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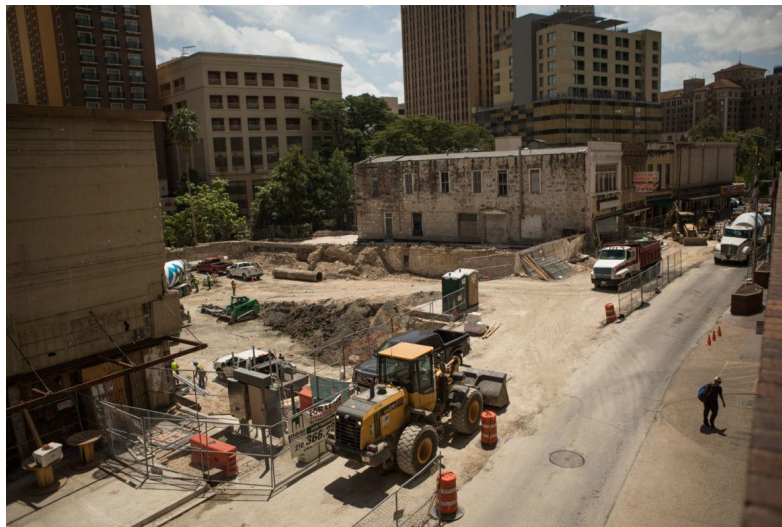
CITY PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT

HDRC Gives Final Approval for Hotel at Solo Serve Site



EDMOND ORTIZ h

8 HOURS AGO



BONNIE ARBITTIER / RIVARD REPORT

Construction crews work on an eight-story hotel that will replace the demolished Solo Serve building.

The [Historic and Design Review Commission](#)

(<http://www.sanantonio.gov/historic/HDRC>) approved the final design of an eight-story hotel on the River Walk. The Hampton Inn and Suites/Home2 Suites by Hilton will replace (<https://therivardreport.com/hdrc-gives-green-light-to-hemisfair-apartments-solo-serve-hotel/>), a section of the former Solo Serve building on Soledad Street that was partially demolished in March (<https://therivardreport.com/solo-serve-demolition-begins/>).

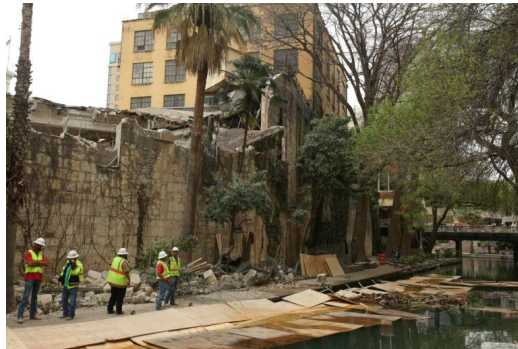
Austin-based Merritt Development Group and hotel developer Vista Host received conceptual approval from the commission last summer and construction crews have been preparing the site ever since. During the

demolition process, debris was accidentally thrown from the site (<https://therivardreport.com/solo-serve-demolition-debris-spills-into-san-antonio-river/>) onto a covered walkway and landed in the San Antonio River.

The hotel will include a river-level restaurant, street-level retail space, and a pool.

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The structure served as the Bexar County Courthouse in the 1870s. City staff and local conservationists have focused on the remnant of the old courthouse, a historic 11-foot brick wall facing the River Walk.



SCOTT BALL / RIVARD REPORT

Debris from the Solo Serve construction site falls on the San Antonio River and River Walk on March 8, 2017.

The approval comes with some stipulations, including that the developers keep the Office of Historic Preservation (<http://www.sanantonio.gov/historic/>) apprised of any other significant archeological findings around the property.

Patti Zaiontz, first vice president on the board of the San Antonio Conservation Society (<https://www.saconservation.org/>) was the lone resident to speak about the planned hotel. The Conservation Society wants to see more of the wall preserved and incorporated into the overall exterior design.

"The current rendering before you illustrates a wall liberally punched with arched openings," Zaiontz said, reading a letter from Board President Susan Beavin. "The Society urges that the proposed redevelopment retain more of the original wall. Fewer open spaces will better maintain the character of the original retaining wall rather than create a purely decorative screen."



COURTESY / THE HAMPTON INN AND SUITES/HOME2 SUITES BY HILTON

The eight-story hotel by Hampton Inn and Suites/Home2 Suites by Hilton will replace the now-demolished Solo Serve building.



COURTESY / THE HAMPTON INN AND SUITES/HOME2 SUITES BY HILTON

Construction documents illustrate what the hotel will look like at the street level on Soledad Street.

David Merritt, president of the Merritt Development Group, said a report on archaeological findings from the site has been submitted to the OHP, and that the City has closely monitored site preparation. Some of the limestone blocks from the wall are going to be relocated and reused on the property, he added.

"Elements of the wall are important to retain," Merritt said. "We think we've done a good job retaining important aspects of the wall and allowing access to the river."

HDRC Chairman Michael Guarino, an architect and educator, said he often takes his students by the former Solo Serve site to help them understand downtown's history.

"[The wall blocks] are unique and are a testimony to a number of buildings that have been on this site," he said.

Guarino commended the developers for attending an HDRC architecture review subcommittee meeting, praising their willingness to incorporate as much of the retaining wall as possible.

"Approaches I have seen from other developers would have been to tear the wall down," he said.

The commission unanimously approved the design. The hotel is among several projects in that area downtown, including the new Frost Bank Tower, expected to open in 2019 (<https://therivardreport.com/new-frost-bank-tower-groundbreaking-signals-downtowns-bright-future/>), and an 18-story boutique hotel (<https://therivardreport.com/esquire-owners-boutique-hotel-design-approved/>) on the River Walk next to the Esquire Tavern.
