

NEW ORLEANS HISTORIC DISTRICT LANDMARKS COMMISSION  
CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT HISTORIC DISTRICT LANDMARKS COMMISSION

LaToya Cantrell  
MAYOR

CITY OF NEW ORLEANS

Bryan Block  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Friday, September 19, 2025

Honorable City Council  
1300 Perdido Street  
New Orleans, LA 70112

Re: 500 State Street

Ladies and Gentlemen:

Attached, please find a report regarding an appeal of the New Orleans Historic District Landmarks Commission's motion to approve the retention of structural demolition in excess of the HDLC approved drawings and fine the applicant \$16,000.

Should you have any questions or require any additional information, please feel free to contact me at your earliest convenience.

Sincerely,

Eleanor Burke  
Deputy Director

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[WWW.NOLA.GOV](http://WWW.NOLA.GOV)





In June of 2025 an application was filed with the Department of Safety and Permits for the renovation of 500 State Street. The proposal sought to remove non-original openings at the primary façade and the removal of a lean to shed addition at the rear of the building. HDLC Staff reviewed the proposal which did not require HDLC Commission approval as it did not hit any of the demolition thresholds. On August 7, 2025 HDLC Staff posted a Stop Work order after an anonymous complaint. The entirety of the rear portion of the building had been removed constituting approximately 60% of the roof structure. The proposal seeks to rebuild the rear portion of the building with the same footprint of the original.

**DEMOLITION**

The demolition of all or portions of historic resources within a local Historic District or Landmark site are considered drastic actions, since they alter the character of the area. Once historic resources or buildings that contribute to the heritage of the community are destroyed, it is generally impossible to reproduce their design, texture, materials, details and their special character and interest in the neighborhood.

As a result, the HDLC rarely considers the demolition of Significant or Contributing buildings or structures within a local Historic District or on a Landmark site to be an appropriate option.

When reviewing demolition applications of properties

**DEMOLITION**

Demolition means any of the following actions occurring within a five-year period to a building in a historic district:

1. The structural removal, obscuration, or increase in height of any exterior wall altering more than 50% of the total exterior structure, or the restructuring of more than 50% of the structure's exterior wall area;
2. The removal, alteration, or obscuration of more than 50% of the existing roof structure measured in plan view;
3. The removal, alteration, or obscuration of more than 25% of the historic materials, as determined by HDLC staff, on the primary façade; or
4. The raising of an existing building to create habitable space that complies with the ceiling height requirements set forth in Sec. 26-196.

*Exterior Wall* means the structural assembly of any wall dividing the exterior of a building from the interior, including structural members, windows, and doors but excluding weatherboards.

*Obscuration* means concealing, hiding, encapsulating, or covering a building's exterior walls, existing roof structure, or historic materials on the primary façade in whole or in significant part with new or replacement elements.

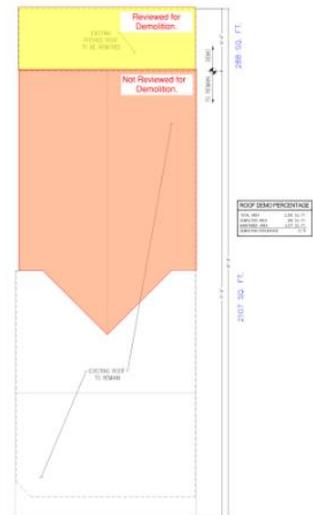
*Primary Façade* means the front or principal face of a building that can be distinguished from the other faces by its elaborate architectural details, including but not limited to, porches, columns, cladding, doors, windows, trim, cornices, soffits, fascia, railings, and shutters.



500 State Street side elevation before



500 State Street after



This matter was heard by the Commission at their meeting of September 3, 2025. At that time the Commission reviewed the Staff report and applicant testimony. Staff recommended approval of the demolition with a Tier 1 fine, the lowest tier in the HDLC Illegal Demolition fine structure. The maximum allowable fine for the illegal demolition is 15% of the appraised value of the building which comes to \$55,560. At their meeting, the Commission agreed with the recommendation of the Staff for a minimal fine due to the circumstances of the case and made a motion to allow the retention of the demolition in excess of the approved drawings and levy a minimal fine of \$16,000.

Demolition Information   500 State			
Rating of Structure	Non-Contributing	Contributing	Significant
CofA Issued?		N/A	
Documentation of Existing Conditions Submitted	No		
Structural Integrity and Condition of Structure	N/A		
Demolition of primary facade, walls, and/or roof		Roof	
% of Demolition Approved		0%	
% of Demolition in Excess of Approved		0%	
Total Amount Demolition		60%	

Total Assessed Building Value: \$370,400  
 Fine Range\*: \$0 to \$55,560

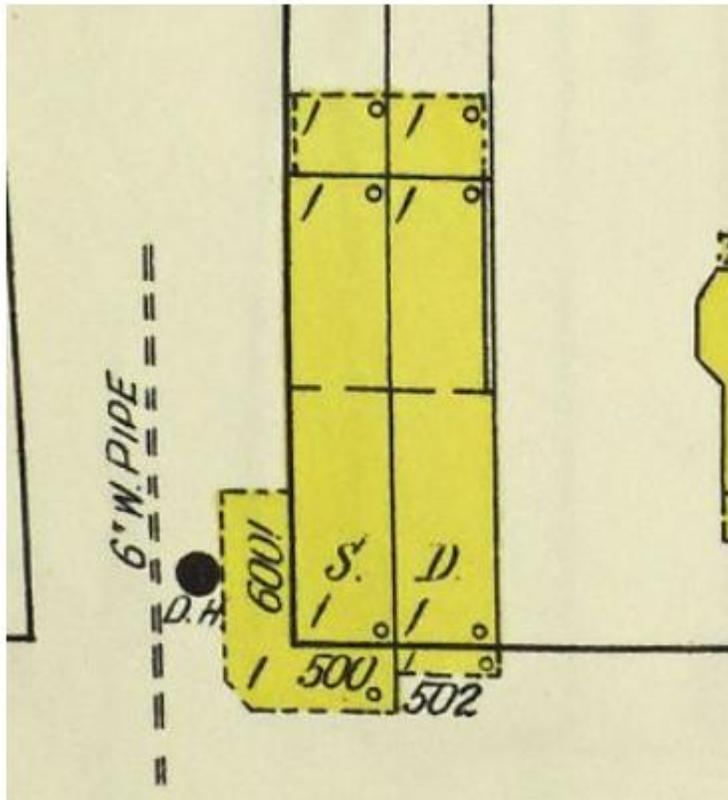
Recommended Fine Tier		
Tier 1	Tier 2	Tier 3
0%-33%	34%-66%	67%-100%
\$0	\$18,890	\$37,225
to	to	to
\$18,335	\$36,670	\$55,560

\* Maximum fine is 15% of certified assessed building value, as per the Assessor's Office, or \$25,000, whichever is greater.

The Staff thoughtfully reviewed the the facts of the case when recommending a Tier 1 fine. The Commission lowered that maximum amount from \$18,000 to \$16,000 and in doing so, the HDLC Staff and Commission were more than fair. The intense development pressure placed on the historic building stock of New Orleans demands substantive fines that disincentivize demolishing historic structures and filling up landfills. The applicants in this case, Crescent City Developers, LLC are seasoned Uptown developers who understand the rules and regulations of the City of New Orleans and the HDLC. Further lowering the fine will telegraph that developers may illegally demolish historic buildings with the consent of the City Council with only minor dents to their bottom line.



## Sanborn Maps:



1909

Additional information and photos may be found in the staff report:

<https://sites.google.com/view/no-cmm-090325/new-retention-applications/500-state-st>

Video of the hearing may be found here:

[https://cityofno.granicus.com/MediaPlayer.php?view\\_id=7&clip\\_id=5187](https://cityofno.granicus.com/MediaPlayer.php?view_id=7&clip_id=5187)