



# Milwaukee Historic Preservation Commission Staff Report

## LIVING WITH HISTORY

<b>HPC meeting date</b>	<b>3/2/2026</b>	<b>CCF # 251241</b>
<b>Ald. Bauman</b>	<b>Staff reviewer:</b> Tim Askin	
<b>Property</b>	924 E Wells Street	University Club
<b>Owner/Applicant</b>	Northwestern Mutual	Kahler Slater

### Proposal

This is a re-hearing of a matter first heard in December. The majority of the alterations were approved at that time. A canopy over the main entrance on Wells Street was held over for additional design work.

The proposed canopy would be constructed of architecturally exposed structural steel members supporting transparent laminated glass. The canopy is designed with an elliptical barrel-vaulted arch. It extends over the sidewalk to provide cover from inclement weather for guests at the main entrance.

### Staff comments

The University Club was constructed in 1926 to the designs internationally renowned architect John Russell Pope. Later major projects included the Jefferson Memorial and the National Archives. This was his only Wisconsin commission and the design was published in a national architectural magazine. However, he was responsible for the first reconstruction of the St. Joan of Arc chapel, forty years prior to its donation to Marquette University.

#### *Wells Entrance Canopy. Guidelines*

##### *D. Terrace*

*The open terrace along the Prospect Ave. and Wells St. elevations of the University Club shall not be enclosed or filled in or removed, as this is a major design feature of the building...*

##### *E. Trim and Ornamentation*

*There should be no changes to the existing trim or ornamentation except as necessary to restore the building to its original condition...*

##### *F. Additions*

*No additions will be permitted on the Wells St. (south) or Prospect Ave. (east) elevations of the building, as these are the primary facades.*

The canopy is tucked under the decorative balcony and sits above the main entry. It is primarily glass and will be approximately 15' above sidewalk grade. It is just under 18' wide and proposed as 25' deep. The design can be loosely called neo-Art Nouveau based on the precedent images offered in the application materials. It is thus sufficiently differentiated from the historic Georgian style of the building.

Design changes since the last review are subtle, but notable. There is less bulk to the design and the roof is now noted to have a slope of less than 1:4. Width of the canopy has been reduced by 3" and it appears the thickness has been reduced although there were no dimensions on the previous drawings.

A determination on the Wells entrance canopy is left to the discretion of the Commission. It is unclear if this canopy meets the definition of "addition" in the sense intended by the designation report.

If the Commission chooses to approve the canopy, the following conditions are recommended:

- a) A structural engineering report of quality that is satisfactory to the Department of Neighborhood Services which indicates that building is capable of bearing the loads indicated without ground support.
- b) Comply with all other requirements of MCO 245-10. (Item b is complete as of the current drawing set.)