



Milwaukee Historic Preservation Commission Staff Report

LIVING WITH HISTORY

HPC meeting date: 6/4/2018
Ald. Robert Bauman District: 4
Staff reviewer: Tim Askin
PTS #114481 CCF #171814

Property	1013 N. OLD WORLD THIRD ST.	Old World Third Street HD
Owner/Applicant	WGS LAND LLC 2375 WOODBERRY CT BROOKFIELD WI 53045	Milwaukee Brat House 1013 N Old World 3rd St Milwaukee, WI 53203 Phone: (414) 273-8709

Proposal Retroactive approval of various signs in front and rear of building.

Staff comments This review comes to us via a citizen complaint about the height of the sign. The primary point of dispute is the projecting sign over the sidewalk, although it does not appear that any signs for the current business underwent review by HPC. On the front, staff counts 1 wall sign, 2 projecting signs sharing one bracket, 1 pole sign, 1 rolling cart A-frame sign, and numerous window mounted signs. In the rear, there is 1 wall sign. There are also numerous in-window signs that are outside HPC jurisdiction.

Front Wall Sign. While the Commission generally prefers depth to a sign, the fact that it has a hand-painted appearance and a painted border make it substantially in compliance with HPC standards. It is acceptable as existing.

Projecting Sign(s). The bracket at the front of the building has two signs hanging from it: a neon sign at the top above a hand-painted sign naming the business. At present, they do not meet sign code as the bottom of the signage is at 8'6" above the sidewalk. Sign code requires 10' above grade for safety. The design of the hand painted sign is acceptable. However, the height remains a serious issue. Prior approvals of signs in historic districts have held the sign ordinance as a baseline for sign approvals before applying design criteria. Therefore, the Commission should not allow the 8'6" height of the combined projecting signs to remain as is.

Staff feels the best solution is to retain the hand-painted sign while removing the neon sign from the bracket. The bottom of the business's main sign would then be very close to the 10' requirement at approximately 9'9". Raising it higher would damage the façade by requiring a new bracket in stucco or brick. The Board of Zoning Appeals has already granted approval for not complying with the 10' rule. It should be noted that this was approved over the objections of the Department of Neighborhood Services, the Department of Public Works, and the Department of City Development. All three departments found that the requirements for granting a variance were not met. DPW in particular noted that the "hardship stated by applicant was self-imposed." BOZA rulings are not binding on HPC.

The neon sign could be relocated behind a window without further oversight by the Historic Preservation Commission. Staff does not believe moving the neon sign to an alternate location on the front is a viable solution. A second projecting sign would not be in line with the Commission's standards for signs at a property with such limited frontage. A second projecting sign may also not be compatible with sign code. .

(over)

Staff comments (cont.)

Pole. The pole sign within the sidewalk cafe should be denied as excessive and it may impinge on city right of way. It appears to be permanently mounted in a former tree planter. It contributes to an excessively busy character for district as a whole.

Rear. Rear signage, consisting of a smaller copy of the front wall sign should be approved as existing. Both the neon sign and the pole sign could be installed in the rear without objection.

Recommendation

Recommend limited HPC Approval of the front and rear wall signs and the hand-painted projecting sign.

Conditions

1. Remove "Late Nite Brats" neon sign from the front exterior of the building.
2. Eliminate pole sign from front of building.
3. Reinstall hand-painted projecting sign on same bracket so that it comes as close as possible to 10' above the sidewalk.

Previous HPC action

Previous Council action