



MILWAUKEE REPERTORY THEATER RENOVATIONS

EUA 3-21474 06 Feb 2024

milwaukee : 333 E Chicago St	414.271.5350
madison : 309 W Johnson St, Ste 202	608.442.5350
green bay : 124 N Broadway	920.336.9929
denver : 1899 Wynkoop St, Ste 700	303.595.4500
atlanta : 1401 Peachtree St NE, Ste 300	404.596.8006

eua.com

File No. 231681

Riverwalk Site Plan Review Overlay Zone (SPROZ)

108 E, Wells Street

“Theater has changed since we moved into our current home in the 1980s - and so has our community. While it has served us well for four decades, our aging and inefficient complex limits the productions we stage, the plays we develop, and the kind of educational impact we create. With a new theater complex, Milwaukee Rep will ensure world-class theater remains in the heart of downtown Milwaukee for decades to come.”

-Chad Bauman, executive director of Milwaukee Rep.

In the 1980's, The Milwaukee Repertory Theater (MKE REP) acquired the historic 1890/1900 Milwaukee Electric Gas and Railway powerplant along the Milwaukee River and converted the premises to a theater complex comprised of three performance venues. After years of study and preparation, the Milwaukee Rep is currently undertaking a significant remodeling necessary to attract and significantly enhance access and accommodation, engage the community and new audiences, and to advance their educational programming. Some exterior changes fall within the 50' Riverwalk SPROZ, and those items are the subject of this exhibit and the City Plan Commission's review. The exterior changes within the Riverwalk SPROZ include a new access door on the south façade, adjacent to the Riverwalk, and a new rooftop mechanical penthouse. There are also modifications proposed to the existing curb cut along Wells Street, within the overlay zone.

The historic powerhouse was constructed of steel and concrete and has some very robust and unforgiving areas with respect to remodeling challenges. Nonetheless, the iconic architecture and commitment to downtown Milwaukee compelled the REP to invest in updating the complex in numerous ways.

A reimagined glassy Wells Street theater entrance, with new grand stair and oversized elevator, provides – for the first time – a public lobby connecting all three performance venues.

The flagship mainstage theater is undergoing a significant transformation to enhance patron experience, expand accessibility, and to allow the Milwaukee Rep the unique ability to configure the stage in either a thrust or proscenium setting (thereby expanding the capacity to offer a variety of productions – including pre-Broadway and co-productions). A new fly space is being created by removing a complete floor of Dressing Rooms. Many back-of-house theatrical support functions will be moved off site to provide space necessary to reposition Dressing Rooms to be located directly adjacent to the mainstage theater – creating a completely accessible theater for the first time.

Furthermore, the Milwaukee Rep will create a new state of the art multi-purpose space and workshops for their Education and Engagement Center – allowing the company to expand public outreach and accommodation. This new Education and Engagement Center space, adjacent to the Milwaukee River, will be provided with direct handicap access to the riverwalk. The Milwaukee Rep intends to create a pleasant patio environment for staff and visitors – offering an opportunity for events to spill out onto the riverwalk (providing much needed activation in this block of the Milwaukee River). The entrance and adjacent seat wall are approximately 18' – 6" from the river's edge and will not encroach into the minimum 8' wide clear walkway along the river.

Nearly 50% of the project scope is dedicated to substantial mechanical, electrical, and plumbing systems replacement and upgrades. A new rooftop mechanical penthouse is necessary to support today's significant air

handling equipment (straddling the riverwalk overlay zone). The penthouse will be set back approximately 23 feet from the south edge of the building, and 16 feet from the west face, and will be 14'-4" feet tall, screened with a façade of horizontal prefinished corrugated metal with a continuous array of louvers on the west façade. The louvers are articulated by an A-B mullion pattern - complimenting the rhythms of the historic façade and the new Wells Street entrance.

This project is also being designed to comply with the National Park Service historic preservation guidelines. A Part II submittal for historic tax credits has been approved – including the new mechanical penthouse and accessible entrance. (Wisconsin State Historic Preservation Officer approval letter is included with this SPROZ submittal).



WISCONSIN
HISTORICAL
SOCIETY

November 28, 2023

Chad Bauman, Milwaukee Repertory Theater
108 E. Wells
Milwaukee, WI 53202

Re: Historic Preservation Certification Application
Project Number WI230547
Reviewed: **Conditional Approval**

Dear Chad Bauman,

On November 2, 2023, the Division of Historic Preservation received a Historic Preservation Certification Application for your property at 108 E. Wells/816 N. Edison Streets in Milwaukee. The building is individually listed in the National Register of Historic Places so a Part 1 application was not required for this project.

We have reviewed the Part 2 application and determined the proposed project will meet the “Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation” **if the conditions on the following page are met**. Enclosed is a copy of the signed Part 2 application.

If questions arise during your project, we have many new articles about maintaining and preserving historic buildings that you may find useful: www.wisconsinhistory.org/preserve-your-building

When all work is completed, the project must be closed out in order to claim/retain tax credit.

1. Take photographs showing the whole building from all sides, as well as detailed photos of the specific work that was completed on the exterior and interior. These photos should be digital and of a high resolution.
2. Download the Part 3 form (*Part 3: Request for Certification of Completed Work*). Fill it out with the *actual* costs of the eligible project work, and digitally submit it with the photos of completed work. This Part 3 form, with a signature from our office, will be required by the Wisconsin Department of Revenue to claim the tax credits.

If you have questions about this approval or the conditions, please contact Paul Porter at 608-264-6491 or Paul.Porter@wisconsinhistory.org.

Sincerely,

Paul Porter
Tax Credit Reviewer-Eastern District



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ASSIGNED PROJECT CONDITIONS

Building Owner Copy

PROPERTY NAME: Oneida Street Station/Milwaukee Repertory Theater

PROJECT NUMBER: WI230547

108 E. Wells Street/816 N. Edison Street

Milwaukee

In order for your project to be approved for income tax credits the following conditions must be met. A second copy of these conditions are being provided for your contractor's use. It is the building owner's responsibility that all conditions are met. Failure to meet these conditions results in project denial.

- 1) The rooftop mechanical penthouse will meet the Standards if the design modifications per the consultant John Cramer's email of Monday, November 27, 2023 are followed:
 - a) The rooftop penthouse height will be reduced by about 16 inches. To accomplish this, the penthouse roof beam sizes have been reduced by about 3-4 inches, and we will eliminate the current coping detail.
 - b) The rooftop penthouse will move east by about 8 feet. To accomplish this, the penthouse floor will cantilever east over the existing roof's long span truss system. Moving the penthouse any further east AND keeping the height of the penthouse down will not be structurally possible.
 - c) The east chillers have been moved further east. To make room for the eastward-shifting rooftop penthouse, the east chillers will be moved further east over the eastern one-fourth of the existing truss span. The chillers may be momentarily visible along Wells Street east of the Milwaukee Repertory Theater but we feel that this minimal visibility will not impact the building's historic character.
 - d) We believe the best penthouse approach to allow the penthouse to "fade into the background" is to create a very simple penthouse façade without articulated vent openings or too many vertical elements. Option 4 eliminates the coping and proposes a continuous louvered façade along the penthouse's west facade. The only detail introduced is a vertical mullion pattern arranged in an A / B pattern – reminiscent of the glass entrance and complimentary to the historic building's neoclassical rhythms.
- 2) New doors must be compatible with the historic building. To ensure compliance with the Standards you must submit manufacturer's details, including material and finish, for all interior and exterior doors for review.

- 3) Any new exterior lights must be compatible with the historic building. They must be installed through the mortar joints so as not to damage the historic masonry. They must not be overly large or numerous to alter the historic character of the building. To ensure compliance with the Standards you must submit the information requested above.
- 4) Interior architectural features and finishes of the building's industrial nature were either covered or removed during the 1980s remodeling. Some are assumed to exist consistently throughout the building unless additional documentation is submitted to demonstrate otherwise. Photographs showing the historic fabric preserved in place throughout the building and incorporated into the final design must be submitted with the Request for Certification of Completed Work.
- 5) The proposed redesign entrance lobby addition should adhere to the design presented. If alterations are needed, further consultation with SHPO is required to comply with the Standards.
- 6) This approval does not extend to work not yet submitted, details of which have not been submitted for review and approval to the State Historic Preservation Office. State regulations governing this program require evaluation of the entire project. This approval may be superseded if it is found that the overall rehabilitation does not meet the Secretary's Standards. Please submit for review the information regarding any additional work as soon as available to ensure conformance of the overall project with the Secretary's Standards.



Paul Porter for Daina Penkiunas, State Historic Preservation Officer

11/28/23
DATE



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