



Date:	5/4/2021
LPC Docket #:	LPC-21-03235
LPC Action:	Approved
Action required by other agencies:	DOB, DCP
Permit Type:	CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS

Address: 250 Water Street

Borough: Manhattan

Block: 98 **Lot:** 1

Historic District: South Street Seaport Historic District

Description: A parking lot. Application is to construct a new building.

COMMISSION FINDINGS

The Commission NOTED that the site is a full-block parking lot in the South Street Seaport Historic District.

The Commission further NOTED that the South Street Seaport Historic District consists of small scale, four to six-story commercial buildings on small lots, constructed in the mid-19th century, as well as approximately 15 new or reconstructed buildings. The district is surrounded by taller later buildings, some of which were built using an innovative development rights bank created to preserve the district. The Commission also NOTED that numerous buildings were demolished to clear most of the 250 Water Street site, and the size and shape of the block was modified for street widenings and extensions on Pearl Street, in the mid-20th century prior to designation of the historic district; and that the site has been used for parking since at least the 1970s.

Pursuant to Section 25-307 of the Administrative Code of the City of New York, the Commission APPROVED THE PROPOSAL, finding:

- that the South Street Seaport Historic District features a significant number of Commission-approved modern buildings, including those built on lots that were vacant at the time of designation, reconstructions of non-contributing buildings, and large, visible rooftop additions, resulting in a heterogenous composition in which new and old buildings coexist;
- that the unusually large size of this full-block vacant site on the edge of the district is a unique condition, and therefore the construction of a larger building on the site would not be a precedent for this or other historic districts;
- that the existing full-block site is currently used as a parking lot and has no historic fabric, and that it does not contribute to an understanding or experience of, and in fact, detracts from, the South Street Seaport Historic District;
- that in the 19th century this site was densely developed with a variety of independent buildings and no open space, and this proposal will reconstitute the presence of a fully built-out block with varying streetwall heights consistent with the historic condition during the major period of significance of this historic district, and therefore will strengthen and reinforce the site's relationship to the historic district;
- that the site is located at the western edge of the district, away from the river which was the focus of the historic district, in an area with larger buildings from later periods, such as the contemporary Peck Slip school to the north and the historic former hospital building to the south, thus supporting the presence of a development with a broader and larger footprint and taller street wall than what is found in other areas of the historic district;
- that the two-part massing of the proposed building will establish a solid, lower-scale base that is relatively simple in form and massing and is consistent with the built volume of many blocks found in the historic district, while the abstracted form of the taller, undulating bar rising from the northwest portion of the site will read as an independent form that differentiates itself while being compatible with the base;
- that the proposed building's three to five-story base is subdivided into smaller modules that relate to the scale of buildings found across Water Street and in the historic district in terms of height and width;
- that the significant setbacks from the southern and eastern facades to the bar building create and reinforce a strong reading of the base as distinct from the bar building, allowing the base to better relate to the historic buildings on Beekman and Water Streets in terms of height and massing;
- that the proposed material palette of the base, featuring orange and red toned brick and cast stone elements with light mortar, and painted metal storefronts, garage doors and windows, will relate to the warm-toned masonry and painted metal materials of surrounding historic buildings in terms of color, texture and finish;
- that the use of punched window openings with prominent lintels and integrated sills in a masonry field and trabeated precast bases with metal storefronts relates to the traditional fenestration, materials and composition of buildings in this historic district;



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-that the base of the building has been articulated with a variety of design elements, including projecting cornices, storefronts with bulkheads and transom grilles, windows with mullions set at varying depths within their openings, and balconies with metal railings and planter-boxes at select locations, to relate to the details and variation found at buildings in the surrounding streetscapes;

-that the differentiated treatment of a limited portion of the façade on Pearl Street to integrate it physically and visually with the bar building will tie the two-part massing together at a location removed from a historic context while adding architectural interest to the otherwise regular treatment of the façade;

-that the design and massing of the proposed taller bar building appears narrow from certain vantage points, specifically when viewed from the north and south, and does not call undue attention to itself and away from the historic buildings within the district;

-that the bar has been situated at the northwestern periphery of the block along the boundary of the historic district, and away from the core of historic buildings further east and adjacent on Water Street, to minimize its visibility from key vantage points within the core of the district, and locate it as far inland as possible from the waterfront of this seaport historic district;

-that due to the significant setbacks on Beekman and Water Streets, the bar is seen as a tower element primarily in connection with non-historic buildings on Beekman and Pearl Streets and, therefore it will not detract from the exterior architectural elements of the historic buildings in the district;

-that the design of the bar, including vertically fluted precast columns with a beige finish, a differentiation in proportions of solid to void ratios and restrained palette of the design elements, recalls the materials, details and color of the buildings in the district and brings unity to the overall design while also being distinct from the base;

-that from many views within the district the historic buildings, as well as this site, are seen with taller buildings rising above and/or behind, and therefore the presence of the proposed bar building, viewed in this context, will not call attention to itself or detract from the exterior architectural features of the buildings within the historic district, nor will it be experienced as disruptive of the scale of the buildings in the historic district;

-that the 5th floor setback is visible from select locations, functioning as a subordinate, transitional architectural volume, and otherwise provides a clean transition between the base and bar building;

-that when viewed from Peck Slip within the district looking west, the base and bar building will be seen primarily in context with other modern buildings and therefore will not detract from significant exterior architectural features of the historic buildings;

-that due to the significant setbacks and the strong reestablishment of the streetwall, the bar building will be read as being disassociated from the base when viewed from Beekman Street looking west, Water Street looking both north and south and Fulton Street looking north, and will not detract from the historic buildings, or call undue attention to the bar building;

-that looking east from Beekman and Pearl Streets to the East River and Tin Building, the lower streetwall will relate to the historic buildings to the south and east, and due to the significant setback, the bar portion will not detract from the historic buildings;

-that the new streetwall on Pearl Street will complete the built character of the historic district, and the design, fenestration, materials, color and details of the proposed building will reestablish and reinforce the boundary of the historic district, which is now broken and unclear due to the presence of the full city block parking lot;

-that given the topography, streetplan, change in elevation as the land district slopes east from Pearl Street and the size of the buildings in the district, almost any new building will block views into the historic district from the west, including the 1991 approval, and that because of these factors the bar portion has no material impact on views into the district beyond what the smaller-scale base portion already effects;

-that the taller streetwall on Pearl Street will not detract from significant exterior architectural features of the historic buildings in the district because it is seen primarily within the context of new and non-historic buildings to the north and south;

-and that for these reasons the proposed new development will enhance and strengthen the contribution of the site to the historic district, and will not diminish the special architectural and historic character of the South Street Seaport Historic District.

VOTE:



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Present: Sarah Carroll, Adi Shamir-Baron, Diana Chapin, Wellington Chen, Jeanne Lutfy, Everardo Jefferson, Michael Goldblum, John Gustafsson, Frederick Bland, Michael Devonshire, Anne HolFord Smith

6-2-0

In Favor = S.Carroll, A.Shamir-Baron, D.Chapin, W.Chen, J.Lutfy, E.Jefferson

Oppose = M.Goldblum, J.Gustafsson

Abstain =

Recuse = F.Bland, M.Devonshire, A.HolFord Smith

Please note that these "Commission Findings" are a summary of the findings related to the application. This is NOT a permit or approval to commence any work. No work may occur until the Commission has issued a Certificate of Appropriateness, which requires review and approval of Department of Buildings filing drawings and/or other construction drawings related to the approved work. In addition, no work may occur until the work has been reviewed and approved by other City agencies, such as the Department of Buildings, as required by law