



Milwaukee Historic Preservation Commission Staff Report

LIVING WITH HISTORY

HPC meeting date: 12/11/2017
Ald. Robert Bauman District: 4
Staff reviewer: Tim Askin
PTS #114422 CCF #171150

Property	735 N. WATER ST.	First National Bank/First Wisconsin National Bank
Owner/Applicant	COMPASS PROPERTIES NORTH WATER STREET LLC 735 N WATER ST STE M180 MILWAUKEE WI 532024105	Sheldon Oppermann Compass Properties 735 N. Water St. Suite M180 Milwaukee, WI 53202 Phone: (414) 765-0305

Proposal This proposal is for a comprehensive sign package for a new tenant, which would become the primary tenant in the building. The proposal consists of the following:

1. Install rooftop sign with individual letters and logo that are internally lit with acrylic face 48'4 W x 6' - 8' H. Height above parapet is yet to be determined.
2. Monument sign of painted aluminum and stone near corner of Water and Mason Streets. Sign will feature push-through white letters with internal illumination and tenant signage, which will be of etched glass.
3. Color wall signs (two) with a bronze-painted border at the Riverwalk entrance
4. One vinyl wall sign on Water Street under the southern entry canopy (#735)

Staff comments The First National Bank/First Wisconsin National Bank building is significant as an important form of new skyscraper office design produced by the firm of D. H. Burnham and Company of Chicago. It was completed in 1914.

The primary issue in bringing this to the Commission is the proposal for a rooftop sign. To staff's recollection, this is not an issue that has ever been addressed by the Commission.

Staff recommends allowing the rooftop sign in the proposed two colors with the logo for daytime use. Evening should be limited to single color illumination (with limited white edges, if necessary for contrast). Staff has a mild preference for white or orange for the evening illumination, but is not significantly opposed to blue if that is the applicant's preference. Staff believes that multi-color illumination on a sign of this scale would detract too much from the character of the architecture.

The second proposal is a monument sign near the intersection of Water and Mason Streets, which will incorporate the building logo in push through letters and tenant signage in replaceable etched glass panels. It will have a granite base matched to granite on the building and a classically inspired sign base with pediment that will be aluminum painted in a bronze tone to coordinate with the building. The applicant rightfully notes that most large office buildings downtown that are not subject to local historic designation have monument signs. This monument sign is a reasonable request and the design is appropriate.

(over)

Staff comments (cont.)

Other signs are of modest scale at entrance areas and are small signs. Staff finds them approvable. One will be incorporated into existing entrance signage with interchangeable plaques for tenants on the Water Street side. Painted aluminum plaque signs will be placed next to Riverwalk entrance in places where there has historically been signage.

Staff recommends approval with a limited set of conditions.

Staff also requests a formal directive from the Commission that rooftop signs remain an issue to be reviewed by the Commission, while still leaving other signs to staff discretion.

Recommendation

Recommend HPC Approval

Conditions

1. Only one rooftop sign shall be permitted on this building and no additional signage shall be permitted above the third floor.
2. Allow reduction in sizes without further review, if necessary for permit approval.

Previous HPC action**Previous Council action**