



Milwaukee Historic Preservation Commission Staff Report

Living with History

HPC meeting date: 6/8/2015
Ald. Robert Bauman District: 4
Staff reviewer: Carlen Hatala
PTS #103224

Property 1023 N. OLD WORLD THIRD ST. Old World Third Street Historic District

Owner/Applicant

WELLS FARGO BANK NA	Vavra Design LLC
1455 W LAKE ST STE 306	1905 South First Street (studio)
MINNEAPOLIS MN 55408	P.O. Box 70087
	Milwaukee, WI 53207
	Phone: (414) 732-9163

Proposal This project involves two portions of the building, the storefront and the rooftop.

Staff comments

This building was constructed as a four story structure in 1894 for Enno Dorestan & Son, a dealer in paints, oils and glass, putty, artist's materials and painters' supplies. The company supplied builders and contractors and occupied the entire premises until 1911. The building was designed by Milwaukee architect C. F. Ringer. The upper two floors were damaged by fire in 1952 and removed. Despite the loss, the building is still a contributing building in the Third Street National Register historic district and Old World Third Street local historic district.

The current storefront, installed in 1977, features two entrances, separated by storefronts that are canted inward from a central pier. All of the framing of the glass and entrances features shiny mill finish metal.

The proposed new storefront will position both entrances at the south end (left) side of the facade and straighten out the walls to form one storefront with four windows. Each window will have a wood bulkhead and the remainder of the trim and doors will also be of wood. The windows will be insulated glass clear NanaWalls that fold open. The current awning will be removed.

The remainder of the front façade will stay the same including the second story windows and the masonry some of which is painted.

The applicant also propose to remove the rooftop structure that was built in 2008 for Bootleggers. This structure is irregular in shape and clad with cement board siding and is set back from the north and east walls for minimal visibility. Permanent planter boxes were built along the east and north perimeter to hold evergreen plants that would screen the cable rail guardrail system and screen the structure from the public rights-of-way.

Great care was taken in 2008 to make the Bootleggers rooftop addition almost invisible from Old World Third Street, both from vantage points across the street and to the north. It adds an accessory structure to the building but does not detract from viewing the building as a two-story structure.

The proposed new greenhouse-like structure is larger than its predecessor but is built of transparent glass with a movable roof system. There will be minimal visibility from across the street but the structure will be visible from the north. Note that building owners along Old World Third Street are improving the rear/alley facades of their properties in order to capture business from the Bradley Arena and that Turner Alley was dressed up to encourage pedestrians to walk to and from Old World Third Street.

The question becomes how much rooftop visibility is appropriate? Should a rooftop structure remain an accessory or should it be allowed to become almost an additional story? To quote from Paul's 2008 staff report regarding the first rooftop structure; "Minimizing or eliminating altogether the appearance of the rooftop construction is a top priority in National Register and local register historic districts."

Unlike the former structure, the new structure occupies almost the entire footprint of the rooftop. Its mass and size make it almost like an additional story to the building. It is set back more than 25 feet from the front (east) wall and is screened by foliage at this east end only. The existing structure is set back 32 feet from the front wall.

The very top of the gabled roof will be visible from Old World Third Street. It is approximately 20 feet tall. The height of the current rooftop structure is around 8 feet tall and it has a flat roof.

The north wall of the new proposed structure will be visible from the north and along Turner's Alley. The side walls are approximately 10 feet tall.

There is much to be said in favor of this new proposal. The structure itself is well finished and does not have the temporary appearance that the current one does.

It would be preferable to

The cladding material is glass and has some of the feel of a conservatory, albeit with modern and heavier glazing. And, like the previous structure, it can be removed at a future date.

There are two possible ways to make the proposed structure less visible. One is to reduce the height of the side walls and roof peak. This would most likely compromise the roof's ability to retract as it has a low roof pitch (6-12) now.

The other is to make the footprint smaller and retain the planter boxes and live foliage screening along the north elevation.

Recommendation

Storefront: Approve with modifications
Rooftop addition: Approve with modifications

Conditions

The storefront design is not meant to be an accurate recreation of the original storefront but the architect wanted to return a more period look to the facade by making use of wood and making it better fit in with the other storefronts. The bulkhead area below the windows can use additional details to be worked out with staff.

The rooftop addition should be pulled away from the north wall and screening, preferably with live foliage, should be added to minimize views from the street level as well as adjacent building occupants. Details can be worked out with staff.

Previous HPC action

Previous Council action