



Department of City Development
City Plan Commission
Redevelopment Authority of the City of Milwaukee
Neighborhood Improvement Development Corporation

Lafayette L. Crump
Commissioner

Vanessa L. Koster
Deputy Commissioner

Ald. Bauman
4th Ald. District

CITY PLAN COMMISSION
ZONING REPORT

File No: [241814](#)

Location: 273 E. Erie Street, north of the Milwaukee River, south of East Erie Street

Applicant/Owner: Milwaukee Institute of Art and Design (MIAD)

Current Zoning: Downtown – Mixed Activity (C9G) and within the Historic Third Ward Riverwalk Site Plan Review Overlay Zone (SPROZ)

Proposal: The Milwaukee Institute of Art and Design (MIAD) is located at 273 E. Erie Street. MIAD is completing a renovation project within the existing building to add a Student Success Center, creating a space for students to receive counseling and tutoring services, along with study rooms.

This site is located within the Historic Third Ward Riverwalk Site Plan Review Overlay Zone (SPROZ) and proposed changes to the exterior of the building on the river-facing façade are the subject of this file. The proposal includes removal of existing concrete infill panels on the ground level of the Riverwalk side of the building and adding windows. These infill panels are located in former openings that provided access to interior ramps used to move goods and materials from cargo ships into the building.

The windows will be glass and black aluminum framed storefront windows and are designed to match the existing windows on the south facade of the building. Per the project architect, the existing adjacent windows are not historical; rather, they are modern storefront products which can be easily matched. The proposed windows will provide additional daylight and river views to the interior spaces.

The addition of the windows will improve the pedestrian realm of the Riverwalk, allowing users to view the activities happening within the building. The proposal will increase the active façade area along the Riverwalk, and is consistent with the overlay standards. There are no proposed changes to the Riverwalk hardscape or landscape.

The Historic Third Ward Architectural Review Board reviewed and approved this proposal at its March 12, 2025 meeting.

Adjacent Land Use:

Surrounding uses are zoned C9G and consist of a mix of neighborhood-serving uses, including retail and restaurants. Catalano Square Park is located north of the parcel. The parcel is bordered by the Milwaukee River to the west.

Consistency with Area Plan:

This Riverwalk segment is located within the area covered by the [Third Ward Area Plan](#), adopted by the Common Council in 2005, and amended to include [The Historic Third Ward Neighborhood Design Guidelines](#) in 2006. The Area Plan outlines the need for Riverwalk segments to provide a physical connection and design relationship, while providing a feeling of security and safety to potential users with appropriate levels of visual access from windows facing the Riverwalk (p. 42).

The Guidelines describe that windows should be preserved and protected against insensitive alteration and elimination. Window openings should replicate the original configuration. Further, the Guidelines stipulate that the blocking up of window openings or any portion of the window opening on the street façade is not permitted (p. 66) – this applies to façades that face the Riverwalk, as a public way. These windows were likely blocked before these Guidelines were established. Given that the applicant is proposing to reinstall windows that replicate the original configuration, these windows are consistent with the *Third Ward Area Plan* and *The Historic Third Ward Neighborhood Design Guidelines*.

Previous City Plan Action:

11/2000 – City Plan Commission recommended approval of amending the design guidelines for the Site Plan Review Overlay Zone established by Section 295-91-0021 of the former Milwaukee Zoning Code for the portion of Riverwalk located within the Historic Third Ward. (FN [990968](#))

Previous Common Council Action:

12/15/2000 – Common Council approved a file amending the design guidelines for the Site Plan Review Overlay Zone established by Section 295-91-0021 of the former Milwaukee Zoning Code for the portion of Riverwalk located within the Historic Third Ward. (FN [990968](#))

Recommendation:

Since these exterior changes to the river-facing façade of the building will increase transparency and activation along the Riverwalk, which is consistent with the overlay standards, staff recommends approval of the subject file.