

City Council - Regular

Meeting Date: 04/02/2024

Initiated by: Jose A. Valdez Jr., Assistant City Manager/City Secretary

Initiated by: Bethany House of Laredo, Inc, Owner; Guillermo Cavazos, Jr., Cavazos Architects, Applicant/Representative

Staff Source: Vanessa Guerra, Interim
Planning Director

SUBJECT:

Public Hearing to approve exterior alterations and addition of two new roofs, new construction, and attached signage on Lots 1, 8, 9, and 10, Block 42, Western Division, located at 901 Hidalgo Street. This property is within the Old Mercado Historic District.

Historic District Landmark Board failed to establish quorum on March 14, 2024, therefore, the item is being presented for Council consideration pursuant to Municipal Code of Ordinances Section 2-156, which states, *"To the extent permitted by law, if a committee is unable to establish a quorum for a regularly scheduled meeting, the city manager may bypass the committee and place any item on the committee's agenda for that meeting on the next regularly scheduled city council meeting."* (Ordinance Number 2018-O-050)

Staff **supports** the application with the **exception** of replacing Building C's existing roof with a low slope metal roof, **and recommends** Building C's roof be replaced with the same or similar roofing materials as that which currently exist.

HD-004-2024

District VIII

PREVIOUS COUNCIL ACTION

None.

BACKGROUND:

Building Type:

- **Building A** (corner of Hidalgo Street and San Agustin Avenue) - As per the 1996 Historic Urban Design Assessment Report, states the following on Building A:
 - This is a brick one story commercial building. The brick has been finished with a layer of stucco. The building comes up to the sidewalk. The whole building has been given a new facade. The base of the building is defined by a darker color datum that comes up to about 30 inches from the ground. The openings are recessed door openings. The doors are double--doors with transoms. There are colorful individual canopies above these that are of a durable cloth material stretched over a metal frame. The parapet has a slightly raised brick coping.
 - This is a brick one story commercial building. The brick has been finished with a layer of stucco. The building comes up to the sidewalk. The door openings are recessed and have double-doors with transoms. There are colorful individual canopies above these that are of a durable cloth material stretched over a metal frame. The parapet has a slightly raised brick coping.
- **Building B** – Currently an empty lot.

- **Building C** (facing north on Hidalgo Street) - As per the 1996 Historic Urban Design Assessment Report, states the following on Building C:
 - This is a brick one story commercial building that comes up to the sidewalk. The brick has been finished with a layer of stucco. The building has an L-shaped plan so that it also has an entrance on San Bernardo Avenue. The facades on this building give the appearance to be a continuation of the adjacent building previously mentioned. The openings are recessed door openings. The doors are double-doors with transoms. There are colorful individual canopies that are of a durable cloth material stretched over a metal frame. The parapet has a slightly raised brick coping.
- **Building D** – Currently an empty lot.
- **Building E** (corner of Hidalgo Street and San Bernardo Avenue) - As per the 1996 Historic Urban Design Assessment Report, states the following on Building E:
 - This is a single-story, brick building. The brick has been painted over. The openings on the facade are recessed and vary in size. The windows and door have a raised brick frame around them. The parapet wall is capped by a raised brick - coping and has an embattlement profile.

Proposed Scope of Work: The applicant is proposing exterior alterations and additions of two new roofs, new construction, and attached signage in the following ways:

- **Building A** (corner of Hidalgo Street and San Agustin Avenue):
 1. The roof will be replaced with a low-slope standing seam metal roof.
 2. The awnings will be repaired with new fabric.
 - The fabric will be 100% woven acrylic in a blue color to match the color palette of the rest of the buildings.
- **Building B** (facing north on Hidalgo Street):
 1. Construction of new structure.
 2. The proposed roof will be a low-slope thermoplastic roof with insulation over a steel roof deck.
 3. The proposed walls will be stucco-finished over CMU (Concrete Masonry Unit) walls and painted to match the rest of the buildings.
 4. Mechanical units will be placed on top of the roof and will be obstructed with parapet walls.
- **Building C** (facing north on Hidalgo Street):
 1. The existing roof, which is a combination of asphalt built-up and modified bitumen roofs over a wood-framed structure, will be replaced with a low-slope metal roof.
 2. The existing walls will be repaired, re-pointed as required, and repainted to match the rest of the buildings.
 3. The building currently has a boarded-up door and two existing window frames in small window openings.
 - The existing exterior door will be repaired, if possible. If not, a single door with transom will be installed to match the existing doors on Building A's facade.
 - The wood window frame will be repaired and/or restored with the same material or similar material.
- **Building D** (facing north on Hidalgo Street):
 1. New construction
 1. The proposed roof will be a low-slope thermoplastic roof with insulation over a steel roof deck.
 2. The proposed exterior wall will be stucco-finished over CMU masonry walls and be painted to match the rest of the buildings.
 3. The top of the wall will have a cornice trim piece and metal coping to prevent water prevention.
 4. The proposed facade will contain arched windows and storefronts to contrast with the adjacent buildings, as well as an overhang.

5. A proposed attached signage that includes the following:
 - The sign letters will be cast in aluminum 14" high
 - The total square footage of the signage is 28 square feet.
6. Mechanical units will be placed on top of the roof and will be obstructed with parapet walls.
- **Building E** (corner of Hidalgo Street and San Bernardo Avenue):
 1. For informational purposes, the existing brick veneer will remain.
 2. For informational purposes, the existing tile accents will remain.
- **Courtyard** (to be constructed to the rear of Building D - formerly the parking lot):
 1. New Construction
 1. The proposed roofs will be a seam metal roof.
 2. The proposed courtyard will contain an arched walkway on all 4 sides.
 - The arches will sit on split-face CMU masonry columns and above the columns will be painted plaster finish to match the rest of the buildings.
 3. A proposed privacy wall at the south end of the courtyard will be solid CMU masonry with a painted stucco finish.
 4. A proposed trellis will contain the following:
 - The trellis will have columns that will have split-face CMU masonry and a painted plaster finish on top.
 - The trellis beams will be constructed of hollow steel members and painted.
- **Please see the attached Exhibit A for reference of the buildings.**

Site: The property is in an H-AE (Historic Arts and Entertainment) zoning district.

Letters sent to surrounding property owners: 26

- **For:** 0
- **Against:** 0

Granting or Denying an Application:

- As per the Laredo Land Development Code, Section 24.1.2.2(2), the Historic District Landmark Board shall utilize the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and Illustrated Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings; and the City of Laredo, Texas, Historic Urban Design Guidelines

Secretary of the Interior's Standards:

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.
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.
3. Each property will be recognized as a physical record of its time, place and use. Changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding conjectural features or elements from other historic properties, will not be undertaken.
4. Changes to a property that have acquired historic significance in their own right will be retained and preserved.
5. Distinctive materials, features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property will be preserved.
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.

7. Chemical or physical treatments, if appropriate, will be undertaken using the gentlest means possible. Treatments that cause damage to historic materials will not be used.
8. Archeological resources will be protected and preserved in place. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures will be undertaken.
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.
10. New additions and adjacent or related new 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.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION

None. (Failure to establish quorum on March 14, 2024)

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Overall Recommendation: Staff **supports** the application with the **exception** of the replacement of Building C's existing roof with a sloped metal roof, and **recommends** Building C's roof be replaced or repaired with the same or similar roofing materials as that which currently exist.

BUILDING A:

Staff **supports** replacing the roof with a low-slope standing seam metal roof, repairing the existing walls, and repairing the awnings with new fabric on **Building A** for the following reasons:

1. As per the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and Illustrated Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings (the Secretary of the Interior), the new roof should match the old in material, design, scale, color, and finish. The proposed low-slope standing seam metal roof complies with the Secretary of the Interior guidelines. The proposed roof will use similar materials as the previous existing roof, which was slate or tin, as per the 1925 Sanborn report.
2. Replacing missing awnings or canopies that can be historically documented to the building or adding...awnings...that are compatible with the historic character of the building, as per the Secretary of the Interior. Therefore, replacing the destroyed awnings with new fabric will maintain the historic features of the building.
3. As per the City of Laredo Historic Urban Guidelines, fabric awnings are appropriate and encouraged for historic buildings. Therefore, replacing the awnings with new fabric is appropriate for the historic structure.

BUILDING B:

Staff **supports** the new construction and the location of mechanical units on the rooftop, which will be obstructed by parapet walls for **Building B** for the following reasons:

1. As per the City of Laredo Historic Urban Guidelines, new construction should appear similar in mass and scale to historic structures found traditional in the area. Therefore, the proposed new construction will be similar and complement the historic environment.
2. New construction of buildings should appear similar to width and height to those seen historically, as per the City of Laredo Historic Urban Guidelines. The proposed new construction will be similar in width and height and will not obstruct the historic character of the buildings in the area.
3. As per the Secretary of the Interior, new additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction will not destroy historic materials, features, and spatial relationships that characterize the property. The proposed new construction will not diminish the historic materials, features, and environment. The proposed materials for the new construction conform with the existing historic materials.

4. The new work should be differentiated from the old and should be compatible with the historic materials, features, size, scale and proportion, and massing to protect the integrity of the property and its environment, as per the Secretary of the Interior. The proposed new construction will protect the property's historic integrity and will not deter the historic setting. Also, the proposed new construction will not resemble the existing historic buildings and will be distinguishable from the existing historic buildings.
5. The City of Laredo Historic Urban Design Guidelines states to minimize the visual impact of mechanical equipment. Therefore, placing the mechanical units on the rooftop and obscuring with parapet walls will fulfill the guideline standards.
6. The City of Laredo Historic Urban Design Guidelines also states to use low profile mechanical units on the rooftops to avoid visibility from the street level. The proposed mechanical units will not be visible from the street level.
7. Overly large and highly visible mechanical equipment will have a negative impact of the historic character of the building and setting. Thus, the proposed mechanical units shall be minimally visible as stated in the Secretary of the Interior.

BUILDING C:

Staff **does not support** the existing roof, which is a combination of asphalt built-up and modified bitumen roofs over a wood-framed structure, to be removed and replaced with a low-slope metal roof. However, staff **supports** the scope of work for the existing roof, existing door, and the window framing to be kept and repaired for the following reasons:

1. As per the Secretary of the Interior, the new roof should match the old in material, design, scale, color, and finish. The existing roof is a combination of asphalt built-up roofs and modified bitumen roofs over a wood-framed structure. The same or the similar materials shall be used to repair the existing roof.
2. As per the Secretary of the Interior, identifying, retaining, and preserving storefronts and their functional and decorative features that are important in defining the overall historic character of the building is recommended. Therefore, retaining and preserving the existing door and the window wood framing will maintain the historic character. However, if the existing door does not exist, the door installed shall be a single door with a transom, similar to the doors located on Building A.
3. The City of Laredo Historic Urban Design Guidelines states storefronts should not be altered or obscured. Therefore, the repairing and retaining the existing door and window openings will not diminish the building's historic character.
4. Any work pertaining to repairing and replacing materials on the existing structures shall use the same material or similar material to match the existing structures without diminishing their historic character and maintain their historic integrity.

BUILDING D:

Staff **supports** the new construction, attached signage, and the location of the mechanical units on top of the roof, which will be obstructed with parapet walls for **Building D** for the following reasons:

1. As per the City of Laredo Historic Urban Guidelines, new construction should appear similar in mass and scale to historic structures found traditional in the area. Therefore, the proposed new construction will be similar and complement the historic environment.
2. New construction of buildings should appear similar to width and height to those seen historically, as per the City of Laredo Historic Urban Guidelines. The proposed new construction will be similar in width and height and will not obstruct the historic character of the buildings in the area.
3. As per the Secretary of the Interior, new additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction will not destroy historic materials, features, and spatial relationships that characterize the property. The proposed new construction will not diminish the historic materials, features, and environment.

The proposed materials for the new construction conform with the existing historic materials.

4. The new work should be differentiated from the old and should be compatible with the historic materials, features, size, scale and proportion, and massing to protect the integrity of the property and its environment, as per the Secretary of the Interior. The proposed new construction will protect the property's historic integrity and will not deter the historic setting. Also, the proposed new construction will not resemble the existing historic buildings and will be distinguishable from the existing historic buildings.
5. The attached signage complies with the City of Laredo Sign Ordinance 2017-O-044. The maximum area of square footage allowed is 72 sqft. The area for the attached sign is 28 sqft
6. The attached signage complies with the City of Laredo Historic Urban Design Guidelines, which states, "business signs on buildings shall be limited...two signs for corner lots."
7. The City of Laredo Historic Urban Design Guidelines states to minimize the visual impact of mechanical equipment. Therefore, placing the mechanical units on the rooftop and obscuring with parapet walls will fulfill the guideline standards.
8. The City of Laredo Historic Urban Design Guidelines also states to use low profile mechanical units on the rooftops to avoid visibility from the street level. The proposed mechanical units will not be visible from the street level.
9. Overly large and highly visible mechanical equipment will have a negative impact of the historic character of the building and setting. Thus, the proposed mechanical units shall be minimally visible as stated in the Secretary of The Interior.

BUILDING E:

Staff **supports** keeping the brick veneer and tiles for **Building E** for the following reasons:

1. As per the Secretary of the Interior, identifying, retaining, and preserving masonry features that are important in defining the overall historic character of the building (such as walls, brackets, railings, cornices, window and door surrounds, steps, and columns) and decorative ornament and other details, such as tooling and bonding patterns, coatings, and color is recommended. Therefore, retaining and preserving the facade of the building will not diminish its historic character.
2. The City of Laredo Historic Urban Design Guidelines states storefronts should not be altered or obscured. Therefore, keeping the facade of the building will not alter the building historic integrity.

COURTYARD:

Staff **supports** the new construction and the proposed privacy wall for the **Courtyard** for the following reasons:

1. As per the City of Laredo Historic Urban Guidelines, new construction should appear similar in mass and scale to historic structures found traditional in the area. Therefore, the proposed new construction will be similar and complement the historic environment.
2. New construction of buildings should appear similar to width and height to those seen historically, as per the City of Laredo Historic Urban Guidelines. The proposed new construction will be similar in width and height and will not obstruct the historic character of the buildings in the area.
3. As per the Secretary of the Interior, new additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction will not destroy historic materials, features, and spatial relationships that characterize the property. The proposed new construction will not diminish the historic materials, features, and environment. The proposed materials for the new construction conform with the existing historic materials.
4. 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, as per the Secretary of the Interior. The proposed new construction will protect the property's historic integrity and will not deter the historic setting. Also, the proposed new construction will not resemble the existing historic buildings and will be distinguishable from the existing historic buildings.

5. The proposed materials being used are compatible with the existing materials on the buildings.
6. It is recommended when installing a protective fence that it be as unobtrusive as possible, as per the Secretary of the Interior.

Staff Comments Regarding Building Care:

1. Any cleaning should be conducted with the gentlest care.
2. Power washing of historic masonry should be used in moderate amounts of pressure. Pressure may not exceed 200-400 psi.
3. A small area of the building should be tested for power washing to determine the historic masonry will not be damaged.
4. Before any painting of the structure, the building should be thoroughly dried out.
5. Highly vapor-permeable paint should be used to prevent spalling and interior mold.
6. Any repairs to the existing buildings should follow the Secretary of the Interior guidelines regarding masonry materials.
 - As per the Secretary of the Interior, identifying, retaining, and preserving masonry features that are important in defining the overall historic character of the building, such as walls, and decorative ornament and other details, such as tooling and bonding patterns, coatings, and color is recommended. The repairing of the existing walls will preserve and retain the historic character.
7. Any work pertaining to repairing and replacing materials on the existing structures shall use the same material or similar material to match the existing structures without diminishing their historic character and maintain their historic integrity.

Staff General Comments:

1. Any improvements which are approved by the Historic District Landmark Board shall also comply with all Building Code requirements and other regulations as provided in the Laredo Development Code.
2. Approval by the Historic District Landmark Board does not guarantee approval of a building permit or any other permit which may be required.
3. It is recommended that all existed improvements utilize the following resources as a guide:
 1. The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings
 2. City of Laredo Historic Urban Design Guidelines
 3. City of Laredo Historic Preservation Plan
4. No other improvements, changes to the building, site or new construction on the property shall be permitted without prior review and approval by staff and/or Historic District Landmark Board, to meet compliance.
5. As per the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and Illustrated Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings, all proposed scope of work should be physically and visually compatible to the original materials and features of the historical structure.

Attachments

Maps

Narrative

Changes to Scope of Work

Site Plan

Elevations & Material List

Material List

3D Renderings

Photos
