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DATE: JULY 25, 2016
 ADDRESSES: 2301-2335 S. Kingshighway Blvd.
 ITEM: Preliminary Review: Redevelopment and demolition of commercial storefront buildings with new construction
 JURISDICTION: Reber Place Historic District, Preservation Review District — Ward 8
 Staff: Dan Krasnoff, Cultural Resources Office



2301-2337 S. KINGSHIGHWAY

OWNER/APPLICANT:

BMO Harris Bank of St. Louis –
 Owner/Applicant

Draper & Kramer - Developer

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Preservation Board withholds approval of the demolition of the Merit Buildings unless it finds that the use of the structures proposed for demolition are not economically feasible and/or that approval of the proposed redevelopment will equal or exceed the contribution of the structures to be demolished.



THE PROJECT:

The developer seeks preliminary approval to demolish and renovate commercial buildings on the west side of the 23xx block of South Kingshighway. Currently these buildings are owned by Southwest (BMO Harris) Bank. The proposal calls for retention of two buildings: one at the corner of Southwest Avenue and South Kingshighway, to be donated to the Tower Grove Community Development Corporation, and the other at the corner of Botanical Avenue and South Kingshighway, for BMO Harris Bank. The buildings in between are proposed for demolition, to be replaced by a Walgreen's fronting on South Kingshighway. The South Kingshighway façade of the proposed Walgreen's would be at the sidewalk with driveways located along the north and south facades that include curb-cuts to South Kingshighway. An additional commercial building and bank drive-through would be located on the west end of the parking lot. This proposal has been revised in a positive fashion and now calls for the preservation of two of the four Merit structures on the site. The developer has met with neighborhood organizations and held a community meeting.

RELEVANT LEGISLATION:

The properties at 2301-2335 South Kingshighway are within the Reber Place National Register Historic District. Constructed from approximately 1905-1928, they were built in five phases. Originally, three of them were for uses other than banking. Four of the five sections, are contributing buildings to the Reber Place National Register Historic District. A separate, non-contributing portion that links the original buildings was constructed in 1973. The demolition is subject to the Preservation Review District ordinance.

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 building 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 section:

2301 S. KINGSHIGHWAY BLVD c. 1905 – Merit Building - Proposal: Preservation

This two-story building's triangular footprint reflects the parcel shape, defined by the intersection of Kingshighway and Southwest Avenue.



2301 S. KINGSHIGHWAY

2307 S. KINGSHIGHWAY BLVD 1923 – Merit Building - Proposal: Demolition

This one-story building has six storefront bays with decorative terra cotta panels.



2307 S. KINGSHIGHWAY

2319-23 S. KINGSHIGHWAY BLVD 1928 – Merit Building - Proposal: Demolition

The two-story structure includes terra cotta parapet panels with geometric motifs and faux balconies.



2319 S. KINGSHIGHWAY

2327 KINGSHIGHWAY BLVD 1973 - Non Contributing – Proposal: Demolition



2327 S. KINGSHIGHWAY

2335 KINGSHIGHWAY BLVD c. 1920 – Proposal: Preservation

The two-story structure 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 are Sound.

2. Structurally attached or groups of buildings.

The proposal is to demolish two contributing sections and a non-contributing section.

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.

The buildings are located in the Southwest Garden neighborhood and the Reber Place National Register Historic District. Surrounding buildings, both residential and commercial, 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.

The buildings under consideration are one and two stories. The properties have been well maintained, although BMO Harris Bank uses only a small percentage of the overall facility. The developer feels the buildings, with the exception the one at the corner of Southwest and Kingshighway, which will be used by the bank, are not viable economically. They propose to donate the remaining building, at the corner of Botanical and Kingshighway, to the Tower Grove Community Development Corporation.

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.

The owner has provided an analysis of the reuse of the building that indicates that the building will not generate sufficient income to justify the cost of renovation.

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 will 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 developer's propose to construct a Walgreen's pharmacy in the space where the demolitions are proposed. The placement of the Walgreen's at the sidewalk would maintain the "street wall" along Kingshighway. However, the addition of curb cuts on both sides of the drive way will negatively impact the urban character of the street.

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.

Although the placement of the Walgreen's will mitigate the loss of the urban character of the streetscape, the character of the streetscape will be diminished in comparison to the effect of renovating the existing structures' historic store fronts.

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.

Not applicable.

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 has been the owner for many years. The developer, Draper and Kramer has an option to redevelop the property.

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 developer will reuse the existing building at the corner of Southwest and Kingshighway for the bank. The Walgreen's constructed on South Kingshighway will occupy a significant portion of the site where the buildings proposed for demolition now stand. In addition, the developer proposes to construct a building for a fast-food-type user in the center of the western portion of the lot. A drive-through facility for the bank and fast food establishment will also be placed in the middle of the lot.

The proposed construction is sensitive to urban design along South Kingshighway through the use of real window openings that extend the length of the façade of the new building. The Walgreen's will not have the same character as the historic storefront buildings that are proposed for demolition.

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 proposed construction will be compatible in regards to setbacks, scale, exterior materials and color. The design of the windows in the Walgreen's is not consistent with those of the buildings to remain on the site.

4. The proposed use complies with current zoning requirements;
Most of the property is zoned "F" Neighborhood commercial. A small portion of the southwest most corner of the lot, which faces Botanical Avenue, is zoned "B", Two-Family.
5. The proposed new construction would commence within twelve (12) months from the application date.

Complies

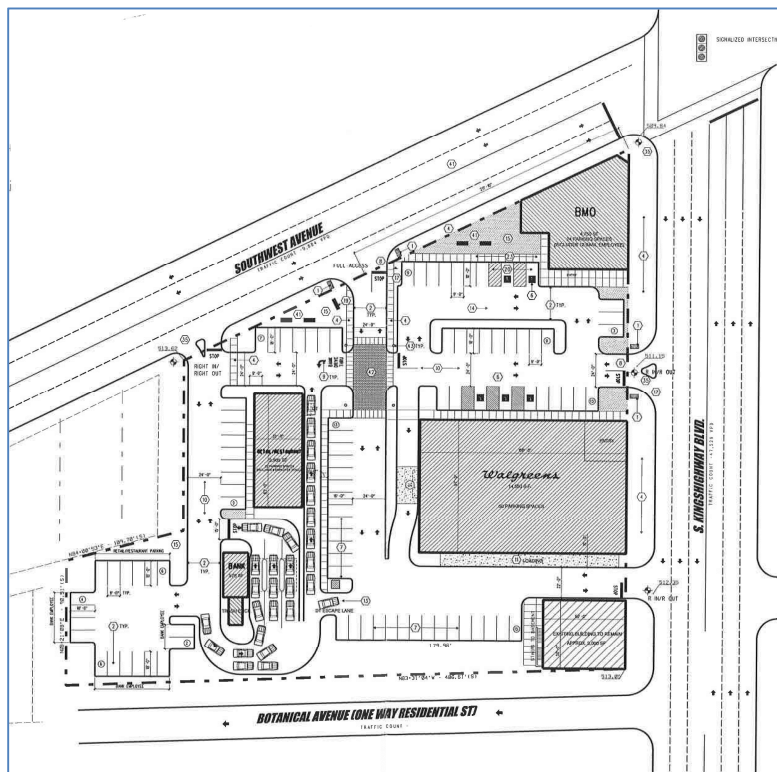
- G. Commonly Controlled Property. If a demolition application concerns property adjoining occupied property and if common control of both properties is documented, favorable consideration will generally be given to appropriate reuse proposals. Appropriate uses shall include those allowed under the current 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. Should the proposal be implemented, most of the property will become owned by Draper and Kramer. The building at Botanical and Kingshighway would become owned by the Tower Grove Community Development Corporation.
- 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.

Preliminary Findings and Conclusions:

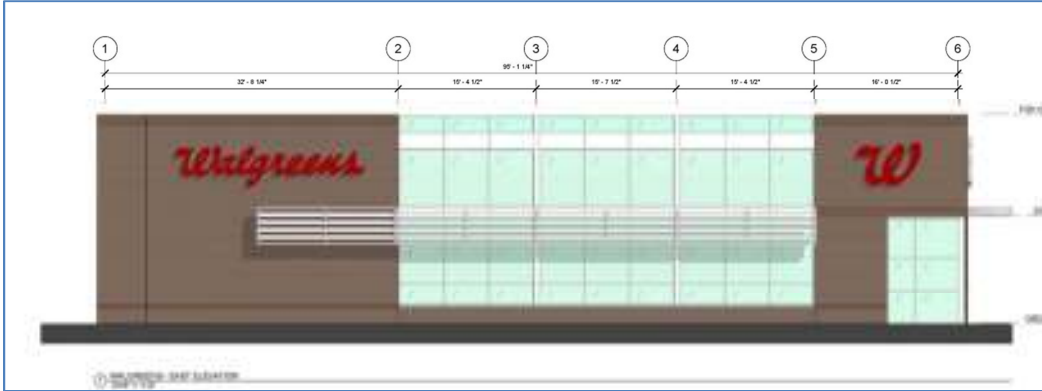
The Cultural Resources Office's consideration of the criteria for demolition led to these preliminary findings:

- The buildings at 2301-2335 S. Kingshighway are located within the Reber Place National Register Historic District.
- Four of these structures: 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.
- These buildings were constructed from approximately 1905-1928 and are representative of a variety of commercial storefront designs from this period.
- 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.

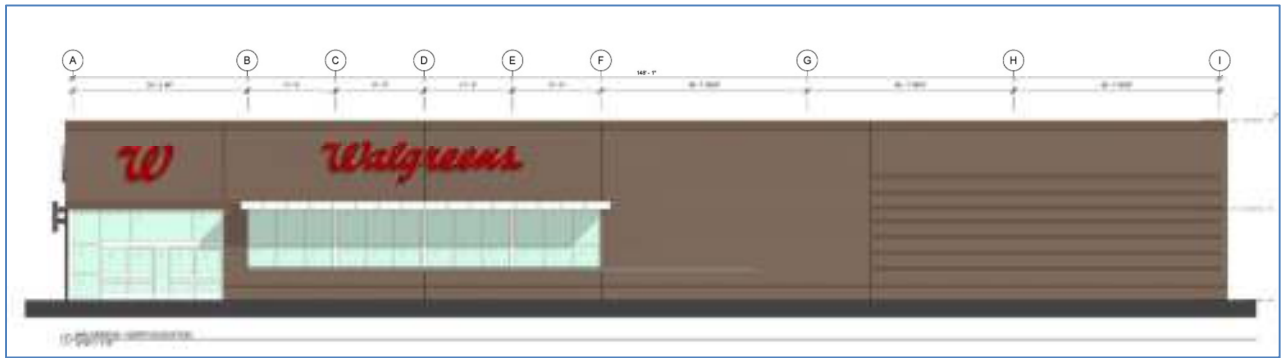
- By keeping two of the Merit structures and placing the Walgreen’s building at the sidewalk, the proposed new construction maintains the urban form of the streetscape, although the configuration of two curb-cuts and parking will leave gaps that lessen the urban character of the streetscape.
- Through additional site design the urban form can be enhanced.
- The design of the Walgreen’s on the South Kingshighway façade includes large windows that face the street. The windows and entry on the South Kingshighway façade is consistent with urban building form. Through additional changes to the South Kingshighway façade, the urban character of the Walgreen’s can be enhanced.
- The owner proposes to donate the building at 2335 South Kingshighway, a Merit structure, to the Tower Grove Community Development Corporation.



PROPOSED SITE PLAN FOR 2301-2335 S. KINGSHIGHWAY



PROPOSED EAST (KINGSHIGHWAY) ELEVATION



PROPOSED NORTH ELEVATION