



Project Name/Address: 739 (741) Williamson Street

Application Type: Certificate of Appropriateness for new development and advisory recommendation for land division in a historic district

Legistar File ID # [34796](#)

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Summary

Project Applicant/Contact: Stephen Mar-Pohl, InSite Consulting Architects

Requested Action: The Applicant is requesting a Certificate of Appropriateness for the new development and an advisory recommendation for the land division.

Background Information

Parcel Location: The subject site is located in the Third Lake Ridge Historic District.

Relevant Landmarks Ordinance Sections:

33.19(5)(i)1. Review proposed land divisions and subdivision plats of landmark sites and properties in Historic Districts to determine whether the proposed lot sizes negatively impact the historic character of significance of a landmark or landmark site and whether the proposed lot sizes are compatible with adjacent lot sizes and maintain the general lot size pattern of the Historic District. The Landmarks Commission review shall be advisory to the Plan Commission.

33.19(11)(h) Guideline Criteria for New Development in the Third Lake Ridge Historic District - Parcels Zoned for Residential Use.

1. Any new structure shall be evaluated according to all criteria listed in Sec. 33.19(11)(f).
2. The directional expression of any new structure shall be compatible with those of the buildings and environment within its visually related area.
3. The materials, patterns and textures of any new structure shall be compatible with those of the buildings and environment within its visually related area.
4. The landscape plan of any new structure shall be compatible with that of the buildings and environment within its visually related area.

33.19(11)(f) Guideline Criteria for new Development in the Third Lake Ridge Historic District - Parcels Zoned for Commercial Use.

1. Any new structures shall be evaluated according to both of the criteria listed in Sec. 33.01(11)(d); that is, compatibility of gross volume and height.
2. The rhythm of solids and voids in the street facade(s) of any new structure shall be compatible with the buildings within its visually related area.
3. The materials used in the street facade(s) of any new structure shall be compatible with those used in the buildings and environment within its visually related area.
4. The design of the roof of any new structure shall be compatible with those of the buildings and environment within its visually related area.

5. The rhythm of building masses and spaces created by the construction of a new structure shall be compatible with the existing rhythm of masses and spaces for those sites within its visually related area.

33.19 (11)(d) Guideline Criteria for New Development in the Third Lake Ridge Historic District - Parcels Zoned for Manufacturing Use.

1. The gross volume of any new structure shall be visually compatible with the buildings and environment within its visually related area.
2. The height of any new structure shall be visually compatible with the buildings and environment within its visually related area.

Analysis and Conclusion

The current property is a through-lot with a residence located toward the Jenifer Street side. The applicant is proposing to subdivide the site in order to create a lot for the residence on Jenifer Street (Lot 2) and a lot for the proposed apartment building on Williamson Street (Lot 1). The map of the Third Lake Ridge Historic District is attached for comparison of lot sizes in the historic district.

The Landmarks Commission approved the COA for the building at 740 Jenifer at the meeting on July 14 and received an Informational Presentation for the new development and land division for 739 (741) Williamson at the same meeting.

The applicant is requesting a land division recommendation and a COA for new development in the historic district.

The north side of Williamson Street is zoned Traditional Shopping Street (TSS). The south side of Williamson Street is zoned Traditional Residential (TR-V1). Each side of the street has a specific and consistent character and related scale. Because the proposed development does not meet the TR-V1 zoning district standards, the applicant is proposing to rezone the property to Planned Development (PD).

The visually related area (VRA) map is attached to this report. While the applicant provided information related to the buildings on the shared block face (5 properties), there are numerous other buildings (11 properties) in the VRA that are not addressed in the submission materials.

Based on the need for more information, staff does not feel they can make a full analysis of whether the proposal meets the standards; however, based on the submission materials and staff's knowledge of the area, the following comments are offered for applicant and Commission consideration.

A brief discussion of the new residential development standards 33.19(11)(h) follows:

1. See Sec. 33.19(11)(f) discussion below.
2. The general directional expression of the proposed building massing is compatible with the directional expression of the buildings within its VRA. The material selections also affect the directional expression of the building and in this case the reclaimed wood siding is proposed to be mounted in a vertical orientation which is not appropriate in the historic district and results in the appearance of increased height.
3. The materials, patterns and textures of the proposed building are generally compatible with other buildings on the block face; however, the reclaimed wood siding orientation is not appropriate. In addition, the extensive exposure of poured concrete on the front elevation (at the elevator tower) is not compatible with other buildings. The use of a modern architectural style accentuates the differences between this building and others in the VRA.

4. The compatibility of the landscape plan is difficult to determine in this area. The submission materials indicate that appropriate plantings will be planted.

A brief discussion of standards 33.19(11)(f) follows:

1. See Sec. 33.01(11)(d) discussion below.
2. The rhythm of solids and voids in the street facade(s) of the proposed building is generally compatible with the other buildings in the VRA.
3. See comments above.
4. The design of the roof of the proposed building is generally compatible with those of the buildings in the VRA; however, the roof design is less compatible with the adjacent residential buildings on the south side of the street. The use of a modern architectural style and roof form accentuates the differences between this building and others on the south side of the street. This standard relates to four sides of the building and the typical main roof type of the proposed building is flat compared to the pitched main roofs of the majority of the buildings in the VRA.
5. The submission materials show a graphic where the rhythm of the proposed building masses and spaces is compatible with adjacent buildings in the VRA; however, this relies heavily on the success of the green wall on the concrete elevator tower to visually recede as the 5' set back of that element is minimal. Assuming the green wall is not installed or cannot maintain the desired appearance, the building is not compatible with the rhythm of masses and spaces. This standard relates to four sides of the building and from the rear (east elevation), the building is not compatible with the rhythm of masses and spaces.

A brief discussion of standards 33.19(11)(d) follows:

1. The gross volume of the proposed building is mathematically larger than the buildings in the visually related area (VRA) on the south side of the street. While the articulation and change in materials breaks up the elevations toward a more compatible visual appearance, the building reads as one mass. The proposed green wall system is a good additive solution to disguise the concrete material and provide a visual break, but it should not be relied upon to achieve the standard for gross volume or any other standard.

Staff has suggested that the property owner investigate ways to eliminate the parking so that the building form is not tied to the largest footprint allowed on the site to accommodate turning radiuses and parking clearances. Removing the parking may allow for the first floor level to be used for living space which may allow the volume to be reduced and for the further articulation of the massing.

Staff has also suggested that the property owner consider two "walk up buildings" or two "three flats" which would be compatible with the character of the historic district and provide a space between the individual buildings.

2. The height of the proposed building is taller than the buildings in the VRA on the south side of the street. The height is held back from the street face through the use of step backs and porches. Given a modified volume, the height may be compatible.

Recommendation

Staff believes the proposed lot sizes are compatible with adjacent lot sizes and maintain the general lot size pattern of the historic district and suggests that the Landmarks Commission provide a similar recommendation to the Plan Commission.

Based on the need for more information to provide an accurate review of the project against the standards for granting a Certificate of Appropriateness for new construction in the historic district, staff cannot conclude that the standards are met at this time and recommends that the Commission refer the request to allow the applicant to provide the VRA information and address the issues discussed in this staff report.