

# Staff Report of Findings

## Application for Design Review - Staff Report of Findings

**Property Address:** The Chancery Building, 1023 W Riverside Avenue  
**Applicant:** Chad Schmidt, Architect; Doug Yost, VP Centennial Real Estate, Inc  
**Hearing Date:** 1/19/2022  
**Type of Work:** Demolition of Contributing Structure in National Register Historic District;  
Application for approval of new construction replacement structure

### **FINDINGS OF FACT:**

1.) The Landmarks Commission has the authority to review this proposal for a Certificate of Appropriateness under SMC 17D.100.230 (Demolition Permits for Historic Structures in the Downtown Boundary Area and National Register Historic Districts).

- The commission has the authority to review the work under:

*No demolition permits for structures that are listed or eligible to be listed on the National or Local Register of Historic Places located in the area shown on [Map 17D.100.230-M1](#), Downtown Boundary Area, and in all National Register Historic Districts shall be issued unless the structure to be demolished is to be replaced with a replacement structure that is approved by the commission under the following criteria:*

- A. *The replacement structure shall have a footprint square footage equal to or greater than the footprint square footage of the landmark structure to be demolished. The replacement structure must also have a floor area ratio equal to or greater than 60% of that of the landmark structure to be demolished. The square footage of the footprint may be reduced:*
  1. *to accommodate an area intended for public benefit, such as public green space and/or public art;*
  2. *if the owner submits plans in lieu for review and approval by the City's design review board subject to applicable zoning and design guidelines; and*
  3. *if the replacement structure is, in the opinion of the HPO and the commission, and in consultation with the Design Review Board, compatible with the historic character of the Downtown Boundary Area or National Register Historic District, as appropriate.*
- B. *Any replacement structure under this section shall satisfy all applicable zoning and design guidelines, and shall be considered by the commission within thirty days of the commission's receipt of an application for a certificate of appropriateness concerning the building for which a demolition permit is sought.*
- C. *A building permit for a replacement structure under this section must be accepted, processed, and issued prior to the issuance of the demolition permit. In the alternative, the owner may obtain a demolition permit prior to the issuance of the building permit if the owner demonstrates to the satisfaction of the director of building services, in consultation with the HPO, that the owner has a valid and binding commitment or commitments for financing sufficient for the replacement use subject only to unsatisfied contingencies that are beyond the control of the owner other than another commitment for financing; or has other financial resources that are sufficient (together with any valid and binding commitments for financing) and available for such purpose.*

***\*\*Demolition CoAs are only valid for 3 months, therefore, if the CoA for the replacement building is approved; the demolition CoA should be reviewed administratively after the building permits are issued. An administrative CoA will take no longer than 24 hours to complete.***

2. The Chancery at 1023 W Riverside is a contributing property within the Riverside Avenue National Register Historic District and is therefore subject to a Certificate of Appropriateness for both the demolition of the structure and the replacement building.

- The Riverside Avenue National Register Historic District was listed in January of 1976.

3. The Management Standards for Spokane Register properties and districts are the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings. Staff recommendation is based on the Standards as listed below.

### **PROPOSED WORK:**

The project is for the demolition of a 1924 "primary" contributing property in the Riverside Avenue National Register Historic District known as the Chancery Building. The SHLC is also tasked with review of the replacement structure proposed for the site.

If there is a replacement structure that meets applicable criteria, the SHLC must allow for the demolition of a contributing structure within a National Register Historic District. There are provisions for denying a Certificate of Appropriateness for demolition of a Spokane Register listed property or contributing structure within a Spokane Register Historic District, but not for those in a National Register District in which an appropriate replacement structure is proposed.

### **STAFF COMMENTARY/BACKGROUND:**

- The proposed "Spokane Apartment Building" was submitted for review in December of 2021. Staff from the Historic Preservation Office asked the Design Review Committee and Alternates to that committee to fill out the "Compatibility Scoresheet" for new construction in historic districts modified from the Browne's Addition Standards and Guidelines. A Design Review Committee meeting (5 members did not constitute a quorum) was held virtually on January 6, 2022 at 4 pm to discuss the scoresheets and design of the new construction. That discussion helped shape the staff report.
- The Compatibility Scoresheet was a good starting point for discussion of the compatibility and appropriateness of the Spokane Apartment Building submittal. (Scoresheet compilation attached)

### **HISTORY OF THE PROPERTY (From the 1976 NR Historic District Nomination):**

*Roman Catholic Chancery Building (originally Western Union Life Insurance Building), W1023 Riverside Avenue. At the easternmost end of the district, on the south side of Riverside Avenue, is the building completed in 1924 at a cost of \$260,000 as the home office of Western Union Life Insurance Company. An example of the Second Renaissance Revival Style with a Neo-Classical portico, the building was designed by prominent local architect, G.A. Pehrson, who here made use of glazed white terra cotta, the facing material he consistently favored. Essentially H-shaped in plan with a long east wing and a longitudinal central pavilion and portico, the three-story, steel-framed building is of reinforced concrete and brick masonry construction. Frontage on Riverside Avenue is approximately 130 feet. Brick was used for exterior facing on the rear and east walls which were originally unexposed. ...*

*The shell of a predecessor Western Union Life Insurance building oriented longitudinally on the west corner lot was incorporated into the new building. The earlier, two and a half story, H-shaped building had been constructed of brick masonry in 1910 according to an exceptionally interesting design in the Jacobethan Revival Style by Kirtland Cutter. With its patterned brick exterior and stepped dormer gables, it was set back from Riverside Avenue behind a low brick wall and a "Dutch" garden. Except for fenestration and the outline of the outer wall, there is little outward sign that the company's first specially-constructed office building was subsumed in the new construction and actually constitutes the main block of the expanded building. General contractor for the expanded building was Fred Phair. The new building was so designed that additional stories could be added to the flat roof as required, but no*

*further stories were superimposed before the property changed hands.*

*The ground story of north and east faces of the building is faced with rusticated terra cotta. Fenestration is regular, and bas reliefs decorate the spandrels. Second story windows are flat arched with keystones, and third story windows have segmental arch heads. The facades are capped with cornice and balustrade. The central pavilion of the principal façade on Riverside Avenue houses the lobby. Its three bays are set off by Ionic pilasters and festoons. Telescoping from the pavilion is a single-story vestibule in Doric temple form with peristyle. This flat-roofed feature is surmounted by balustrade and a shallow false gable intended for use as a title plaque.*

*The building is bordered by lawn, boxwood hedges and a low retaining wall on the north and east sides. Though offices have been remodeled throughout, the main public spaces of the building, the vestibule and the lobby, are essentially intact with their bronze fixtures, marble borders and dadoes, classical pilasters and marble cashier's counter.*

### **CURRENT SITE CONDITIONS:**

The Chancery Building is located on the eastern edge of the Riverside Avenue National Register Historic District on the southeast corner of Riverside and Madison. The historic district is located in a downtown environment and consists of commercial, religious, institutional, and residential uses. Most structures are of modest 3-4 stories in height, although there is variety in massing and scale within the district. The buildings along the north side of Riverside Avenue are primarily built out to the sidewalk with no setbacks, except for the 1972 constructed Riverfalls Tower which includes a drive-through and small plaza fronting Riverside. The south side of Riverside Avenue does have more varied setbacks with more vegetation, plantings and small walls/fences to separate buildings from the public right-of-way. Entrances tend to be dominated by one main entrance that is oriented to the street. Buildings consist of red brick, stone, and tile and are of high-quality materials and craftsmanship. Most buildings consist of one main color with one accent color. The buildings of the district are almost all symmetrical and follow classical architectural principles.

### **RELEVANT STANDARDS (Secretary of the Interior's Standards):**

**Standard Number 9: New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction shall not destroy historic materials that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible with the massing, size, scale, and architectural features to protect the historic integrity of the property and its environment.**

### **SITE DESIGN STANDARDS:**

1. **Context Compatibility** with overall district character; facing block fronts and adjacent buildings.

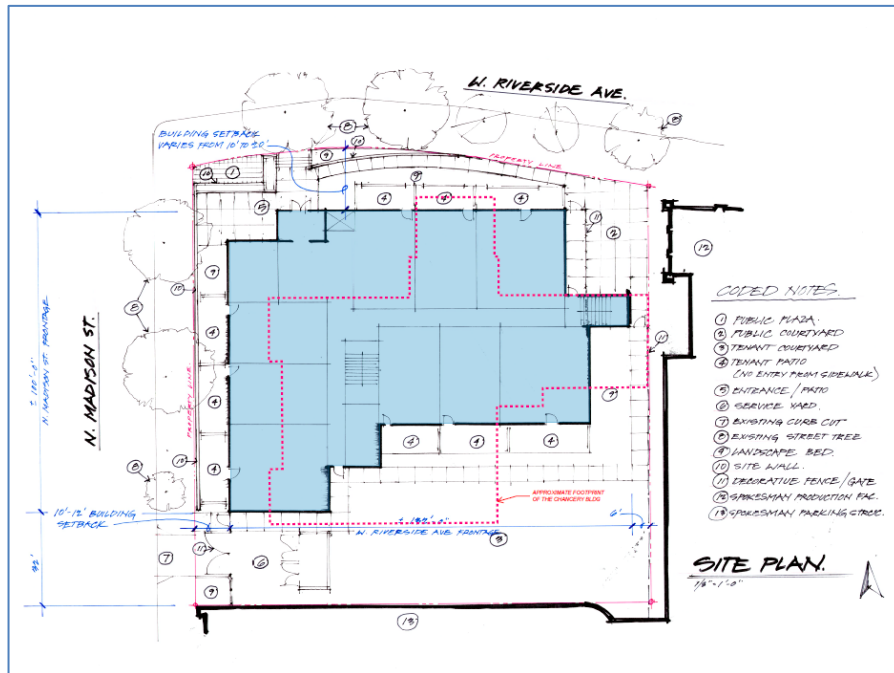
**Comment:** The proposed building's size, scale and form are consistent with the overall character of the district. The applicant did use some architectural cues from the facing block in terms of the building's composition and modeling. The buildings directly across from the Chancery have repeated patterns of column and window openings, this building does use a repeated pattern in the window openings. The setback and darkened 4th floor of the proposed building does take subtle cues from the Masonic Temple across the street, albeit with a contemporary interpretation.



2. Streetscape factors including maintaining common setback on block front; maintaining lot coverage patterns; maintaining rhythm and spacing of the block; and maintains a ground story at a common position.

**Comments:**

- The proposed new building does maintain a fairly common setback for properties along the south side of Riverside Avenue which consists of several properties with plantings and fencing between the building and the public right-of-way.
- The Spokane Apartment Building will take up more of the lot than the Chancery building as shown in the rendering below and will also reduce some of the setback from the sidewalk of the current (dashed outline represents the current Chancery):



- The proposed building does maintain the rhythm and spacing of the blockfront. It is located next to a building constructed in 1980 as a newspaper production facility, but is now a restaurant/bar/distillery. Next west is the Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Cathedral which has a prominent presence on the street, raised above the sidewalk by a grand stairway.
- The Spokane Apartment Building does have a main entrance to the sidewalk, but it also contains several doors on the ground level for tenant access to exterior terraces on both the front and side of the building. Rendering below shows the main entry as well as six additional doors – three per side – that are tenant doors. The only other building in the district that also has multiple exterior doors is the condominium development, Riverside Condominiums, at 1209-1225 W Riverside constructed in 1998 (pictured below).



3. Scale, massing and height. The question of scale asks if the proposed project maintains the scale of the district and to humans. The question of massing asks if the massing relates to historic patterns of dominant and secondary spaces; if large forms are modulated with horizontal and vertical breaks; and how the roof form relates to the building type and occupiable space. Finally, the question of height asks if the project avoids difference in height of more than two stories from its neighbors.

**Comments:**

- The proposed building is compatible with the district in scale both to the district as a whole and to humans.
- The proposed building's massing does relate to the historic patterns of the district, although it is done in a contemporary manner. Where the Chamber of Commerce building and Masonic Temple have a recessed area with a colonnade, the Spokane Apartment Building uses an extruded/floating portion of the building to give depth to the façade.



- The Spokane Apartment Building does contain modulation of both vertical and horizontal breaks.
- The flat roof is a common form in the district.
- The proposed building does not change the height from its neighbors by more than two stories. It is higher than the Chancery, but uses a recessed and darkened 4<sup>th</sup> floor to lessen the impact of the higher building.

4. Compatibility of orientation, design quality and presence. This section includes how the entrance is oriented; if there is evidence of traditional design principles employed by the architect; if the building is a compatible and well-designed presence; and finally, if it is a 360-degree design.

**Comments:**

- While the bulk of the buildings within the historic district employ the use of a central prominent entrance, this building does not. It does have a prominent entrance delineated by a differentiation in material (molded metal) and a protruding canopy on the western side of the front façade closest to the corner.
- The building design does include a distinct base, middle and top which is evident in other multi-story buildings in the district. The publicly visible elevations of the building are designed and relate to the whole.
- This building will certainly be recognizable as new construction within the district. It does not attempt to emulate historic buildings or employ common materials used at the time



most of the buildings in the district were constructed.

**5. Use of façade material, accents and color.** The section asks if materials used are found in the district or are contemporary equivalents; does the project use a primary façade material; does the project respect the “rule of five” in terms of total number of materials; and are materials used in a traditional manner. This information is also asked in terms of secondary facades and the change of materials at plane breaks such as vertical, story and bays. Finally, the section asks about the use of color: is one color dominant, is the dominant color a traditional color; is the color similar in value and saturation to context; and are secondary colors compatible with the dominant.

**Comments:**

- The materials commonly used in the district were brick, stone, and tile. The proposed building uses contemporary equivalents of stone in the Cordova Stone product – but lacks the use of other commonly found materials in the district. The proposed materials are mid-range construction materials such as formed metal panels, vinyl windows, aluminum storefronts, fiber cement wall panels, and dry design formed metal wall panels. The use of multiple materials on the building lessens its compatibility considering that nearly all other buildings in the district use one main material with one accent material. The applicant may wish to consider reducing the differing materials on the building to make it more compatible or using more traditional materials in place of those proposed.
- There are several different colors on the facades of the building. The Cordova Stone is one color, the fiber cement panels appear to be a slightly different color to the stone, the fourth floor seems to introduce a gray color in the pressed metal panels, and the dry design formed metal wall articulating the entrance is of a gold color. A simplification of the color palette may make the building more compatible with the district.

**6. Façade Design.** In this section, the project is reviewed based on its inclusion of elements of similar scale as the context; the avoidance of mixing disparate elements; whether or not the project has a degree of articulation similar to the context; if it has logical and compatible fenestration and finally, if it is designed to be a contemporary version of the building type.

**Comments:**

- Reviewing the inclusion of elements of similar scale to the rest of the district – the proposed Spokane Apartment Building does use a prominent entryway and repeating pattern on the front and side elevations with both fenestration and wall configuration. The northwest corner of the building does take cues from the Masonic Temple building in the non-centered entrance and prominent entryway. The Masonic Temple employs a two-story colonnade that runs the entire width of the building; the Spokane Apartment Building also employs elements that relate to the two central floors with a repeated design pattern of a similar scale.



- The Spokane Apartment Building uses proportion and rhythm to establish the

function of the building and make obvious the public entrance as opposed to the private terrace entrances for the garden level units. The fenestration patterns are logical and compatible to the facing block.

- The proposed design is visually contemporary and “of its time.” It does not attempt to mimic surrounding historic buildings, but employs basic architectural design principals to complement the surrounding district.

#### **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

**Replacement Structure:** Staff recommends that the proposed new construction is compatible with the historic district and should be **approved**. Elements such as color and use of materials may be simplified in a final design to make the building more compatible, but it still meets compatibility requirements as proposed.

**Demolition:** Staff recommends that the Certificate of Appropriateness for a demolition permit should be reviewed administratively **after** the building permit for the replacement structure is issued (if the Commission approves the replacement structure). The Spokane Municipal Code 17D.100.230 does not give the Spokane Historic Landmarks Commission the ability to deny demolition of a property that is not listed on the Spokane Register of Historic Places if a replacement building is reviewed by the Commission and approved as compatible. An administrative CoA generally takes less than 24 hours to complete. Demolition CoAs are only valid for 3 months per 17D.100.230D.

HPO Report – Megan Duvall  
Design Review Committee Review: none  
Landmarks Commission Review: Pending

Date: 1/10/2022  
Site Visit: n/a  
Hearing: 1/19/2022