



NuLu Review Overlay District (NROD)

Report to the Committee

Thru: Joseph Haberman, AICP, Urban Design Administrator
From: Kat Groskreutz, Senior Planner – Urban Design
Date: February 27, 2025

Case No: 25-OVERLAY-0003

Classification: Non-Expedited

Meeting Date: March 5, 2025

GENERAL INFORMATION:

Property Address: 1000 E Main Street

Applicant: Ashley Bartley, QK4, Inc.

Property Owner: Main Plumb, LLC

Description of Proposed Exterior Alteration:

The applicant is requesting approval to demolish four, mostly interior, structures on the site to clear and secure the site for future development. The primary structure on the parcel, which is located along the northwest corner along E Main and S Wenzel Streets, is historic and contributing to the Phoenix Hill National Register District. It is not part of the demolition request and will be retained and reused in future development plans. No other site alterations or improvements are proposed at this time.

The demolition request includes the following structures (See Figure 1), all of which are considered non-contributing:

1. The 1 to 1.5 story, interior, rear addition complex attached to the south and east facades of the historic primary structure. This addition complex is a mix of materials and ages.
2. A southwest, 1-story, masonry structure that includes an inset, four-bay loading dock accessed from Wenzel Street.
3. A 1-story, metal, interior warehouse structure.
4. A southeast, 1-story, open air, covered canopy structure.



Figure 1: Demolition Site Plan

Communications with Applicant, Completion of Application:

The applicant submitted the Overlay Permit application on January 21, 2025. The application was determined to be substantially complete and classified as requiring a non-expedited review by the Urban Design Administrator on the same day. The application will be reviewed by the Committee at 10:00 AM on March 5, 2025 at the Old Jail Auditorium, 514 W Liberty Street.

A previous conceptual site plan (24-OVERLAY-0038) was reviewed by the NROD Committee on August 7, 2024. This conceptual review allowed the Committee to provide feedback to the applicant regarding demolition and proposed parking areas prior to a formal submittal. No action was taken by the Committee at that time.

The applicant initially submitted development and overlay plans to include new and repaved surface parking on the northern 2/3 of the site behind the historic structure, landscaping improvements, and the retention of the southeast canopy structure. The proposal was to act as an interim plan to clean up the site and secure the historic

building while future plans are developed. However, after discussions with Metropolitan Sewer District (MSD), the requirements needed to the site, including drainage and detention, were determined to be too great for an interim site plan where these drainage and retention areas may not be wanted permanently. Thus, the application request was altered to include only demolition at this time.

FINDINGS

Guidelines

The following Principles and Design Guidelines are applicable to the proposal: **6 – Site Planning and Parking** and **7 - Historic Preservation**. Staff's findings of fact and conclusions with respect to the Guidelines are attached to this report.

Site Context

The subject property is a full block (3.4 acres), bordered by E Main Street to the north, Baxter Avenue to the east, E Market Street to the south, and S Wenzel Street to the west. The single parcel contains the historic primary structure, which is a 2 to 3-story, masonry, late 19th century commercial building with a primary corner entrance and architectural detailing indicative of typical commercial structures of the era. The other additions and infill structures are of different materials and ages and were added to support the industrial and indoor/outdoor storage use, most recently for the Plumber's Supply Company. The site is surrounded by a mix of building uses, ages, and styles. Historic residential buildings converted to retail use are to the north. Modern commercial infill and a historic warehouse building are to the east. Modern infill commercial/warehouse buildings and surface parking are to the south. Lincoln Elementary, which is modern construction, is to the west.

Existing Conditions



North and west side of historic structure along Main and Wenzel Streets, looking southwest



East & north side of property at Main and Baxter, looking south



East side of property at Baxter, looking west, Building 4 is visible



East & north side of property at Main and Baxter, looking northwest, Building 4 is visible



South side of property at Market, looking north, Building 4 is visible



West side property at Wenzel, looking northeast, Building 2 is visible



Building 2 truck loading docks, looking northeast

Conclusions

While demolition is typically discouraged in the District, only non-historic, non-contributing additions and secondary/accessory structures are to be removed. The structures are industrial in design/purpose, in poor condition, and do not meet the guidelines for new structures. The buildings are generally non-historic in age except for Building 2. However, Building 2 is simply a loading dock structure that provides no historic significance to the site; thus, it is non-contributing. Furthermore, the loading docks on the building create a significant pedestrian conflict along Wenzel Street.

The historic, contributing structure facing Main and Wenzel Streets will be retained, which meets guideline **HP1**. No alterations to the main facades of this building are proposed at this time. Additionally, guideline **HP3** states:

No application to demolish any Contributing Historical Structure or structure built 65 years ago or longer shall be approved by the Urban Design Administrator unless the applicant demonstrates to the satisfaction of Urban Design Administrator and the Historic Preservation Officer:

- (a) That the rehabilitation of a Structure or construction of a new Structure will have a greater positive impact on the Area's economic vitality and appearance than would preservation of the Structure proposed to be demolished; and the rehabilitation of the Structure or the construction of the new Structure would not be possible or economically feasible without the demolition of the Structure proposed to be demolished; or
- (b) That the applicant cannot obtain a reasonable economic return from the property or Structure unless the Contributing Historical Structure or Structure constructed 65 years ago or longer is demolished in accordance with the application.

The Urban Design Administrator and the Historic Preservation Officer agree that the removal of these structures, in conjunction with the preservation of the historic contributing structure, will have a greater positive impact on the economic vitality and appearance of the site and District while a formal redevelopment plan is created for future review. Also, when the applicant met with the Committee in August 2024, the Committee provided feedback that they would be supportive of the demolition of these structures for the betterment of the site and to prepare it as an interim plan for future development.

The removal of the chain-link fence and coiled razor wire and truck loading dock (Building 2), which are both negative impacts on the site in terms of appearance, will create a safer, more pedestrian friendly environment during the phase as well.

In summary, the proposal meets the applicable design guidelines, and will have a positive impact on the site and District as a whole as the applicant works towards a more permanent redevelopment of the site.

Note: The Committee has recommended amendments to the design guidelines. Those recommendations are scheduled to be considered by Metro Council at their meeting on February 27, 2025 (after the completion of this report). While those new guidelines may be effective as of the date of the meeting, staff reviewed this application under the guidelines effective at the time of application.

RECOMMENDATION

The proposed demolition generally complies with the applicable Design Guidelines for the NROD and meets the overall intent of the District.

Considering the information furnished, the Urban Design Administrator recommends the application for an Overlay Permit be **approved with the following conditions**:

1. The footprints of the demolished buildings shall be seeded or sodded in the interim until a new development is reviewed and approved through an overlay and development plan review. The grass areas shall be properly maintained and mowed and during the growing season.
2. The applicant shall submit documentation demonstrating how the historic building will be protected during demolition, and how any wall opening shall be treated and secured if left exposed after demolition of the connected additions.
3. The five trees located at the southwest corner of the property shall be retained during demolition and in the interim until a new development is approved.
4. No new construction, additions, parking areas, or other site alterations or improvements were reviewed under this application. Any new work on the site shall be reviewed and approved separately as part of subsequent overlay permit, which may require additional Committee review.
5. Signage was not reviewed under this application. Signage shall be reviewed and approved separately as part of subsequent sign and overlay permit.
6. All razor wire shall be removed upon completion of the demolition. While not required by this overlay permit, chain link fencing may remain to secure areas of the site if needed; however it shall be properly maintained.

Principle 6 – Site Planning and Parking

Design Guideline Checklist

Objective

Site Planning is an important part of any project. Sites should incorporate attractive and maintainable landscaping to enhance the hardscape of the building. Plants should be used to minimize the visual impact of parking lots and service areas in the NuLu Review Overlay District (NROD).

+	Meets Guidelines	NA	Not Applicable
-	Does Not Meet Guidelines	TBD	To Be Determined
+/-	Meets Guidelines with Conditions as Noted		

	Guideline	Finding	Comment
SP1	Development Plans shall minimize the adverse visual impact of utility lines on the area. Underground lines or service from the alley, where feasible, is encouraged.	NA	No new construction or change to current utility locations is proposed at this time.
SP2	Combining existing small, under-utilized lots to create shared parking areas that are more efficient and more accessible is encouraged.	NA	The project site is one consolidated, block large parcel.
SP3	Additional surface parking lots and drive-throughs shall not be permitted in the NuLu Review Overlay District.	NA	No additional surface parking or drive throughs are proposed at this time.

SP4	Parking areas adjacent to the public sidewalks must use landscaping, trees, colonnades or other construction, to maintain the building line created by structures along the sidewalk. Side parking lots which exceed 40% of the total linear lot frontage adjacent to right-of-way shall provide a 36" high masonry, stone, or concrete wall that makes reference to a similar design within the surrounding area extending from the principal structure across the front of the parking area. Surface parking lots with no principal structure shall provide the 36" wall as described. The 36" tall wall can wrap around any existing or proposed monument signage to maintain visibility.	NA	No additional surface parking is proposed at this time. All existing parking is already located behind the historic building.
SP5	Adequate perimeter landscaping, fencing, or a combination of both is required to help screen vehicles and/or equipment from public view. The screening height for vehicle parking lots shall be 36" above finished grade of the lot. This height will enable drivers of vehicles to safely see and avoid other pedestrians and vehicles while screening most parked cars. A 7'-0" max high screened fence or wall can be used for industrial or commercial sites to screen for large vehicles or equipment on site.	NA	No additional surface parking is proposed at this time. The existing chain-link fence with coiled razor wire will be removed.
SP6	New commercial developments should provide adequate and significant screening to adjacent residential structures. Opaque landscape buffers and other forms of screening should be used to minimize noise and lighting impact.	NA	No new construction is proposed at this time.
SP7	Fencing and screening shall be constructed of materials compatible with the principal structure.	+	The existing chain-link fence with coiled razor wire will be removed. No new fencing is proposed at this time.
SP8	Chain link fencing must not be visible within the NuLu Review Overlay District.	+	The existing chain-link fence with coiled razor wire will be removed.
SP9	Intensity, location, color, and direction of outdoor lighting shall be sensitive to nearby residential areas.	NA	No new construction or lighting is proposed at this time.
SP10	The number and width of curb-cuts in the Overlay Area should be minimized to promote pedestrian circulation. Existing continuous curb-cuts should be reduced to widths necessary for vehicular traffic, or removed altogether.	NA	The truck loading dock area will be removed, but there are no alterations to the sidewalk or curb cuts proposed at this time.
SP11	Minimum 4'-0" wide landscape buffer area (LBA) containing a 36" minimum height (at maturity) screen shall run along 90% of the lineal area in front of the patio, plaza, or outdoor space that faces the street. This landscape buffer area (LBA) shall include permanent landscaping material such as trees (minimum 1 3/4" caliper size at time of planting), shrubs (minimum 18" height at time of planting), groundcover, and /or perennials. Fences, planters, and/or walls (maximum height of 36") are permitted within the LBA. Landscape Buffer Plantings shall be installed prior to occupancy or use of the patio, plaza, or outdoor space.	NA	No new ground level outdoor space proposed at this time.
SP12	Existing trees located within the property or adjacent property along the street, alley, or access easement shall be preserved and protected unless the city arborist determines they are not healthy or are dangerous and should be removed. Removed trees should be replaced with appropriate trees approved by the City Arborist. The replacement trees shall be sized at a minimum of 1 3/4" caliper (at time of planting). Replacement tree(s) shall be planted within 3 months of the tree(s) removal or during the next planting season, whichever comes first.	NSI	There are five trees located at the southwest corner of the property. It is unclear if they are to remain yet. No other trees existing on the site or are proposed at this time. See conditions of approval.
SP13	The construction or installation of a deck or structure built off the ground and over existing landscaped areas in front of a building's primary façade is prohibited. Balconies located on the second or third floors of buildings that are cantilevered or bracketed, scaled to match the building's façade, and utilize contextual materials are appropriate.	NA	No new construction is proposed at this time.

Principle 7 – Historic Preservation

Design Guideline Checklist

Objective

Historic buildings (65 years of age or older) comprise a significant part of NuLu Review Overlay District (NROD) and are physical reminders of Louisville's early history. The historic buildings in the Area are some of the oldest remaining in the city and exhibit characteristics of classic urbanism. Historic structures define the area's origins while providing unique adaptive reuse potential. Structures over 100 years old are sometimes flanked by more contemporary mid-century ones that exhibit similar urban characteristics of scale, massing, and setback, and are thus contributing structures in their own right. Given the important role of many existing buildings to the history and streetscape of the Area, demolition of any contributing structure will entail stringent review.

- + Meets Guidelines NA Not Applicable
- Does Not Meet Guidelines NSI Not Sufficient Information
- +/- Meets Guidelines with Conditions as Noted

	Guideline	Finding	Comment
HP1	Changes to the exterior of Contributing Historic Structures and other structures within the Overlay District that were constructed 65 years ago or longer and have not been significantly altered, shall be reviewed in accordance with the standards established for Contributing Historic Structures by the United States Secretary of the Interior. However, the Director of the Department of Planning and Design or the NuLu Review Overlay Committee may relax these standards in the interest of accomplishing the intentions of these Guidelines.	+/-	The historic, contributing structure facing Main and Wenzel Streets will be retained. No alterations to the main facades of this building are proposed at this time. Non-historic, non-contributing additions to the rear of the building are to be removed. At this time, it is unclear how the historic building will be protected during demolition, and how any wall opening shall be treated and secured if left exposed after demolition of the connected additions. See conditions of approval.
HP2	The design of new or substantially remodeled structures that are adjacent to Contributing Historic Structures should be compatible with them and should incorporate similar design details or references where appropriate.	NA	No new construction is proposed at this time.
HP3	No application to demolish any Contributing Historical Structure or structure built 65 years ago or longer shall be approved by the Urban Design Administrator unless the applicant demonstrates to the satisfaction of Urban Design Administrator and the Historic Preservation Officer: (a) That the rehabilitation of a Structure or construction of a new Structure will have a greater positive impact on the Area's economic vitality and appearance than would preservation of the Structure proposed to be demolished; and the rehabilitation of the Structure or the construction of the new Structure would not be possible or economically feasible without the demolition of the Structure proposed to be demolished; or (b) That the applicant cannot obtain a reasonable economic return from the property or Structure unless the Contributing Historical Structure or Structure constructed 65 years ago or longer is demolished in accordance with the application.	+	None of the proposed structures to be demolished were found to be contributing. The Urban Design Administrator and the Historic Preservation Officer agree that the removal of these structures, in conjunction with the preservation of the historic, contributing structure, will have a greater positive impact on the economic vitality and appearance of the site and District as a formal redevelopment plan is created for the future.