

**CERTIFIED LOCAL GOVERNMENT
KANSAS HISTORIC PRESERVATION LAW
PROJECT REVIEW REPORT
TOPEKA PLANNING DEPARTMENT**

CASE NO: CLGR22-13

by: Aim Strategies, Inc.

Project Address: 735 S. Kansas Ave.

Property Classification: Non-Contributor to the historic integrity of the South Kansas Avenue Commercial Historic District

Project Description: Demolition

Standards: Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation

Attachments: Site Plan ☐ Elevations ☐ Arch./Const. Plans ☐ Pictures ☒

PROPOSAL: The applicant is requesting a review under Kansas State Historic Preservation Law for the demolition of the structure located at 735 S. Kansas Avenue. Removal of this building (*without replacement in-kind*) would remove the street-walls along both SW 8th Street and S. Kansas Avenue, and would also damage the massing, sizing, and scale of development within the surrounding historic district.

This building is listed as a non-contributing property within the nomination of the South Kansas Avenue Commercial Historic District.

BACKGROUND: The building on this property dates to 1960 when the Helzberg Diamond Shop razed the former Topeka State Bank building. This new construction largely conforms with the visual character of the building as it currently stands, although several additional changes were made following damage resulting from the 1966 tornado that passed through downtown Topeka. Its present appearance as a minimal commercial building dates to 1974 when the building was used as the primary bus transfer center for IntraCity Transit. The building was most recently used as a restaurant (WrapCity) until it closed in 2015(?).

This building retains several characteristics of its original design as the Helzberg Diamond Shop. These features include its single-story construction with a blank, clean façade above the lower storefront, a significant proportion of display windows facing SW 8th Street, and the structure's original stone foundation. The materials of the exterior of this building, however, date to its remodel for use as Topeka's IntraCity Transit Transfer Station.

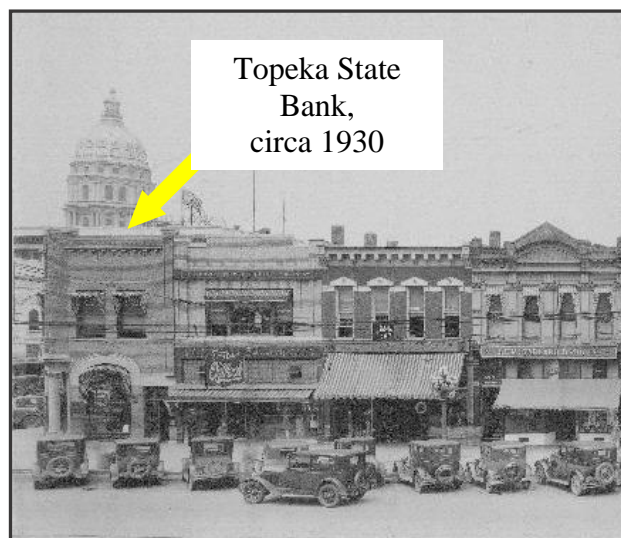
A structural assessment, however, conducted on behalf of the project developer, has determined that the extent of water damage to the foundation make it unsuitable for use as a restaurant without extensive repair. According to the analysis report:

"It is my understanding that the owner desires to repurpose the property with restaurant occupancy on the main floor, as well as on a new second floor and rooftop patio. The existing structure cannot accommodate this type of occupancy without significant, likely cost prohibitive, improvements. We feel the best approach would be to reconstruct this building to adequately and efficiently support the proposed use."

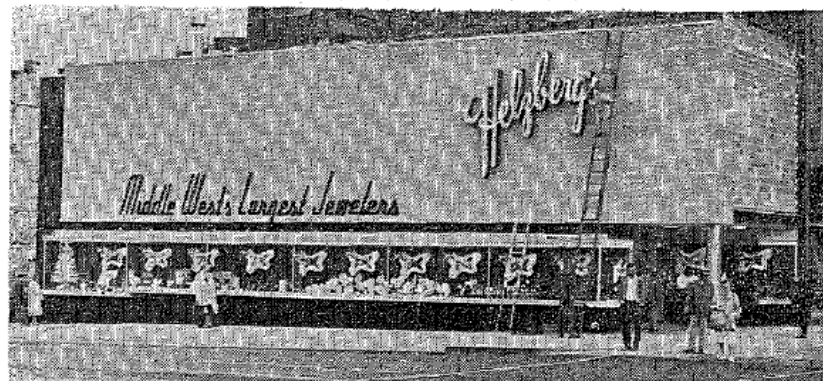
Similarly, with regard to roof-top dining and a second level addition, the report concludes:

"The existing roof joists and supporting steel frames, are rated only for roof live loads. A rooftop patio is not feasible without significant reconstruction, the magnitude of which is likely cost prohibitive. Similarly, the steel frames are unable to support the addition of an intermediate second floor within the existing building shell without significant reconstruction. Additionally, we are not confident that the existing basement walls can support the addition of two additional occupied levels. Although they are in fair condition, considering their age, we have no record of what they were designed to support. It also seems logical that with the extent of reconstruction warranted for the proposed remodel that a new, dry concrete basement is justified."

This analysis, therefore, concludes that the economic viability of this structure is limited by its foundation and roof.



TOPEKA STATE JOURNAL
Saturday, November, 26, 1960



—Staff Photo

Avenue Gets Another New Face—

The Helzberg's signature sign goes up on the emerald and white pearl granite exterior of the new Helzberg's Diamond Shop at 735 Kansas. The store had its official opening Friday. It replaces the former store at 809 Kansas.



REVIEW SUMMARY: The Kansas State Historic Preservation Office requires that all projects occurring on any property listed on the Register of Historic Kansas Places be reviewed for their effect on the listed property and the surrounding district. State law (K.S.A. 75-2724) establishes that the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation be used to evaluate changes proposed to any property that is individually listed, or is located within an historic district. The following is an analysis of the application of each Standard to the proposed project.

Standard 1. *A property shall be used for its historic purpose or be placed in a new use that requires minimal change to the defining characteristics of the building and its site and environment.*

Analysis: Absent its replacement with a building of a similar size, scale, materials and use, the demolition of this building would remove its historical use for commercial activities from these properties. The nomination for the South Kansas Avenue Commercial Historic District states the following of the historical significance of the commercial use of properties within the District:

"The South Kansas Avenue Commercial Historic District (District) is significant as an intact example of a dense commercial corridor that reflects the economic and civic development of Topeka from shortly after its founding to the present day, with most of the development occurring in the early to mid-twentieth century. The 103 buildings (sixty-three contributing and seven previously listed) were constructed to house all of the businesses, financial institutions, social halls, and local government offices necessary for the development of a successful urban center. The District is a representative collection of commercial architectural styles and property types, both high style and vernacular, spanning from the late nineteenth century through the late twentieth century. Updated

façades of late nineteenth and early twentieth century buildings reflect efforts by owners to refresh their properties in an era of changing architectural aesthetics. Despite shifts in architectural tastes from Victorian to historical revival to Modern Movement, the District retains its definitive commercial character. The District clearly communicates associations with the historic context defined for the commercial, civic, and social function of the area as well as the evolution of popular architectural styles and property types.”

The demolition of this structure would remove its historic use, and its massing, size, scale, and rhythm from the development of Downtown Topeka’s history.

Standard 2. *The historic character of a property shall be retained and preserved. The removal of historic materials or alteration of features and spaces that characterize a property shall be avoided.*

Analysis: The adopted Downtown Topeka Design Guidelines prescribes 4 primary goals through its recommendations for the treatment of historic properties within the District. These goals are:

- 1) *Create an active, appealing, and prosperous downtown center.*
- 2) *Recognize, preserve, and enhance Downtown Topeka’s historic character as a significant component of downtown revitalization.*
- 3) *Provide support for private sector investment in downtown projects through the use of rehabilitation tax credits., and*
- 4) *Encourage the preservation and appropriate treatment of authentic building fabric.*

The Design Guidelines state with regard to Goal No. 4, “*Once damaged, destroyed, or lost, authentic fabric cannot be reclaimed. Authenticity and appropriate care and treatment should take precedence over other design issues.*” Although the building in question is listed as a “non-contributor” to the historic district, its use and presence as a commercial properties, consistent with the mass, sizing, rhythm, and scale as the rest of the surrounding historic district, would be lost.

Standard 3. *Each property shall be recognized as a physical record of its time, place, and use. Changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding conjectural features or architectural elements from other buildings, shall not be undertaken.*

Analysis: Demolition of this structure will not introduce features that will create a false sense of historic development. The demolition of this building will, however, remove a style of building design that typified the mid-20th Century of S. Kansas Avenue’s development.

Standard 4. *Most properties change over time; those changes that have acquired historic significance in their own right shall be retained and preserved.*

Analysis: The only historic materials to be removed in conjunction with this demolition request is the stone foundation. No other historic or character-defining materials

of this structure will be removed or adversely affected in conjunction with this project.

Standard 5. *Distinctive features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property shall be preserved.*

Analysis: No distinctive features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize this structure will adversely affected in conjunction with this project.

Standard 6. *Deteriorated historic features shall be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature shall match the old in design, color, texture, and other visual qualities and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features shall be substantiated by documentary, physical, or pictorial evidence.*

Analysis: The deterioration and structural limitations of the foundation building requires complete replacement to accommodate its intended use as a restaurant. The foundation has no visual qualities to the character of the building nor the surrounding historic district.

Standard 7. *Chemical or physical treatments, such as sandblasting, that cause damage to historic materials shall not be used. The surface cleaning of structures, if appropriate, shall be undertaken using the gentlest means possible.*

Analysis: N/A

Standard 8. *Significant archeological resources affected by a project shall be protected and preserved. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures shall be undertaken.*

Analysis: N/A

Standard 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.*

Analysis: N/A

Standard 10. *New additions and adjacent or related new construction shall be undertaken in such a manner that if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.*

Analysis: N/A

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: In light of these standards and the preceding analysis, Planning Staff recommends to the Topeka Landmarks Commission a finding that the proposed demolition of the building located at 735 S. Kansas Avenue **will damage or destroy the historic character or the historic integrity of this property and the historic integrity of the surrounding South Kansas Avenue Commercial Historic District.**

APPEAL TO THE GOVERNING BODY: If the Landmarks Commission determines that the proposed treatment will damage or destroy the historic integrity of the property, the applicant may appeal to the governing body. It will be incumbent upon the governing body to make a determination, after consideration of all relevant factors, that: (1) there are no feasible and prudent alternatives to the proposed alterations; and (2) that alternatives to the project include all possible planning to minimize harm to the property that may result from those alternatives.

Prepared by: _____


Timothy Paris, Planner II