



Milwaukee Historic Preservation Commission Staff Report

Living with History

HPC meeting date: 10/14/2013
Ald. Jose Perez District: 12
Staff reviewer: Paul Jakubovich
PTS #88918

Property	100 E. SEEBOTH ST. Daniel Burnham Block, an individually-designated building	
Owner/Applicant	100 E SEEBOTH LLC 833 N JEFFERSON ST MILWAUKEE WI 53202	Karl R. Kopp 833 N. Jefferson St. Milwaukee, WI 53202 Phone: (414) 765-0615 Fax: (414) 732-8835
Proposal	Renovate exterior of the complex for adaptive reuse as a restaurant.	

Staff comments

This a major project that will preserve one of the few commercial buildings of its kind left in the city. Known historically as the Burnham Block, the cream brick building stained red at 100 E. Seeboth has an engaging character that is a familiar and visually important marker in the Fifth Ward next to the Milwaukee River. It is a rare surviving commercial building from the early 1870s that has a door front storefront in which the street-level storefront was originally comprised of consecutive pairs of swinging doors. While the original doors were removed long ago, the original openings remain intact and the plans call for the installation of wood millwork to duplicate the appearance of the original doors. New windows throughout the Burnham Block will be all wood and duplicate the original 4-over-4 appearance on the second story. The street-level doors will also feature divided lites to reflect the original designs of door front storefronts.

The development will include both the 1871 two-story Italianate style building and the one-story brick garage building behind it which was constructed in 1953. According to preservation guidelines for this property the commission may review only changes to the Burnham building.

The red stain on the Burnham Block was likely applied during the late 19th century and has become almost inseparable from the building's character. The proposal is to save much if not most of the patina that years of age, weathering and stain have uniquely produced on the brick and install appropriate new wood windows and doors. A technique of gently washing the exterior with very low water pressure will be employed. Completely chemically cleaning old cream brick is not always necessary or even desirable and the proposal to retain the stained, but somewhat mottled century-old finish on the brick is a most welcome, albeit different approach to preservation.

Both buildings have suffered extensive deterioration of the roof structures which will have to be completely replaced. The Burnham Block is divided by internal brick bearing walls into three equal sections. The middle section that will include the main entry doors will feature an elliptical opening in the roof creating what will be an open-air, central courtyard that will also retain the years of wear and deterioration on the internal walls. The approach is not unlike the movement in 19th century England known as the Romantic period when the great age and wear of fragments from past cultures were widely celebrated and often incorporated into the designs of new buildings and finely tended gardens.

The garage building will be used for dining and the rest of the Burnham Block will be used for a kitchen, restrooms and offices. The entire project is highly commendable for its very creative approach to the adaptive reuse of the existing buildings. The buildings are also contributing structures in the South Second Street National Register Historic District and are eligible for tax credits up to 30% of eligible project costs. It is worth mentioning that the while the garage building is not part of HPC review, the changes to the building, nevertheless, meet general preservation guidelines.

Recommendation

Recommend HPC Approval

Conditions

Sample of the washing technique for the brick and a sample of any tuckpointing must be reviewed and approved by HPC staff prior to the general commencement of that work.

Previous HPC action**Previous Council action**