section constructed in 1973 is non-contributing.**

The following describes each building/section:

**2301 S. KINGSHIGHWAY BLVD (at Southwest) c. 1905 – Merit Building. Proposal: Preservation Condition: Fair**

The footprint of this iconic building is formed by its location at the corner of Kingshighway and Southwest Avenue.

The building/section is to be rehabilitated.



**2307 S. KINGSHIGHWAY BLVD 1923 – Merit Building - Proposal: Demolition, Condition: Fair**

This one-story, six bay building originally had individual storefronts. Five of the bays date to the original construction of the building, with the sixth bays construction after 1951. The building/section includes decorative terra cotta panels. There is a Kingshighway pedestrian entrance.



2307 S. KINGSHIGHWAY

**2319 S. KINGSHIGHWAY BLVD 1928 – Merit Building. Proposal: Demolition, to be replaced by a commercial building that includes the preserved storefront design. Condition: Fair**

The two-story building/section includes terra cotta parapet panels with geometric motifs and a faux balcony. The building was constructed as an auto dealership



2319 S. KINGSHIGHWAY

**2327 KINGSHIGHWAY BLVD 1973 - Non Contributing. Proposal: Demolition, Condition: Fair**

This building/section was constructed to adjoin adjacent buildings. Sanborn maps indicate that prior to 1973 this frontage included a 2-family residential building and a one-story commercial building that were not attached to the one another or the adjacent storefront buildings.



2327 S. KINGSHIGHWAY

**2335 KINGSHIGHWAY BLVD (at Botanical) c. 1920 – Merit Building. Proposal: Preservation - Condition: Fair**

**Rehabilitation will include new systems and finishes.**

This building/section has two street-facing facades. It has a central gablet with faux half-timbering, decorative brackets and recessed “diamond” panels.



2335 S. KINGSHIGHWAY

- C. Condition. The Office shall make exterior inspections to determine whether a structure is sound. If a structure or portion thereof proposed to be demolished is obviously not sound, the application for demolition shall be approved except in unusual circumstances which shall be expressly noted. The remaining or salvageable portion(s) of the structure shall be evaluated to determine the extent of reconstruction, rehabilitation or restoration required to obtain a viable structure.

1. Sound structures with apparent potential for adaptive reuse, reuse and or resale shall generally not be approved for demolition unless application of criteria in subsections A, D, F and G, four, six and seven indicates demolition is appropriate.

**In terms of the ordinance, all of the buildings/sections are Sound.**

2. Structurally attached or groups of buildings.

**The proposal includes demolition of structurally attached buildings—2307 South Kingshighway (contributing) and 2327 South Kingshighway (non-contributing).**

D. Neighborhood Effect and Reuse Potential.

1. Neighborhood Potential: Vacant and vandalized buildings on the block face, the present condition of surrounding buildings, and the current level of repair and maintenance of neighboring buildings shall be considered.

**Surrounding residential and commercial buildings are generally in good condition and are occupied.**

2. Reuse Potential: The potential of the structure for renovation and reuse, based on similar cases within the City, and the cost and extent of possible renovation shall be evaluated. Structures located within currently well maintained blocks or blocks undergoing upgrading renovation will generally not be approved for demolition.

**All of the current buildings/sections are generally well maintained. Although the total square footage of the combined structures is approximately 35,000 square feet, the bank utilizes only 4,500 square feet. Most of the combined building has not been used by the bank for the past twenty years.**

**The developer has prepared an analysis regarding the lack of economic viability of the buildings in their current configuration for reuse. Few commercial/retail storefronts in the South Kingshighway vicinity have undergone major renovation in recent years. This may indicate a lack of economic viability in this geography. Unlike areas with dense collections of commercial storefront buildings found in commercial areas such as The Grove, South Grand and Cherokee, the buildings on South Kingshighway are isolated, with few pedestrian-oriented storefront buildings nearby. This lack of density hinders the redevelopment potential of the buildings.**

3. Economic Hardship: The Office shall consider the economic hardship which may be experienced by the present owner if the application is denied. Such consideration may include, among other things, the estimated cost of demolition, the estimated cost of rehabilitation or reuse, the feasibility of public or private financing, the effect of tax abatement, if applicable, and the potential for economic growth and development in the area.

**n/a**

E. Urban Design. The Office shall evaluate the following urban design factors:

1. The effect of a proposed partial demolition on attached or row buildings.

**The walls of the corner buildings that will remain on the site would be affected by the demolition. The developer will need to make remedial repairs to these facades.**

2. The integrity of the existing block face and whether the proposed demolition will significantly impact the continuity and rhythm of structures within the block.

**The existing block face has a high degree of design continuity. Rehabilitation of the corner commercial buildings at Southwest/South Kingshighway, preservation of the building/section at 2319 South Kingshighway as the front facade of a new structure will enhance the streetscape. Demolition of the non-contributing 2327 building section will create a “hole” in the streetscape. The retention of the façade wall of the 2307 South Kingshighway building/section will be a screen for parking and maintain the building wall. It is worth noting that historically there have been “holes” in the streetscape. The southern-most bay of the 2307 building/section was only added to the façade in the 1950’s and the 2327 building/section was not constructed until the 1970’s. Previously there had been detached residential buildings at that location.**

3. Proposed demolition of buildings with unique or significant character important to a district, street, block or intersection will be evaluated for impact on the present integrity, rhythm, balance and density on the site, block, intersection or district.

**Much of the continuity found on the street currently will be maintained by preserving the two corner buildings and preserving the storefront of 2319 South Kingshighway. Demolition of 2327 South Kingshighway is not relevant to this section of the ordinance due to its lack of design character. The retention of the façade wall of the 2307 South Kingshighway building/section will help maintain streetscape continuity.**

4. The elimination of uses will be considered; however, the fact that a present and original or historic use of a site does not conform to present zoning or land use requirements in no way shall require that such a nonconforming use to be eliminated.

**Replacement of the previous “back office” use by the bank with pedestrian and auto-based commercial and retail uses is desirable because these buildings were built for retail/commercial/office activity to serve the public.**

F. Proposed Subsequent Construction. Notwithstanding the provisions of any ordinance to the contrary, the Office shall evaluate proposed subsequent construction on the site of proposed demolition based upon whether:

1. The applicant has demonstrated site control by ownership or an option contract;

**BMO Harris/Southwest Bank and Draper & Kramer have demonstrated site control.**

2. The proposed construction would equal or exceed the contribution of the structure to the integrity of the existing streetscape and block face. Proposal for creation of vacant land by demolition(s) in question will be evaluated as to appropriateness on that particular site, within that specific block. Parking lots will be given favorable

consideration when directly adjoining/abutting facilities require additional off-street parking;

**The proposed construction will “equal or exceed” the existing streetscape through the rehabilitation of the existing buildings corner buildings and by the rehabilitation the original façade of the 2319 South Kingshighway building/section for active commercial/retail use. Although one Merit building and a non-contributing building are lost, the rehabilitation of the most important structures and a façade mitigate the demolition proposed.**

**The ordinance states that “parking lots be given favorable consideration when they directly adjoin/abut facilities.” The proposal includes approximately 100 parking spaces with approximately 25% of them for employees. Many of these spaces directly adjoin/abut the buildings in the development proposal. The retention of the façade wall of the 2307 South Kingshighway building/section will serve to mitigate demolition of the rest of the structure, though its loss will diminish the streetscape design.**

3. The proposed construction will be architecturally compatible with the existing block face as to building setbacks, scale, articulation and rhythm, overall architectural character and general use of exterior materials or colors;

**The proposal calls for the rehabilitation and reuse of two merit buildings on the site, including the iconic corner building, with the additional rehabilitation of the storefront at 2319 South Kingshighway. The proposal does not include street-visible new construction on South Kingshighway that could have been incompatible with the existing streetscape design.**

4. The proposed use complies with current zoning requirements;

**Most of the property is zoned “F” Neighborhood Commercial. Zoning will require Conditional Use Permits in order for components of the development to occur.**

5. The proposed new construction would commence within twelve (12) months from the application date.

#### **Complies**

- G. Commonly Controlled Property. If a demolition application concerns property adjoining occupied property and if common control of both properties is documented, favorable consideration will generally be given to appropriate reuse proposals. Appropriate uses shall include those allowed under the current zoning classification, reuse for expansion of an existing conforming, commercial or industrial use or a use consistent with a presently conforming, adjoining use group. Potential for substantial expansion of an existing adjacent commercial use will be given due consideration.

**The entire property is currently by Southwest (BMO Harris) Bank and, should the proposal be implemented, it will be owned by Draper and Kramer. The sole change in ownership will be the transfer of 2335 South Kingshighway building/section to the Tower Grove Neighborhoods Community Development Corporation. Per Section “G” of the ordinance, because almost all of the property will be “commonly controlled”,**

**favorable consideration should be given if the proposal is found to be an appropriate reuse.**

- H. Accessory Structures. Accessory structures (garages, sheds, etc.) and ancillary structures will be processed for immediate resolution. Proposed demolition of frame garages or accessory structures internal to commercial or industrial sites will, in most cases, be approved unless that structure demonstrates high significance under the other criteria listed herein, which shall be expressly noted.

**The existing bank drive through will be replaced with a new one that is in the same approximate location on the site. Per Section “H” of the ordinance, an application to remove the existing bank drive-through will be approved.**

### **Preliminary Findings and Conclusions:**

The Cultural Resources Office’s consideration of the criteria for demolition led to these preliminary findings:

- The preliminary review is being considered by the Preservation Board because it includes demolition of sound, Merit buildings/sections.
- The buildings/sections at 2301-2335 S. Kingshighway are located within the Reber Place National Register Historic District on a single parcel under one owner.
- Four of these buildings/sections: 2301 S. Kingshighway, 2307 S. Kingshighway, 2319 S. Kingshighway and 2335 S. Kingshighway are Merit buildings and, according to the ordinance, “shall not be approved except in unusual circumstances which shall be expressly noted.”
- The Merit buildings were constructed from approximately 1905-1928 and are representative of a variety of commercial storefront designs.
- The buildings are sound, in terms of the Ordinance.
- The developer has supplied cost estimates that indicate per square foot rent levels in the South Kingshighway area are significantly lower than the cost to renovate the structures.
- The cost estimate does not include the added value of historic tax credits for which most of these buildings would qualify.
- The curb cut and driveway will negatively impact the urban character of the streetscape.

These are the “unusual circumstances” which justify the demolition of some merit structures:

- The proposal calls for the rehabilitation of the original, iconic, merit structure/section, Southwest Bank Building, as well as the Merit structure/section at 2335 South Kingshighway.
- The proposal calls for the rehabilitation of an historic storefront design 2319 South Kingshighway for use by a national pharmacy retailer—this has never been done in St. Louis.
- The proposal takes a lightly used back office facility with a bank branch and converts it to retail, commercial and office uses that will enliven the streetscape.
- The proposal maintains the urban form of the streetscape.
- The site is currently under common ownership.

- Parking is adjacent to and abuts the commercial and bank buildings on South Kingshighway. Per the ordinance, “parking lots will be given favorable consideration when they directly adjoin/about facilities.”

Based on the Preliminary findings, the Cultural Resources Office recommends that the Preservation Board grant preliminary approval to the proposed demolitions, with the stipulation that no demolition permits be approved by the Cultural Resources Office without:

- The approval of curb-cuts by the Streets’ Department
- The approval of Conditional Use Permits
- Consultation with Cultural Resource Office staff regarding design details
- The granting of building permits that reflect the developer’s proposal to the Preservation Board



**PROPOSED SITE PLAN FOR 2301-2335 S. KINGSHIGHWAY**



**KINGSHIGHWAY ELEVATION WITH BRICK RESTORED**



**KINGSHIGHWAY STREETSCAPE WITH BRICK RESTORED**



**PROPOSED WALGREENS ELEVATION**



**PROPOSED STREETScape AT SOUTHWEST LOOKING SOUTHEAST TO KINGSHIGHWAY**