

NEW ORLEANS HISTORIC DISTRICT LANDMARKS COMMISSION
CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT HISTORIC DISTRICT LANDMARKS COMMISSION

LaToya Cantrell
MAYOR

CITY OF NEW ORLEANS

Bryan Block
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Monday, July 25, 2022

Honorable City Council
1300 Perdido Street
New Orleans, LA 70112

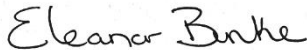
Re: 722 Cadiz Street

Ladies and Gentlemen:

Attached, please find a report regarding an appeal of the Historic District Landmarks Commission's decision to deny an application to demolish the Contributing-rated structure at 722 Cadiz Street.

Should you have any questions or require any additional information, please feel free to contact me at your earliest convenience.

Sincerely,



Eleanor Burke
Deputy Director





722 Cadiz Street is a Contributing rated structure located in the Uptown, partial-control, local historic district.

HDLC Guidelines:

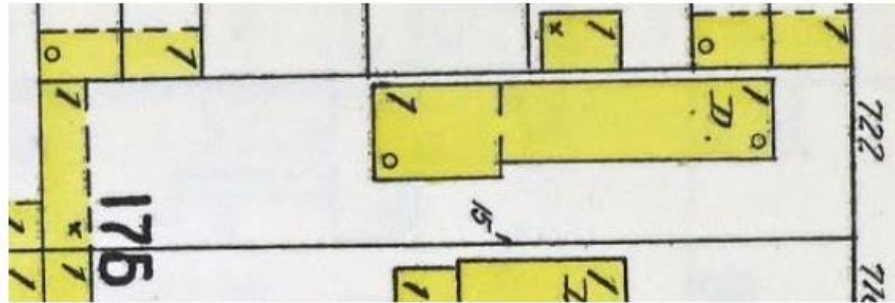
Section 12, Pages 23-24 of the Guidelines for New Construction, Additions and Demolition states that the demolition of all or portions of historic resources within a local Historic District or Landmark site are considered drastic actions, since they alter the character of the area. Once historic resources or buildings that contribute to the heritage of the community are destroyed, it is generally impossible to reproduce their design, texture, materials, details and their special character and interest in the neighborhood. When reviewing demolition applications at properties located within a Historic District or at a Landmark site, the HDLC uses the following criteria in its evaluations:

- The historic or architectural significance of the building or structure as designated by its “rating”: Contributing.
- The importance of the building or structure to the tout ensemble of the area: FEMA survey and Sanborn map research indicates the original building was likely constructed between 1890

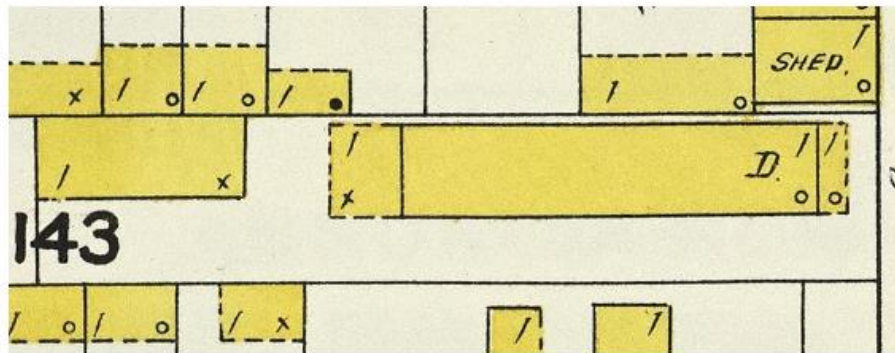
and 1900 and it first appears on the 1896 Sanborn map as a one-story, single-family residential building located closely to the right side property line. The building appears to have been altered and expanded periodically over the years and alternated between residential and commercial use. However, it appears that it has retained much of its original type, scale, massing, roof form, and footprint to this day with the exception of the front porch which may be a later addition after the 1951 Sanborn map.

- The alternatives to relocation that have been explored by the applicant: None are known.
- The special character and aesthetic interest that the building or structure adds to the local Historic District: The one-story residential building appears to have had much of its original exterior architectural features and details removed, altered or concealed over the years. For example, most of the windows appear to have been replaced with inappropriate aluminum or vinyl windows and it is unclear if the openings are the original size and locations. The siding appears to be aluminum and it is unclear if original wood weatherboards are still present underneath. The current front porch also appears to be a more recent addition, although detailed in a Craftsman style.
- The difficulty or impossibility of reproducing such a building or structure because of its design, texture, material or detail: Based on the size of the building's footprint and minimal exterior architectural elements, it would likely not be more expensive or difficult to reproduce the building today rather than maintaining it in its current form. It is not readily apparent what percentage of original material may be salvaged during a renovation. Using **equivalent** materials in contemporary construction may be costly, but the overall form and detailing is relatively simple and could be replicated.
- The condition of the building or structure: HDLC Inspector Alex Nassar performed an interior/exterior visual inspection on June 23, 2022 and determined the building to be in good condition. On the exterior, the building walls appear straight and plumb with no signs of structural defect. The masonry piers do not appear to be settling or leaning on the perimeter and overall the foundation appears to be in good condition. The front three rooms of the building are in good condition and likely constitute the original historic building, with the rear additions being lower in header height. There is only about 18" between the right side wall and the property line where an adjacent accessory structure limits access to this side of the building. On the interior, the building is in good condition, occupied and well maintained. There is no evidence of water intrusion or termites. However, the floor surface of the front three rooms is not level and slopes toward the right side property line. Leveling the building would be very difficult due to the limited access on that side. The full inspection report is included below for reference.

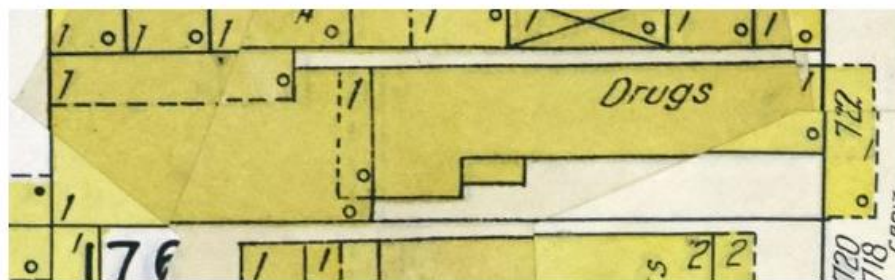
Sanborn Maps:



1896



1909



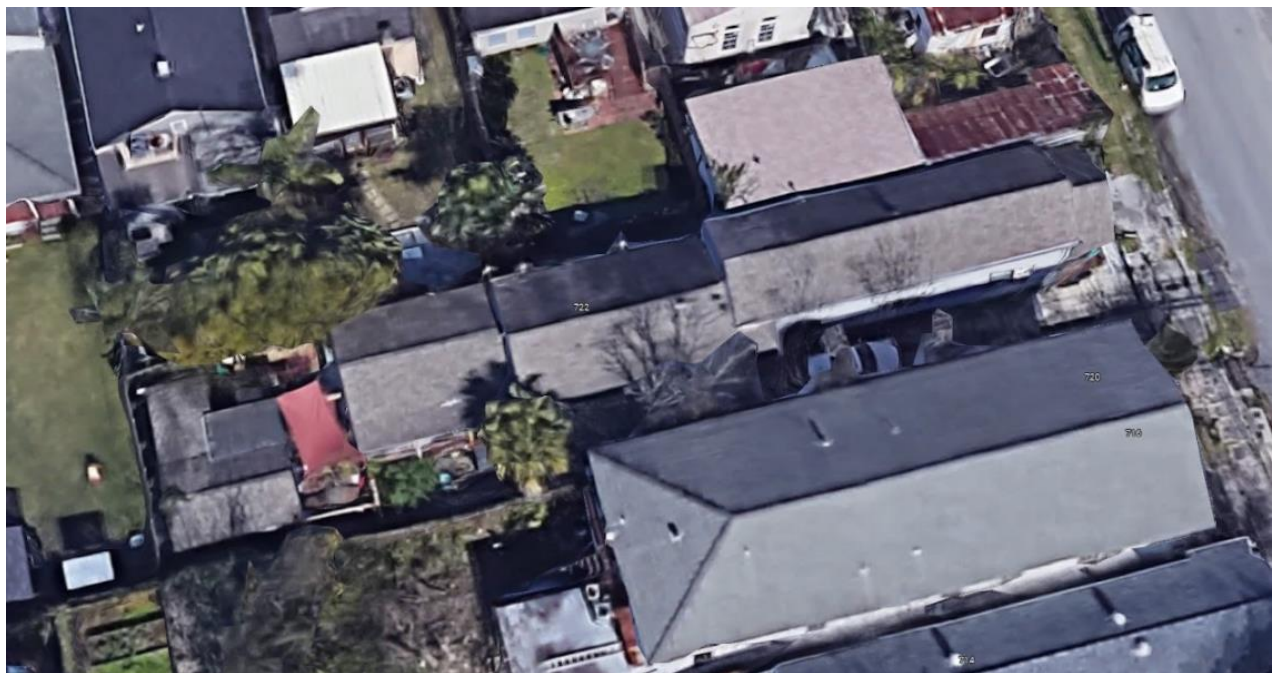
1951

Staff Recommendations:

While the original building appears to have been modified and altered over the years and much of its original exterior details were removed or concealed, the approximately 125+ year old structure continues to contribute its type, scale, massing, roof form and footprint to the tout ensemble of the surrounding historic district. It is understandable that the limited 18 inches of access on the right side of the building will make necessary repairs and desired changes more difficult, however, it would be inappropriate to demolish it entirely to accommodate a new construction given the age of the building and the good condition of the structure today. Based on this, and because there are alternatives to full demolition that could be explored by the applicant - such as a more limited partial demolition of the non-original rear portions and new rear addition off-set from the property line - Staff recommended denial of the demolition application. At their hearing of July 6, 2022 the Commission reviewed the Staff report, the inspection photos and the Applicant's testimony. The Commission then voted to deny the demolition of the building.













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Bryan D. Block
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

722 Cadiz St. Demolition Request Inspection Results

- An exterior and interior visual inspection of the structure took place on June 23, 2022.

Building description:

- The occupied raised single family residential building appeared to be in good condition.
- The structure had a pier and beam foundation, wood framed superstructure with aluminum siding.
- The roof is covered with architectural asphalt shingles that appeared to be in good condition.

Exterior:

- The building is covered in aluminum siding that appeared intact throughout.
- There is less than 3'-0" of space between this building and right property line, with a neighboring accessory structure built up to the property line. This restricts access to the right side of the building.
- The front three rooms are in good condition and likely constitute the original building.
- There appears to have been a series of 2-3 rear additions over the life of the building. In these areas of the building, the ceiling height is lower than the front three rooms.
- The original windows have been replaced throughout with historically inappropriate aluminum single pane windows.
- The masonry piers do not appear to be settling or leaning on the perimeter of the building. Overall, the building foundation appears to be in good condition.
- The exterior walls are straight and plumb and do not show signs of structural defect.

Interior:

- The interior of the building is in good condition, occupied, and well maintained.
- There is no evidence of water intrusion or wood destroying insects.
- The interior floor plan has been modified.
- The floor surface of the front three rooms is not level and has a consistent slope towards the right-side property line. Levelling the building would be very difficult if not impossible due to the lack of access to that side of the building.

Overall, the building shows no signs of neglect, wood destroying insects, water intrusion or vegetation damage. The building is located on the site in a manner that is not conducive to proper maintenance or reshoring.

HDLC Inspector Alex Nassar



Secondary buildings can contribute to the streetscape.

SECONDARY BUILDINGS AND STRUCTURES

Many properties in New Orleans include more than a principal building. In most instances, secondary buildings, structures and landscape features are also present and contribute significantly to the overall property, setting and historic context. (Refer to the *Guidelines for Site Elements* for regarding landscape features.) Secondary buildings or structures in the City of New Orleans most typically include but are not limited to service or accessory quarters, sheds and garages.

Secondary buildings and structures can contribute significantly to our understanding of New Orleans' history and character. Although most of the City's secondary buildings were designed to be utilitarian, in many cases buildings associated with residences, such as service or accessory quarters and garages, were constructed to be complementary to the property's principal building. These similarities can include the building form, materials and simplified detailing.

In general, a secondary building or structure is historically or architecturally significant if it was:

- Constructed at the same time as the principal building on the site
- Constructed after the principal building on the site but was used for a significant function
- Representative of an important architectural design or construction method
- Associated with an important event or person related to the property
- Built incorporating distinctive characteristics of form, style, materials or detailing or shares those characteristics with other buildings on the site

The HDLC reviews the alteration, construction or demolition of any secondary building or structure that is completely or partially visible from a public right-of-way.

DEMOLITION OF SECONDARY BUILDINGS AND STRUCTURES

In some instances, secondary buildings can become functionally obsolete on a property, such as service quarters. Before considering demolition of Significant or Contributing secondary buildings, it is recommended that alternative uses that maintain the historic character be explored. Service quarters have successfully been converted into additional living space or can be used for storage. In addition, secondary buildings can be relocated on a property or to new sites within New Orleans.

There are some cases in which contemporary secondary buildings are not compatible with the historic property or local Historic District and are not appropriate, such as some pre-manufactured metal garages or garden sheds. If demolition of non-compatible secondary buildings is considered, it is recommended that it be conducted as sensitively as possible. (Refer to *Demolition*, Page 12-23.)

Because significant and historic secondary buildings and structures can contribute to the overall property, historic setting and streetscape, demolition or removal from the site is strongly discouraged and should be avoided. The demolition or relocation of Significant secondary buildings and structures is not permitted. The demolition of Contributing secondary buildings is considered on a case by case basis. In instances where there is no alternative to demolition, the HDLC will consider the relocation of Contributing secondary buildings and structures. (Refer to the *Relocation of Buildings and Structures*, Page 12-22.) The HDLC Executive Director may approve the demolition of Non Contributing secondary buildings under 1,000 square feet provided the demolition is deemed appropriate.



The secondary building to the rear is used as a residence.

RATINGS OF SECONDARY BUILDINGS AND STRUCTURES

To obtain the rating of a secondary building or structure, contact the HDLC at (504) 658-7040.

DEMOLITION

The demolition of all or portions of historic resources within a local Historic District or Landmark site are considered drastic actions, since they alter the character of the area. Once historic resources or buildings that contribute to the heritage of the community are destroyed, it is generally impossible to reproduce their design, texture, materials, details and their special character and interest in the neighborhood.

As a result, the HDLC rarely considers the demolition of Significant or Contributing buildings or structures within a local Historic District or on a Landmark site to be an appropriate option.

When reviewing demolition applications at properties located within a Full Control Historic District or at a Landmark site, the HDLC uses the following criteria in its evaluations:

- a. The historic or architectural significance of the building or structure as designated by its "rating";
- b. The importance of the building or structure to the tout ensemble of the area;
- c. The alternatives to demolition that have been evaluated and explored by the applicant;
- d. The special character and aesthetic interest that the building or structure adds to the local Historic District or Landmark site;
- e. The difficulty or impossibility of reproducing such a building or structure because of its design, texture, material or detail;
- f. The condition of the building or structure;
- g. The future utilization of the site; and
- h. The proposed mitigation measures such as, but not limited to, fencing, landscaping and maintenance contracts.

If the proposed demolition involves only a portion of a building or structure or if there are multiple buildings on a site, demolition applications must include a site plan that clearly shows the area proposed for demolition. The application should include details for the stabilization and protection of the remaining portion of a building or structure for partial demolition proposals. The HDLC may also require photographs or drawings of the existing building or structure as part of the application. If the applicant believes the building is structurally unsound or a hazard, they are encouraged to provide documentation of the unsound conditions prepared by a licensed structural engineer or architect. The only instances in which the HDLC Staff can approve demolition applications are when:

- The HDLC's Building Inspector indicates the building, monument or structure is in a state of imminent danger of collapse; or
- It is a Non-Contributing building or structure which is less than 1,000 square feet in area and its demolition is approved by the Executive Director of the HDLC.

All demolition Applications that do not meet the criteria for Staff review will be considered by the Commission at a public hearing. After initial review, the Commission typically requires demolition applications to lie over for 30 days. This allows further investigation by Staff and the Building Inspector, particularly as to the historic importance and current condition of the resource, and provides an opportunity for public comment.

If the Commission votes in favor of a proposed demolition, a Certificate of Appropriateness (CofA) will be issued for the work after all conditions of the Commission's approval have been met. No work may begin on a proposed demolition until a CofA has been issued by the Staff and the applicant has obtained all other necessary permits from the applicable City agencies including the Department of Safety and Permits.

HDLC DEMOLITION JURISDICTION

The HDLC's demolition jurisdiction varies depending whether the property is located within a Partial Control Historic District or a Full Control Historic District. (Refer to HDLC District Jurisdiction, Guidelines Introduction, Page 01-4.)

- **Partial Control Historic Districts:** In Partial Control Districts in which the HDLC's jurisdiction is limited to demolition review, the review criteria shall be limited to criteria a through f. The design of any proposed redevelopment will not be considered.
- **Full Control Historic Districts:** In Full Control Historic Districts, the HDLC has jurisdiction over the demolition and retains jurisdiction over alterations or new construction visible from a public way. The Commission strongly encourages the submission of redevelopment plans concurrently with Demolition Applications for all properties in Full Control Historic Districts.



The Isidore Newman House, constructed in 1890, designed by Thomas Sully, was demolished in 1972. Its demolition galvanized the organization of what is now known as the St. Charles Avenue Association, and the push for preservation ordinances to protect historic districts.

With the demolition of the St. Charles Hotel, New Orleans lost one of its most famous landmarks.



RELOCATION OF BUILDINGS AND STRUCTURES

THE HDLC REQUIRES:

- Detailed drawings for the redevelopment of the land to be cleared
- A site plan for the future site of the building or structure including all proposed site features such as fencing, walls, steps, walkways, driveways, parking and signage

THE HDLC RECOMMENDS:

- Selecting a site with similar characteristics as the original site
- Locating the building in a similar setting as the original site including orientation and distance from the roadway, and proximity to side yard setbacks, trees and other landscape features
- Relocating related resources and landscape features such as secondary buildings and structures, walls, fences, walkways, etc. to the new site to re-establish original relationships

THE HDLC DISCOURAGES:

- Relocation of Contributing buildings or structures
- Altering the historic spatial relationship between the relocated building and its surrounding features

THE HDLC PROHIBITS:

- Relocation of Significant buildings or structures

DEMOLITION

An act or process that results in one or more of the following at any time over a 5-year period: structural removal of more than 50% of the exterior wall area; removal of more than 50% of the roof structure as measured in plan view; or structural removal of more than 25% of the primary façade.

DEMOLITION BY NEGLECT AND HARDSHIP

Refer to *Guidelines Introduction*, Pages 01-14 and 01-15 for *Hardship Variances* and *Demolition by Neglect*.

DEMOLITION OF BUILDINGS AND STRUCTURE

THE HDLC RECOMMENDS:

- Evaluating the significance of the historic resources
- Exhausting all attempts to reuse a historic resource prior to considering demolition including:
 - Stabilization, weatherproofing and securing
 - Sale or transfer of property
 - Renovation or adaptive reuse
- Donation of salvageable materials such as windows, doors, hardware, shutters, bricks, and siding to an architectural salvage company for use in other projects rather than disposal in landfills

Building or Structure Relocation or Demolition Review

Demolish a building or structure that is in imminent danger of collapse

S C N HDLC Staff review.

Relocate or demolish a building, structure or addition over 1,000 square feet

S C N Commission review.

Relocate or demolish a building, structure, or addition under 1,000 square feet

S C Commission review.

N HDLC Staff review.

This material is based upon work assisted by a grant from the Department of the Interior, National Park Service. Any opinions, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this material are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Department of the Interior.

Prepared by Dominique M. Hawkins, AIA, LEED AP of Preservation Design Partnership, LLC in Philadelphia, PA.