

Legislation Text

File #: 21-1205, **Version:** 1

PRESENTER:

Caleb Chance Gasparek
Historic Preservation Officer

SUBJECT:

HST21-378 Consideration of a Certificate of Alteration for the construction of a rooftop bar and restaurant at 125 N. Castell St., 204 W. San Antonio St., and 214 W. San Antonio St., located within the Downtown Historic District.

DEPARTMENT: Planning & Development Services

COUNCIL DISTRICTS IMPACTED: District 5

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

The applicant is requesting a Certificate of Alteration to construct a rooftop bar and restaurant onto the existing structures at 125 N. Castell St. (outside of the historic district), 204 W. San Antonio St. (Seguin Beauty School), and 214 W. San Antonio St. (Red Stag Building). Additionally, a sign is proposed on the corner of the Red Stag building at W. San Antonio and Castell.

The existing fire escape on Castell St. will be expanded to allow rooftop access. A metal and glass railing will surround the portion of the rooftop where customers would gather. Shielded metal lamps are also proposed below the railing at the Red Stag rooftop section.

On the roof itself a bar, stage area, and staircase leading from the 2nd to 3rd story is proposed. Both the rooftop bar and stage area are towards the rear of the building in order to lessen the visual impact of the additions. The rooftop bar will be most visible from Castell Ave. though existing trees, which the applicant is keeping, shield some of it from view.

Towards 125 N. Castell Ave. a rear staircase is proposed as well as an elevator to reach the 2nd story. There is a shed-like addition that is proposed directly adjacent to the proposed bar area on the Red Stag Building. 125 N. Castell Ave. is outside of the Downtown Historic District though will attach to both 204 and 214 W. San Antonio.

HISTORIC CONTEXT:

The Comal Appraisal District indicates the building was constructed in 1893. During the late 1800's and early 1900's the building was known as the B. E. Voelcker building, named after Bruno Voelcker, a descendent of New Braunfels founder Julius Voelcker. The building was known as an impressive example of the Italianate architectural style.

Sanborn maps indicate that 204 W. San Antonio was originally constructed of masonry with a wooden wraparound porch. Mr. Voelcker ran a drug store out of the building, though there was also a garment factory and a telegraph office. By 1912 the building had expanded to include 214 W. San Antonio. By 1922 the building housed a variety store, a clothing store, a butcher, and a pool hall.

Sometime between 1930 and 1946, 204 and 214 W. San Antonio St. were “modernized” stripping the buildings of many of the Italianate architectural details and cladding the building in stucco. The wraparound porch had also been removed by this time.

Both 204 and 214 W. San Antonio St. were surveyed by HHM of Austin and the Texas Historical Commission in the late 2000’s. The survey’s give an estimated constructed date of 1940, though there is no indication in the City’s records that these dates are accurate. No demolition permit could be found for either building. The buildings were likely stripped of their architectural details and modernized around 1940. Both the HHM survey and the THC survey indicate that neither building is eligible for individual landmark status, but they are contributing structures to the Downtown Historic District.

ISSUE:

A Certificate of Alteration is required for any alteration to a landmarked property or a property within a local historic district.

FISCAL IMPACT:

Approval of a Certificate of Alteration waives all permit fees associated with the building permit. The applicant has indicated they will pursue a tax freeze on the property for improvements made at a future date once invoices and receipts have been received.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends approval of the Certificate of Alteration based on criteria 9 and 10 of Chapter 66-58 Criteria for approval of an alteration certificate.

9) Contemporary design for alterations and additions to existing properties shall not be discouraged when such alterations and additions do not destroy significant historical, architectural, or cultural material, and such design is compatible with the size, scale, color, material, and character of the property, neighborhood, or environment.

Most of the defining characteristics of the building were lost when the building was modernized. However, the new additions are setback from the public right of way in order to minimize visual impact. The expansion of the fire escape staircase is also a requirement of fire code.

10) Wherever possible, new additions or alterations to buildings, structures, objects, or sites shall be done in such a manner that if such additions or alterations were to be removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the building, structure, object, or site would be unimpaired.

The facades of 204 and 214 W. San Antonio St. are largely unaffected by the additions being made. Along Castell St. the bar area will be visible to some degree, though arguably it is positioned in such a place that is tertiary to the building’s primary façade.

ATTACHMENTS:

- A. Location Map
- B. Application
- C. Submittal Documents
- D. Supplemental Documents

E. Sec. 66-58 Criteria for Approval of an Alteration Certificate