

Staff Report of Findings

Application for Design Review - Staff Report of Findings

Property Address: 2314 West Second Avenue
Applicant: Rex Anderson, architect
Hearing Date: 9/16/2026
Type of Work: New construction in Browne's Addition Historic District

FINDINGS OF FACT:

- 1.) The Landmarks Commission has the authority to review this proposal for a Certificate of Appropriateness under SMC 17D.100.280 C (Browne's Addition Local Historic District Overlay Zone – Certificates of Appropriateness Review).
- 2.) The certificate of appropriateness review process for the Browne's Addition Local Historic District helps ensure any alterations to a building do not adversely affect that building's historic character and appearance, or that of the historic district. The process is conducted by the Spokane Historic Landmarks Commission as detailed in "*Browne's Addition Historic District Design Standards and Guidelines*."
- 3.) The District Design Standards and Guidelines assist property owners through the design review process by providing the following:
 - District-wide design standards and guidelines,
 - Design standards and guidelines for new construction, and
- 4.) The proposed new construction is within the Browne's Addition Local Register Historic District Overlay Zone and is therefore subject to a Certificate of Appropriateness for design of the new building.
 - The Browne's Addition Local Historic District Overlay Zone became effective in November of 2019.
- 5.) 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 a new apartment building to replace an 1897 non-contributing building lost to fire in the summer of 2021.

STAFF COMMENTARY/BACKGROUND:

- The proposed new construction was submitted for review in July of 2026. A noticed workshop was held on Wednesday, August 19, 2026 at 3:00 pm to discuss the design of the new construction with the applicant. That workshop discussion and subsequent modifications to the proposed design helped shape this staff report.

HISTORY OF THE PROPERTY/LOCATION

The site previously contained an 1897 house that had been remodeled significantly making it non-contributing to the district. The house was converted to apartments in 1924 and it housed seven apartment units. The building suffered a catastrophic fire that destroyed the property on August 17, 2021.

CURRENT SITE CONDITIONS:

The site is located in the Browne's Addition Local Register Historic District one parcel west of the northwest corner of 2nd and Spruce. The historic district is located in a residential environment and consists of a mix of historic, mid-century and modern multi-family residential; historic single family residential; and a few commercial properties. Most structures are modest in height, ranging two-to-four stories, although there is variety in massing and scale within the district.

The buildings directly across the street from the proposed site consist of two identical 1948 3-story apartment buildings in the Art Moderne style with projecting entry porticos and brick cladding. To the southeast is Coeur d'Alene Park. Across Spruce to the east is the 1958 2-story Lynn Smith Apartments, a modest structure with buff brick on the first floor and stucco on the second. The non-contributing apartments to the east, located on the corner lot, were also damaged in the fire and demolished.

Two additional properties are located to the west on the same block front as the proposed new construction, one contributing and the other non-contributing – both were originally houses that have been converted to apartments. Entrances tend to be dominated by one main entrance that is oriented to the street. Buildings consist of brick, stucco and wood cladding and are of high-quality materials and craftsmanship. The buildings of the district 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 historic character area (Northwest Character Area in Browne's Addition); facing block fronts and adjacent buildings.

Comments:

- The proposed building's size, scale and form are relatively consistent with the overall character of the area.

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 similar setback for properties along the facing blockfronts and adjacent buildings on Second Avenue which consists of several properties with plantings and fencing between the building and the public right-of-way.
- The rendering below shows the footprint of the proposed new apartments and the existing buildings on the block and the aerial image from 2020 shows the former buildings that sat on this site and the site to the east.



- The proposed new apartment building uses a similar size footprint to the former building, but it is a narrower north-to-south footprint. It does employ an entryway element, with that entry oriented towards Second Avenue despite the units facing east.
- The proposed building does maintain the rhythm and spacing of the blockfront by creating a residential façade on the south even though the units face to the east.

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 new apartment 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.
- The proposed building does contain modulation of both vertical and horizontal breaks.
- The front-gabled roof is a common form in the district, especially for large historic single-family residences.
- The proposed building does not change the height from its neighbors by more than two stories.

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 prominent entrances, they do not necessarily contain central entryways. The district is a mix of residential and multi-family buildings that range from the late 1800s to the 1960s. The original submission did not include a main entrance on the façade but it has been modified by the applicant to include a porch element, pedestrian access, and architectural detailing that provide a more residential entry on Second Avenue.
- The building design does include a distinct base, middle and top which is evident in other multi-story buildings in the district. All elevations of the building are designed and relate to the whole. The architect uses bellybands that break up the overall massing and give the building horizontal interest.
- The original submission included a very simple and under-designed west elevation which was improved with more fenestration and pass-through access points.



The Parkview Apartments are located across the street to the south and also use prominent entryways and traditional materials.

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, stucco and wood. The proposed building uses primarily a composite wood product that is similar in design, texture, and color to wood clapboard siding that is common in the district.
- The proposal avoids using too many conjectural details on the design of the building.
- The building does employ plane breaks between stories as well as from the base using trim and changes in siding material.
- The color palette is typical of historic houses in the district.
- The roof material is still to be determined. Stormwater treatment requirements may necessitate the use of a metal roof. The applicant will address this issue and discuss it during the hearing.

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 apartment building uses a simulated front porch and entryway to create a residential feel despite the units being oriented toward the east.
- The proposed apartment building uses proportion and rhythm to establish the function of the building and make obvious the public entrance as opposed to the individual unit entrances on the east elevation. The fenestration patterns are logical and compatible to the facing block, but three simulated windows were added on the west side to better balance the façade.



NORTH ELEVATION



SOUTH ELEVATION



EAST ELEVATION



WEST ELEVATION

- The proposed design is visually contemporary with the use of the “invention within” approach to new construction in the district. “Invention within” can and should be a coherent approach to design, not a jumble of various elements from building types and styles. Reinvention allows for various building forms and styles in the district to be used as inspiration and will result in buildings that would come under the broad umbrella of compatible contemporary construction.
- The building does not attempt to mimic surrounding historic buildings. It employs basic architectural design principals to complement the surrounding district.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Replacement Structure: Staff recommends that the proposed new construction is compatible with the Browne’s Addition Historic District and should be **approved**.

HPO Report – Logan Camporeale
 Design Review Committee Review: Reported at Workshop
 Landmarks Commission Review: Pending

Date: 9/10/2026
 Site Visit: 8/5/2026
 Hearing: 9/16/2026