



Milwaukee Historic Preservation Commission Staff Report

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HPC meeting date: 6/2/2025
Staff reviewer: Andrew Stern

CCF # 250158
Ald. Stamper

Property	1220 W. Vliet St.	Schuster's Department Store
Owner/Applicant	Ted Matkom – Gorman & Company 200 N. Main St. Oregon, WI 53575	
	Quorum Architects, Inc. Allyson Nemec 3112 W. Highland Blvd. Milwaukee, WI 53208	

Proposal

Gorman & Company and Quorum Architects are proposing a comprehensive rehabilitation of the former Schuster's Department Store / Marcia P. Coggs Health and Human Services Center. The project consists of exterior renovations, site redevelopment, and interior renovations of the systems and spaces. The proposed Vliet Street Lofts rehabilitation will include first floor space for Milwaukee County Behavioral Health Department, 62 residential units, and a lower-level parking garage. The project has an approved Part 1 tax credit application with the National Park Service and State Historic Preservation Office and has a Part 2 application submitted consistent with what is being reviewed with this COA application.

Proposed Scope of Work

Masonry

Repointing brick on the east, west, and south facades. Replacement of damaged brick with brick to match. Repair of all steel door and window lintels or replacement in-kind if too deteriorated to repair. Repair of all structural cracks.

Entrances and Storefront

All storefronts present are non-historic aluminum storefront systems. Where present, non-translucent glass will be replaced with glass to match the existing storefront glass. Metal panels and artwork in the panels will be removed and replaced with glass to match existing storefront glass. Artwork panels will be reinstalled within the building's interior. Existing storefront doors on the main (south) elevation will be retained, while those on the east and west will be replaced with new anodized aluminum storefront doors. The non-historic glass and metal canopy over the center entrance on the south will be removed.

New entry vestibule to be constructed on the north elevation

Windows

All windows are non-historic aluminum windows. All windows will be retained, with glass replacement to match existing translucent glass on those with non-translucent coating. Three new anodized aluminum-framed windows on the north façade.

Roof

Install low profile skylight to provide an interior lightwell for apartments below. Installation of roof top air condensers set back to not be visible from the right of way.

Site Redevelopment

Removal of entry vestibule and loading dock on north elevation, while keeping decorative brick pilaster and limestone pediment. New entry vestibule addition on north elevation with precast concrete base and brick cladding. Vehicular ramp and retaining wall to basement parking. Vehicular access will be from north-south alley access north of the building, with a secondary exit east to N 12th Street between the subject property and furniture store. Outdoor plaza north and west of the proposed ramp will include stamped and stained concrete, furniture fixed to the plaza, pergola structures, and concrete planters. A rain garden will be added adjacent to the plaza to comply with municipal stormwater management requirements. The refuse enclosure will be located adjacent to the building on the north

elevation, between the building and the vehicular ramp. A transformer will be added to the northwest of the plaza. Both the refuse enclosure and transformer will be enclosed with a mostly opaque painted metal fence.

Staff comments

The rehabilitation work on the exterior of the building takes a light touch and retains the historic character of the building, even while maintaining the non-historic aspects such as EIFS, the aluminum storefront system, and aluminum windows. The by utilizing historic tax credits, the project will adhere to the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation. The landscaping work and new entry vestibule on the north elevation do not detract from the character of the building and features such as the transformer and refuse are obscured with a mostly opaque painted metal fence. Staff recommends approval of the proposal with conditions

Recommendation

Recommend HPC Approval with Conditions

Conditions

1. New mortar must match the original mortar in terms of color, texture, grain size, joint width, and joint finish/profile. The compressive strength of the repointing mortar shall be equal or less than the compressive strength of the original mortar and surrounding brick or stone. The replacement mortar shall contain approximately the same ingredient proportions of the original mortar. Mortar that is too hard is subject to premature failure and could damage the masonry. See the city's books As Good As New or Good for Business, Masonry Chapters, for more information. In most cases, this means a lime mortar with natural hydraulic cement rather than Portland cement. No joint of a width less than 3/8" may be cleaned of damaged/decomposed mortar with power disc grinders. No over-cutting of the joints is permitted. Remove decomposed mortar back into the wall 2.5 times the height of the joint before repointing. When installing new flashing at a masonry feature, the flashing must be stepped or cut into the mortar joints. The bricks may not be cut to install flashing at an angle.

New brick/stone/terra cotta must match as closely as possible the color texture, size, and finish of the original.

A sample panel of the masonry materials and their mortar must be reviewed and approved by HPC staff prior to general installation of the material.

UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES SHALL UNPAINTED MASONRY BE PAINTED, BE GIVEN A WATERPROOFING TREATMENT, OR CLEANED BY ABRASIVE MEANS; THIS STATEMENT SUPERSEDES ANY OTHER WORDING IN THIS DOCUMENT INDICATING THE CONTRARY.

Previous HPC action

Previous Council action