



Milwaukee Historic Preservation Commission Staff Report

HPC meeting date

4/3/2023

CCF 221766

Ald. Bauman

Staff reviewer: Tim Askin

Property

308 W Kilbourn (formerly 333 W. State) Milwaukee Journal Complex

Owner/Applicant

HKS Holdings, Inc.

Ethan Skeels, AIA
Kahler-Slater

Proposal

This proposed project consists of a new 8 story hotel constructed at the corner of MLK Jr. Drive and Kilbourn Avenue with a current address of 308 West Kilbourn Ave. The site is currently a surface parking lot, but is part of the history of the Milwaukee Journal Complex and subject to HPC review.

The new hotel building is a freestanding structure that is 8 stories tall. The L-shaped hotel form holds the street edges with activated uses and is respectfully consistent in height with the other buildings on the block. Since the last submittal in December, the building has taken on a more vertical expression with taller windows, especially with a 2-story base expression. In addition, the predominately masonry form has been interrupted to express a two bay wide entry condition which reads as a vertical slot on the east facade. This same slot language has been utilized on the west and north facades as well. The angled geometry motifs have been edited to be orthogonal and vertical in nature. In addition, the rooftop form has been more integrated into the project with vertical lines carrying through the facade.

The proposed materials for the new building consist of light toned brick masonry that is complimentary in color to some of the other buildings on the block and is carefully detailed to express mass and verticality. The masonry is accented with a dark stone base water table and dark metal panel trim and window framing. The rooftop level has operable glass walls and is set back from the masonry edge. It is crowned with a projecting roof form and clad with a soffit panels in a contrasting color.

Staff comments

Siting

The zoning requires a front setback of 10 feet. This would result in a 10-foot setback on King Drive. All parties agree that this is illogical.

Nonetheless, with the current siting, DCD recommends a subtle setback of no more than 2' to the west. This subtle adjustment would allow sidewalk area streetscape improvement, in order to maintain their aesthetic value and a good pedestrian realm. HPC staff recommends accepting DCD's judgment on the needs of the streetscape in this instance.

Form

All prior critiques have been addressed. The entry canopy is still understated, but it is now of a size that draws attention to the entrance. It is now part of full height design declaring the entrance and is suitable within this scheme. The form guideline is now met.

Scale

There is a coherence to the layers of the structure now that responds to the environment in a contemporary influence. The visual height of the ground floor brings the scale to compatibility the grand entrances of the main Journal Building, the Historical Society, Hyatt, and Panther Arena. It now fits into the context of this intended grand civic Boulevard. The verticality traditional to Milwaukee architecture is now expressed in the lines of the building. The west façade has been redesigned to be moderately expressive, while staying a secondary elevation.

Materials

Metal panels have been reduced to an accent function on the primary facades. In this de-emphasized way, they meet the intent of the guidelines. Metal panels are used extensively on the penthouse and west elevation. The

brick and stone are now so extensive that they still give the metal the character of an accent rather than a primary cladding. Materials now connect to each other in a way that brings coherence to the design. Recessed windows and vertical recesses in the brick have eliminated the flatness of the façade.

Recommendation

Approve with conditions

Conditions

Allow HPC staff, DCD, and DPW to further negotiate precise placement of the building on the lot and details of curb cuts and sidewalk area landscaping.

Previous HPC action Held for revisions in January

Previous Council action