



Milwaukee Historic Preservation Commission Staff Report

LIVING WITH HISTORY

HPC meeting date: 8/5/2019
Ald. Robert Bauman District: 4
Staff reviewer: Tim Askin
PTS #114799 CCF #190576

Property 1030 N. OLD WORLD THIRD ST.

Owner/Applicant FRED USINGER INC Fred Usinger Inc
1030 N OLD WORLD THIRD ST 1030 N Old World Third
MILWAUKEE WI 532031300 Milwaukee, WI 53203
Phone: (414) 276-9100

Proposal Remove existing non-lit letter signage and individually mount new illuminated channel letters in the same area. Current letters are 18" tall. New letters are 32" tall and have a total width of 34'. The width is similar to the original text.

Staff comments Based on a 1906 design rendering and a 1908 Journal photograph, staff concludes that the existing letters are original to the building. Therefore, they constitute "original trim and ornamentation" and would have been intended as a building name. A building name is not always the business name, but was in this case. There are at least three other examples within the Old World Third District of similar building-top names: Hinkle at 1001, Schonleber at 1019, and Wild at 1021. These are all parts of the character and design of the building and are not business signage. The businesses have long since left. It was also common for commercial blocks to bear the name of the owner, regardless of tenants. As the Commission would not consider removing the text from those buildings, the same should be applied to the Usinger building.

The new signage is not compatible with the architectural and historic character of the building in the location proposed. It would require removal of original ornamentation and it would overhang additional architectural elements and obscure their visibility. A different location should be considered, including a possibility of updating the letters on the projecting sign, which are not original to the building. Staff would recommend that a comprehensive sign program for the Usinger building complex be established.

Guidelines A.4. Trim and Ornamentation There shall be no changes to the existing trim or ornamentation except as necessary to restore the building to its original condition. The architectural fabric includes turned and carved wood trim, all terra cotta ornament, all pressed metal elements including the cornices, pediments and oriels, and all carved and cast stonework. Replacement features shall match the original member in scale, design, color and materials.

H. Signs The installation of any permanent exterior sign other than those now in existence [1991] shall require the approval of the Commission. Approval will be based on the compatibility of the proposed sign with the historic and architectural character of the building.

Recommendation Recommend HPC Denial

Conditions

Previous HPC action

Previous Council action