



## Milwaukee Historic Preservation Commission Staff Report

LIVING WITH HISTORY

**HPC meeting date: 1/10/2022**

**Ald. Nik Kovac District: 3**

**Staff reviewer: Tim Askin**

**PTS #115232 CCF #211393**

**Property** 1534 N. FARWELL AV.

**Owner/Applicant** TFG Milwaukee IV LLC

Dan Beyer Architects  
225 E St Paul suite 303  
Milwaukee, WI 53202

**Proposal** General rehabilitation of the building with 1) new entrance awning on Farwell and removal of all fabric awnings, 2) replacement of storefront plate glass windows, 3) restoration of storefront transom windows 4) brick cleaning and repointing where appropriate 5) brick repainting/touch up where already painted, 6) insert four windows on rear elevation, 7) a rear addition for accessibility and additional egress paths, 8) modest rooftop penthouse with pergola.

**Staff comments**

- 1) The present marquee-style awning over the main entrance is non-historic, stylistically incompatible, and post-dates 1987. It replaced a period awning that was appropriate the style of the building. Demolition of the present awning is welcomed in the guidelines, but only if replaced by something similar in design to the original 1920s design. The post-modern industrial design proposed is not compatible with the overall arts-&-crafts-influenced commercial style of the building. A glass top that is less distracting from the character of the façade is acceptable within an awning that is more in the design spirit of the original.

Removal of the fabric awnings is acceptable. While such awnings are historically appropriate, they do not appear to be part of the original design and are no longer needed as to protect merchandise in display windows.

- 2) The large pane storefront windows on the ground floor are proposed for replacement with more energy-efficient models. Several of these plate glass windows are already non-original and lack wood frames. The proposed aluminum "Quaker or similar" are acceptable in this location, providing that any surviving original wood or metal trim is retained or replicated. Anodized frames should not be permitted. Paint/enamel finishes are acceptable.
- 3) Transom repairs are indicated and approvable.
- 4) Masonry repairs are necessary and acceptable if completed according to our standard conditions
- 5) The north and east walls are substantially painted and were painted long before designation. Re-painting should NOT use latex paint but is otherwise acceptable.
- 6) Brand and style of new windows for the rear is not discussed. Precedent makes clear that we cannot allow vinyl windows to be installed in new openings. These new windows should be non-clad wood.
- 7) Guidelines for this property prohibit "large rooftop construction or addition[s]," but allow for consideration of penthouses by the Commission, if the overall roofline and flat roof with parapet are preserved. The design as proposed complies with the guidelines for roofs and additions. The scale is proportional, yet it is clearly a subordinate structure and compatible, yet differentiated by style and a slight change in tone of brick. It is similar in form to other rear stair tower additions we have approved by the Beyer firm. The materials and proportions have been customized to this building.
- 8) Rooftop penthouse features metal-panel siding with a standing seam appearance. Staff is averse to the metal panel appearance, but the Commission has occasionally found them acceptable for rooftop penthouses with no ground level visibility.

**Recommendation** Recommend HPC Approval with conditions

**Conditions**

- 1) Work with staff on redesign of main entry awning canopy
- 2) No anodized finish on storefront windows, retain or replicate any surviving wood or metal trim
- 3) None
- 4) Standard masonry conditions, next page
- 5) No latex paint
- 6) Non-clad wood windows for new windows on east elevation
- 7) None
- 8) Overall: HVAC and laundry are not addressed. No HVAC or laundry vents are to be permitted on the street facades.

### **Masonry Conditions**

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 must match as closely as possible the color texture, size, and finish of the original brick.

A sample panel of brick and 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.**

### **Masonry Cleaning**

Most abrasive cleaning methods are prohibited on historic buildings by Wisconsin state law. Exceptions can only be granted in writing by the Wisconsin Historical Society. Chemical and power-washing are acceptable methods of cleaning that the city can approve. Pressure washing is to be conducted ONLY with fan tips with a spread of 15-50 degrees, maximum 800psi at the tip, flow rate less than 8gpm, and from a distance from the surface of a minimum of 12" inches. PSI of 400-600 is typically adequate, though it may take more time and more passes than higher pressures.