Approved Conditionally by CPC on 11/10/2014
"Obtain Certificate of Appropriateness from HPC"

Project Narrative for the Building 29 Renovation (part of the Brewery Project Site)
Submitted as part of the Application for Development Incentive Zone on October 21, 2014
Project Location: West Highland Avenue and 9th Street, Milwaukee, Wisconsin
Owner: Blue Ribbon Suites, LLC
Architect: HGA Architects and Engineers

East Elevation (along 9th Street); Photo from June 2014

Building History and Original Construction:

Building 29 was the Bottling Plant for the Pabst Brewery. It was built in three phases, the original building was constructed in Circa 1889; a large addition was added in Circa 1910; and a small final addition in Circa 1911. The existing structure contains approximately 250,000 SF and stretches for the full block along West Highland Avenue between 9th and 10th Streets and three quarters of the block from West Highland towards West Juneau Avenue.

The building is a two-to-three story cream city brick building which sits on a rock-face coursed limestone base. Historically the building reflects the industrial aesthetic of the late 19th century and was built as part of the Pabst brewing complex that all used a similar architectural language and similar materials. Built in three phases the exterior uses similar cream city brick and aesthetic details featuring jack arches over windows, tall crenulated parapets, and tower and chimney features. The original building had wood windows, however subsequent additions began to use metal windows. The roof of the building featured two long ventilation and light monitors as well as frequent skylights for daylighting the bottling area. Structurally the building reflects the construction techniques of the times that they were built in: with wood timber columns and joists in the original building, the addition of steel columns and beams in the circa 1910 addition and the use of concrete beam and floor construction and a steel/clay tile roof system in the final addition, circa 1911.

Current Building Condition:

Building 29 has been vacant since the Pabst Brewing Company ceased operations in the complex in December 1996. The interior manufacturing equipment along with the heating/cooling, plumbing and electrical systems were removed from the building previously.

Hammel, Green and Abrahamson, Inc.
HGA Architects and Engineers, LLC
HGA Architects and Engineers, LLP

333 East Erie Street, Milwaukee, Wisconsin USA 53202-6005
Telephone 414.278.8200 Facsimile 414.278.7734
Visit our Website : www.hga.com

The exterior brick walls have been modified in numerous locations and ways: with the insertion of new loading dock doors; the addition of new window, louver and door locations; the infill of original windows (with new materials including glass block, concrete block and different types of brick); and several bridge connections and building additions (now removed). The face of the brick is very soiled and there is significant areas were mortar is missing or has been replaced with incompatible concrete mortar repairs. The tall parapets have been surveyed and while mostly intact have moved and are out of plumb by as much as 4"; many of the parapets have received temporary bracing and netting. Portions of the exterior brick face and all of the interior brick walls have been painted.

Many of the original windows in the building have been replaced with metal or vinyl replacement windows. However, some original wood and metal windows do remain – the sills and bottom sashes are typically in poor condition.

All of the skylights from the original design have been removed and infilled with wood decking/roofing. The original vertical face of the ventilation monitors have been re-clad with vinyl siding, however, the octagon element on the west side of the roof is believed to have the original corrugated metal siding. The roof membrane has some damage and holes, however, the over-all roof structure is in good condition.

Very few interior walls, features or fixtures remain. The original three stair towers on the east façade are intact, however most interior doors and other interior features are no longer present (other than structural floors/walls and columns).

Proposed Building Use:
The building is proposed to be renovated for dormitory, extended stay hotel, educational (university), retail and restaurant uses. Blue Ribbon Suites, LLC proposes to sensitively rehabilitate the building into 150 dormitory units for university students, included in that is a small portion of extended stay hotel rooms (for visiting parents, relatives and others), and additional supporting amenity spaces such as offices, food service court and dining, fitness room, study lounges, laundry and supporting retail spaces (such as a potential coffee shop, convenience store and/or branch bank). It is intended that the dormitory units will house international students who will attend local universities such as Marquette, UWM, MATC, MSOE and Concordia University.

Compliance with 'The Brewery Project DIZ Guidelines':
Massing, Fenestration and Materials: Building 29 is being restored in a historically sensitive manner to preserve the character of the existing building. To the extent possible existing materials are being maintained and restored. The original window locations are being restored. All glass used will be clear low-'E' glass. There are no building additions– the full existing building will be restored and reused. There are two primary entrances into the building both utilizing historic entry locations into the building. The primary resident and public entry occurs on 9th Street and is an existing entry that will be featured in the central tower of the east façade. The ADA ramp providing the accessible entry to the main level, where the secure student access point and the public food court are located, is concealed inside of the building to minimize impact on the exterior façade. A secondary public access point occurs near the corner of West Highland Avenue and 9th Street. Both public entries will utilize a simple glass entry system inserted into the width of the existing openings that allow the historic masonry and façade materials to have precedence.

Pedestrian Accommodations: Building 29 is ringed by existing sidewalks along 9th, 10th and West Highland Avenue; the existing alley to the north will be maintained and improved with concrete paving.

Vehicular Circulation and Parking: The building, alley and sidewalk fill the entire site so there is no space available for on-site parking. An existing drop off zone aligns with the primary entry on 9th Street and there is existing parallel parking along 9th, 10th and West Highland Avenue which will be maintained, however, the primary parking for residents and visitors will be in the adjacent Brewery parking structure. Access through the north alley will be restricted with collapsible bollards (approximately at the mid-point) – the alley will provide access from 9th Street for deliveries, trash removal and emergency vehicles, however the alley is intended primarily as a pedestrian walkway.

Site Improvements: Amenities including bench seating, a bicycle rack and trash receptacle will be provided at the primary public entry along 9th Street; the style of these elements will coordinate with the over-all Brewery complex. It is important to note that an interior bike storage room will be provided for the residents; it will have easy and direct access off of the north alley and will accommodate up to 150 bikes. There are two interior trash rooms – both are within the building but with direct door access to the north alley; one which serves the dormitory units only and one which serves the retail tenants and dormitory use. The delivery/loading area for the dormitory and retail uses again occurs along the north alley – just off of 9th Street and is internal (served by an overhead garage door) and is not visible from the primary facades of the building. All mechanical equipment is internal or concealed on the rooftop – there are no transformers or mechanical equipment visible on the exterior of the building. The site and sidewalks are lit by existing light poles which will be maintained; the public entries on 9th and West Highland Avenue will be internally lit; new building mounted LED lighting will be added along the north alley for safety and security. Green space on the site is extremely limited because the existing building, bio-swales and sidewalk systems utilize almost the entire site; however a narrow grass area along 10th Street and a green strip at the corner of West Highland and 9th Street up to the primary public entry will be maintained as green space and be planted with street trees where the space allows. Signage will comply with the Brewery Project DIZ Guidelines, however, this will be reviewed with City staff, once the retail component of the project is determined. The area to the northwest of Building 29 will contain a below grade storm water detention system – after installation of the system that area will be restored to its current condition of gravel/stone area. A tentative park is being planned for the northwest corner – but the area is not part of the Blue Ribbon property.

Proposed Work and Impact on Building Features:
On the exterior, the damaged masonry walls will be stabilized, repaired, portions rebuilt and all exterior masonry will be cleaned. The tall parapets will be taken down and rebuilt with salvaged brick from the site. Missing and repaired concrete mortar will be replaced with new mortar tuckpointing. Many of the infilled openings will be restored to their original condition and most of the locations where dock doors or other unsympathetic louver or openings where cut into the original brick fabric will be rebuilt using matching brick from the brewery site. Currently, the exterior brick and masonry is being cleaned – this followed a review of test samples and specification by SHPO's Mark Beuchel and a COA review for exterior brick cleaning by the City's Paul Jakubovitch. Some of the buildings' exterior industrial elements – such as signage, railings, vents, standpipes and brackets and supports will remain or be reinstalled after repairs.

The window strategy will feature a blend of restored wood windows, new wood replacement windows, and new metal replacement windows. All replacement windows will feature historic replications of brick molding, sash profiles and muntin and sill details. The current monitor windows will be replaced with historic replicas. Many of the original skylights (now removed) will be reintroduced into open/public areas of the building. The existing east side stair towers are intended to be restored utilizing the refurbished metal treads and risers with potential updates to meet code requirements.

The overall intent will be to celebrate the building's industrial past by exposing the structural and ceiling/floor elements to the extent possible. The dorm suites will be arranged on the perimeter to maintain all of the existing window openings in bedrooms and living rooms. The existing interior face of the brick perimeter walls will be exposed in the bedrooms, the existing brick arched structure, wood joists and deck or clay tile structural systems will be exposed as ceilings in the bedrooms and living rooms of the units; only the bathrooms, kitchenettes, and entries of the units will have new ceilings. The intent is to expose as much of the varied structural columns and flooring systems as possible – in the corridors to the dorm suites the wood columns will be exposed and each of the dorms suites will experience a part of the original materials through exposed columns, brick walls and structural wood, brick arches or clay tile ceilings. Again, after review from SHPO's Mark Buechel, the interior coatings removal began late this summer, the results have been dramatic and the revealed a wonderful mix of wood decking, metal accessories, brick arches, and clay tile materials which will be prominently featured in the new building.

Programmatically, light wells will be created under the existing roof monitors providing a way to get daylight into the center of the building – but they will also serve as a place where the full extent of the buildings' structural framework is exposed in three bay-wide by 170 foot long lightwells featuring the original monitors and reintroduced skylights.

Mechanical rooms and support spaces have been located along the north façade (the most altered and least significant alley elevation). The generator room, electrical room, laundry room and mechanical room are all along this first floor north elevation which is partially underground and windowless for the most part. The receiving area and trash rooms are also located along this north alley façade.

The proposed main entrance to the building will occur along the east elevation (9th Street) at the central tower and one of the original large entry openings into the building. The original opening width and materials are maintained, and the entry is marked with the addition of a simple glass canopy for protection and an all-glass entrance system reveals the existing brick walls and wood structure inside. The restaurant and retail elements will stretch along the interior of the east façade on the first level. The entrance for students and guests also occurs at this location. A secondary smaller entry will occur along the West Highland Avenue (south) façade near the east corner.

The existing mechanical, plumbing and mechanical systems were removed by a previous owner and will need to be reinstalled. New equipment and systems will be installed to meet code requirements. HVAC ductwork, piping and conduit will be exposed where ever possible - in keeping with the industrial character of the building.

The over-all strategy of the renovation is to reintroduce the locations of all of the windows and openings in their original configurations. The exterior cream city brick will be restored, cleaned and portions rebuilt to reflect the original design and with the industrial signage, railings, brackets and vents restored and exposed. The interior will celebrate the beauty and variety of the materials used in the construction and will expose many of the columns and structural elements of this industrial building.