

STAFF REPORT
for
FEBRUARY 5, 2020 HRC MEETING

Case #: COA2020-012
Staff: Heather M. Bratland

Applicant: Keith Wales Jr., AIA

LOCATION

District: West End Historic Overlay District #104
Street: 421 Summit Avenue
Building: Office Building
Status: Noncontributing
Local Historic
Landmark#: n/a

REQUEST(S)

- Building rehabilitation and rooftop addition

APPLICABLE SECTIONS OF DESIGN REVIEW GUIDELINES

West End Historic Overlay District Design Review Guidelines
(Please refer to the applicable sections of the *Guidelines*, as detailed in the staff comments.)

PROJECT DESCRIPTION/ELEMENTS

Please refer to the information provided with the application.

STAFF COMMENTS

Per the *West End Historic Overlay District Report*, "This award-winning two-story brick and glass office building was designed by the architectural firm of Lashmit, James, Brown, and Pollack as their office." It was built in 1957. The proposed project includes the following elements:

1. Replacement of the existing storefront at the first floor and window at the second floor with fixed Kawneer EnCORE Framing System storefront windows and Kawneer Thermal Entrances, including removal of the louvers on the second floor window;
2. Creation of four new window openings at the second floor to install fixed Kawneer EnCORE Framing System storefront windows;
3. Creation of five new window openings at the second floor to install operable Kawneer EnCORE Framing System storefront windows;
4. Painting the existing brickwork;
5. Installation of two wall-mounted bike racks on the east elevation;
6. Construction of a rooftop addition, which will be stepped back from the perimeter of the building at the east and south facades; and
7. Renovations to the existing parking area to remove curb and sidewalk, add a bike rack, and plant a dogwood tree.

STAFF FINDINGS

Commission staff finds that the project is not incongruous with the character of the West End Historic Overlay District because:

- 1) The addition of windows, fixed and operable, to the second floor of the building will better integrate the building with the West End, where large expanses of masonry unbroken by windows are

uncommon and vertical louvers screening windows are unprecedented. Instead of the upper floors of the building turning away from the street as a private retreat, they will address the street and bring the building into conversation with the neighborhood. The simple, rectilinear, aluminum and glass windows, arranged asymmetrically without any surrounding trim or embellishment, are compatible with and characteristic of the midcentury Modern style of the building. Replacement of the existing windows and storefront will maintain its appearance and architectural integrity. (*Noncontributing Structures*, West End Guidelines 1 and 3)

- 2) Although the Guidelines do not permit painting of historic brick because of the great potential to harm or destroy soft, historic brick, the same concerns do not apply to the modern, hard-fired brick of which this building is comprised. Painting the brick is a treatment compatible with the style and character of the building. (*Noncontributing Structures*, West End Guideline 3)
- 3) The third floor addition is differentiated from the existing building but compatible with it in style and character. The flat-roofed addition replicates the rectilinear massing of the existing structure and uses the same brick on its west and north facades, where it will continue the existing building line vertically. However, on the east and south facades, where the building is adjacent to Summit and 4 ½ Streets, the addition is stepped back to recede from public view, reducing its visual impact from the corner. These facades are clad in a mixture of flush fiber cement panels and fixed storefront windows and doors that replicate those on the floor below. This addition will read as a contemporary alteration to the office building because of its footprint, extensive use of glazing, and the use of fiber cement panels. Nevertheless, it will blend with it stylistically through the repetition of rectilinear forms, the use of brickwork, aluminum framed windows, and the flat roof. (*Noncontributing Structures*, West End Guideline 3)
- 4) Removal of the sidewalk and curb inside the private parking area will have no impact on the character of the property. Planting of a dogwood tree will bring welcome vegetation to the parking area and visually break up the expanses of hard surfaces behind the building. (*Parking – Nonresidential*, West End Guideline 3)
- 5) The bike racks that will be installed in the parking lot and on the east façade are small accessory features that do not compromise the integrity of the building or lot. (*Trash Containers, Dumpsters, and Recreational Facilities*, West End Guideline 3)

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Based on the preceding findings, staff recommends that the Commission approve COA2020-012 at the Office Building, located at 421 Summit Street, within the West End Historic Overlay District (PIN# 6825-86-7809.00), with the following conditions:

- 1) The applicant shall receive, prior to commencement of the work, all other required permits or permissions from governmental agencies;
- 2) Commission staff shall review and approve any revisions or deviations to any portion of the as-submitted work, that qualifies as a minor work, prior to commencement of that portion of the project; and
- 3) The applicant shall submit the Certificate of Appropriateness Request for Certification of Completed Work form and photo documentation of the completed project to HRC staff within ten (10) days of its completion.