



## Milwaukee Historic Preservation Commission Staff Report

LIVING WITH HISTORY

**HPC meeting date: 1/10/2012**  
**Ald. Robert Bauman District: 4**  
**Staff reviewer: Paul Jakubovich**  
**PTS #72920**

**Property** 611 N. BROADWAY

**Owner/Applicant**

James Stephenson  
First Hospitality Group  
10275 Higgins Rd. Suite 380  
Rosemont, IL 60018

David Plank  
Kahler Slater, Inc.  
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Milwaukee, WI 53203  
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**Proposal**

Install new doors at entrances; respond to HPC concerns about canopy and ramp.  
Restore original cast iron original balustrade.

**Staff comments**

The commission reviewed exterior renovation plans in June 2011 for the Loyalty Block, as it is known today, and approved most of the plans with the exception of a proposed ramp and canopy for the Broadway elevation. The commission also requested detailed information on the entry doors that would be used.

The new plans call for elimination of the ramp on the front elevation and the accessible entrance will be at Michigan Ave. For the time being the front entrance canopy will be eliminated from the plans. The doors proposed for the building are full-view metal ones. The main entrance doors on Broadway and on Michigan will be electrically-operated. The other doors to the remaining storefronts on the building will be manually-operated. The architect met with HPC staff and some staff concerns about the doors and a transom were addressed in the revised plans that are being submitted to the commission

The balustrade will be carefully disassembled, cleaned of all rust and then reinstalled in the exact same location with a new a handrail. The existing handrail does not appear to be original.

In sum, with the changes that have been agreed to, HPC staff recommends acceptance of the proposal. The plans meet the preservation guidelines of the district and very little will change on the exterior of the building from the time it was built.

A sign proposed for the southeast corner of the building required additional detailing and it may be part of a later staff approval.

To briefly review the history of the building, it was completed in 1886 for the Northwestern Mutual Life Insurance Company according to the designs of the prominent Chicago architect Solon Spencer Beman. Beman began his architectural training in the New York office of Richard Upjohn, one of America's best-known 19th century architects. Mr. Beman moved to Chicago in 1879 and was commissioned by railroad car baron George Mortimer Pullman to design what would become the nation's first planned company town. Located on Chicago's Far South Side and known as the Town of Pullman, the project included more than 1,300 houses, a factory, monumental water tower, theater, church, hotel, market, and schools.

The Loyalty Block in Milwaukee is one of Mr. Beman's finest remaining commercial buildings in the country. The exterior walls are made of massive, solid granite blocks, which was a rare means of construction even in the late nineteenth century. The interior atrium space, although not part of HPC review, is one of the nation's finest of its kind remaining from the 1880s.

**Recommendation**                      Recommend HPC Approval

**Conditions**

**Previous HPC action**                      Reviewed preliminary plans in June 2011

**Previous Council action**                      None