

This project is the renovation of a vacant space that was most recently occupied by a bank (left in 2009) at 2650 N Downer Ave. The goal of this project is to create a space that brings together the following: **1.** The needs of Stone Creek Coffee and its brand standards. **2.** The current character of the street and its unique, historical elements. **3.** The Downer Avenue Preservation Guidelines.

The guidance for our work has come from the meetings we have had with Tim Askin and the staff at HPC, a detailed review of the Downer Ave Preservation Guidelines, a reading and review of Good For Business, A Guide to Renovating the Exteriors of Older Commercial Buildings, a review of Horseless Age: The Automobile Trade Magazine, Issue 31, and finally extensive Google image searches of early 1900 buildings in metro Milwaukee for inspiration and guidance.

Our scope of work encompasses demolition of pieces of the building that have been added over the years, restoring and renovating the exterior façade, and repurposing a small parking lot into a patio, and a complete renovation of the interior space.

## **Demolition**

Given the current conditions of the building one of the most impactful things we can do to restore this building is not by adding anything but rather by what, and how, we remove elements that have been added by previous owners and tenants. The previous tenant in this space was Associated Bank. The current north end of the Mulkern Building has a very heavy “eyebrow” of flat white stone along with a contrasting upper and lower black metal banding. This heavy element wraps the building and destroys the integrity and character of the original building elements including the anchoring vertical brick pillars on the north end of the building. Secondly, when Associated Bank took over the space they added a two drive-thru that also carries this heavy eye-brow feature. It is our proposal to remove this drive thru addition as well as the eyebrow to restore the façade of the building back to its original character.

## **Façade Renovation**

### Downer Ave Facade

On the Downer Ave. facade, our plan is to remove the eyebrow element and return the facade to its original material. Additionally, we plan to add a slightly faded simple “STONE CREEK COFFEE” to the wood element above our space. This sign will be executed to feel old and slightly faded - we want it to feel like it has been here for many years and play into the slightly unkempt nature of this wood.

Additionally, on the Downer Ave facade we will be creating and operating a walk-up window, within the existing window openings, that will be designed to function like an old ice cream walk up Ice Cream stand. We will be creating a custom tile element that reads “COFFEE TO GO” to be installed directly below this walk-up window. The rest of the lower facade will be painted wood to match the existing façade wood.

### Park St. Facade

On this north side facade, we will also be removing the heavy stone eyebrow element and returning the building lines and material to their original material. This will involve some infill brickwork, which will match the existing, where we remove the drive-thru. All original materials will be used and restored.

Additionally, we will be install a wood painted sign that says “THE GET DOWNER”. This sign was inspired by the many painted billboards painted on the side of old buildings in the early 1900’s.

Moreover, on this facade we will install a set of metal awnings that are inspired by the fruit market awnings that can still be seen today in the 3rd Ward. These awnings are made of simple corrugated metal and simple metal framing. Not a lot of detailing, but high on function and simplicity. The lighting under the simple metal awnings will be porcelain period specific fixtures (1930’s).

As we reviewed the history and uses of the Mulkern Building we learned more and more about how cars were serviced, stored and fixed in this building. We felt that putting garage doors on this North facade was in keeping with the original use of the building. In fact, in the oldest photo we could find of this building there were actual garage doors install on the Downer side of the building on the very south end of the building and the very north in what is now our space. The garage doors will be installed not in the original Mulkern building but rather in the small addition built many years later.

This add on-building will function as a seasonal porch opening the garage doors to the patio during the warmer months while providing a comfortable place to lounge in the colder months to provide year-round activity on this side of the building.

We have specifically designed the porch to be in this different add-on building to be respectful to the nature of how these buildings relate to each other. Our customers will also feel those vibes. Finally, we felt the garage doors and the open free flow from the porch to the patio was in keeping with the beer gardens that made Milwaukee famous as customers flow from the inside to outside fluidly. In this case we are serving Milwaukee's other brew - coffee.

### **Parking Lot to Patio**

For over 10 years I lived just north of this site. As my wife and I walked past this site it was always filled with cars and very much called out for some love. Our plan for the parking lot is to rip out the parking lot and put in an outdoor patio with more green space, natural materials including wood tables and benches, board form concrete planters with grasses and flowers, Edison lights overhead for a warm glow at night.

The patio will be made of sealed concrete with charcoal colored tumbled brick inserts and boards. All the concrete planters and concrete formed benches will be poured using the “board formed” concrete method to be sensitive to how this concrete would have been poured before 4 x 8 sheets of plywood.

On the eastern edge of our patio we will be installing a rough-cut cedar fence that will be natural and will weather over time to a patina gray. The fasteners will be a slotted round head stainless steel.

### **Conditions and Context:**

This current site has presented many challenges. The current ownership situation has made

the development of this project a tad difficult. The 1st and 2nd floors of the Mulkern Building are owned by two different groups, by virtue of condo structure that is currently in place. The 2nd floor landlord is not currently using the space and has done very little to maintain the space including currently allowing many broken windows directly above our space.

Additionally, our end of the building has been empty for over 10 years and many of the mechanical systems, facade materials, roofing material, etc are in poor repair or not working at all.

We decided to tackle this project over 2 years ago because we love Downer Ave and very much would like to join the effort to create a vibrant Downer Ave district. We love our space and all the potential we have to create a project the neighborhood will love.

Finally, we want to say thanks to the folks at the city DCD office, our alderman Nik, and the staff at HPC - without these folks this project would not have come to life. Thank You.

Eric Resch and the Design Team of Stone Creek Coffee