

Milwaukee Historic Preservation Commission
Staff Report



HPC Meeting Date: 12/03/2018

Ald. Bauman District: 4
Staff Reviewer: Tim Askin
PTS#114620 CCF#180978

Property	511 N. Broadway	East Side Commercial Historic District
Owner/Applicant	511 N Broadway LLC 225 E Michigan St #200 Milwaukee, WI 53202 joshua@jeffers.com 414-501-5610	J Jeffers & Co 225 E Michigan St #200 Milwaukee, WI 53202 joshua@jeffers.com 414-501-5610

Proposal The first version of this project was presented to the Commission in December 2017. This is a second revision that features subtle changes from that which was presented in October 2018. It is a nine-story mixed-use retail and office building with a significant aboveground parking component at the northwest corner of Clybourn and Broadway.

The ground floor of the Clybourn elevation will feature a full width, two-story storefront with a separate storefront on Broadway. North of the Broadway storefront will be the office building lobby followed by the parking entrance. Roughly, 60% of the first and second floors will be indoor parking and all of the third and fourth floors will be parking. The upper floors are dedicated to office space.

The proposed building is massed to provide a strong corner bookend for both Clybourn and Broadway. The proposed form is set back from the historic Mackie building to allow for continued exposure of natural light for the ballroom's feature windows and maintains a view corridor to the clock tower.

Staff Comments This property has been surface parking in the East Side Commercial Historic District for quite some time. Several properties on this land were lost to fire and unrelated structural deficiencies after the creation of the district.

This design is subtly altered from the October version. Most of the concerns previously expressed the have been addressed. Both the changed and unchanged items have been addressed in a narrative.

The most visible changes are the use of natural stone on the street-facing elevations and modified masonry accents. The altered masonry accents add depth and character while simultaneously emphasizing the unusual angles of the siting.

Mr. Wolosz cited inspiration from Spanish architect Rafael Moneo. Two possible references might have been invoked. The most likely is that of City Hall Extension for Murcia and is identified on screen.

The concerns were as follows:

1. More cohesive fenestration pattern on west wall. *Achieved, now linear.*
2. Add fenestration to north wall. *Added where feasible at northwest corner*
3. Refine SE corner to tie it in to the design concept together more coherently. *Design intent is clarified, but there have been no changes. Commissioners Jarosz and Bauman particularly opined on the apparent incongruity of this feature.*
4. Further address vehicle shadows and visibility of parking. *Windows will have backlighting and not have views to the interior.*
5. Limit Cordova Stone to Chiselface, Rockface, and Groundface textures. *This artificial stone has been eliminated from street-facing elevations and replaced with natural stone. Groundface has been selected for the west elevation.*
6. Consider requiring full height masonry on west and north walls

Changes declined because of cost concerns. Staff is willing to concede the point on these secondary elevations. Commissioners did not seem exceptionally concerned about this point.

7. Consider significant alterations to cladding and fenestration of northeast corner setback. *Unchanged and architects indicate that the depth of the setback is sufficient to mitigate these concerns. A new section drawing is provided. Staff is not fully convinced of this point.*
8. Submit drawings with thorough dimensioning of façade elements and heights. *Received and they provide sufficient clarity.*
9. Submit HVAC plans that include any proposed penetrations of the street-facing facades. *HVAC plans are not complete, but written assurances have been provided. The street-facing elevations will not be marred with mechanicals other than intake vents disguised with trellised green screens at the garage entrance.*

Metal on primary elevations

The setback in the northeast corner has an abrupt change in materials and fenestration. The switch from masonry with rhythmic fenestration to metal panels with arrhythmic windows is an extreme contrast. By changing both, the change calls attention to itself in a way that should be de-emphasized on a secondary portion of the primary elevation. The surrounding buildings decrease their detail as they rise higher, this design increases detail as it goes upward by virtue of maximizing contrast. Staff believes either the masonry should be continued or the fenestration pattern should be continued up for the full height. Continuing the fenestration pattern vertically is likely the best of these options and certainly the most economical.

Guidelines for New Construction

It is important that additional new construction be designed to harmonize with the character of the district.

1. Siting: New construction must reflect the traditional siting of buildings in the district. This includes setbacks, spacing between building, and the orientation of openings to the street and neighboring structures.

The siting is nontraditional, but leaves substantial sightlines to the historic buildings surrounding it. This Commission approved the siting in October.

2. Scale: Overall building height and bulk, the expression of major building divisions including foundation, body and roof, and individual building components such as overhangs and fenestration must be compatible with the surrounding structures.

The building is tall at 9 stories and 112' at the bottom of the parapet. The parapet height is unknown. It pushes the outer limits of what should be acceptable in this historic district, but does not quite cross that line. The major building divisions on the masonry portions of the street-facing facades are harmonious, rhythmic, and generally fit the district, excepting the corner projection, which appears as separate building.

Windows in the masonry sections are unchanged from the last review. The rhythm and verticality and their dimensions work with the scale and indicate an awareness of context. Nonetheless, the number of window configurations is high.

3. Form: The massing of new construction must be compatible with the surrounding buildings. The profiles of roofs and building elements that project and recede from the main block must express the same continuity established by the historic structures.

The form is essentially rectangular with a major setback from the northeast corner. Windows in the masonry sections are grouped in a way that is reflective of the surrounding buildings. It attempts to tie together the verticality of the Romanesque Button Block with the horizontality of the Mackie Building. Window patterns in the metal-panel clad areas are of contrast to those in the masonry sections. It is notable that towers are prominent features of the large historic buildings on this block and that feature is absent here. The essential form meets the intent of this criterion.

4. Materials: The building materials that are visible from the public right-of-way should be consistent with the colors, textures, proportions, and combinations of cladding materials traditionally used in the district. The physical composition of the materials may be different from that of the historic materials, but the same appearance should be maintained.

Staff still holds concerns about the use of metal panels on the primary elevations. Natural masonry and shadow effects enhance the street-facing elevations. This is a recommended and appropriate detail for a building in a historic district. The staggered lines of header bricks have been tweaked to emphasize the verticality and angularity of the Broadway elevation. The change in the brick accent is good and welcome. Nonetheless, continuity is lacking at the projecting corner; its ties to the rest of the building are almost exclusively along the top floor. This should be addressed.

Materials on the masonry portions of the street-facing elevations are satisfactory as revised. Where the metal panels and storefront systems become dominant at the SE corner, they create a discontinuity not found in the neighboring historic buildings.

Secondary elevation (west and north) materials are acceptable. The Cordova stone synthetic stone product was previously approved for the St James apartment tower in certain limited finishes. (The St. James apartment tower addition has been cancelled by the developer). The Cordova can again be accepted here.

All of these guidelines lead to a few essential questions for the Commission to consider:

1. Does the proposed new construction support and enhance the historic district or detract from it?
2. How can the compatibility be clearly outlined and defined? What makes this building compatible? How is it different from a building that could be placed elsewhere downtown and not in this historic district?
3. Compatibility and differentiation are not mutually exclusive and one should not be prioritized over the other. Do these two considerations strike the right balance?

Staff is mostly satisfied, but still has concerns about the integration of the metal paneling on the primary elevations and the great number of window configurations. Most other concerns have been addressed in an adequate fashion.

Recommendation **Approve or hold.**

Conditions If held, further revisions of metal panel areas on the street-facing elevations.

Previous HPC Action Approval of subtly modified footprint and 9-story height 10/1/2018, this file.
Approval of footprint and 7-story height on 12/11/2017, CCF#171155.