

MILWAUKEE HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION STAFF REPORT



Date	12/8/2025	Ald.	Perez
CCF	251026	Reviewer	Tim Askin
Address	235 S 2 nd Street	Owner	Robert Chandler Mistie Rodberg
District	S. 2 nd Street	Applicant	Anderson Ashton Design/Build

PROPOSAL

Storefront and window renovations of the ground floor to accommodate single tenant usage of the entire ground floor. The existing non-historic storefront

STAFF COMMENTS

Existing storefronts are not historic and date to approximately 2000. The north storefront has been enclosed since at least the 1970s. The present south storefront seems inspired by Paul Jakubovich, but the detailing and proportions are not at his usual standard. Despite the relative recentness of the renovation, permit drawings for the storefront have not been located. This work predates the 2016 designation of the district.

Scale. The proportions of the proposed storefront are off, thus they are off in “scale” per the guidelines. While the transoms do align with the central entry door’s transom, it is unclear what the National Park Service staff were thinking when they approved the design for the center entry door and it should never have been flush with the façade. It does not match what little is known of historic conditions. Standard 3-foot doors are not appropriate when attempting to recreate 19th century storefront. Double doors are standard. While accommodations can be made for accessibility, the 2nd Street doors are not intended to be wheelchair accessible and cannot physically be made so, therefore double doors should be used. The details on the metal doors also do not align with the divisions of the bulkhead and glass, rails are much too thick and create an awkward appearance. Finally proportions of the sections of the façade do not follow the scale established by the historic columns. There is no visual connection between any portion of the storefront system and the details on the columns.

Materials. *Living With History* states that it is possible to create a historic storefront out of modern aluminum storefront, it is not conceivable that using this amount of such a system was what Jakubovich meant when he wrote that. It is impossible to match the careful details of his typical drawings with such rectilinear materials. This design also constitutes a degradation of the quality of the materials of the south storefront. While we cannot require the existing south storefront to be retained as it is non-original, this Commission has generally not permitted renovations to decrease the quality of façade materials.

Form: Bulkhead detailing cannot be accomplished with a simple pressed metal that attempts to mimic the layers of wood. It does not create the depth required for a traditional appearance. In buildings of later eras, there is some flexibility of materials and depth and texture can be created with tile, but in an 1850s building, only carefully constructed trim detailing is appropriate.

This is also a rare case where a written objection to the design has been filed by a neighboring property owner.

RECOMMENDATION

Hold for revisions. The general concept of the design is workable, but materials and details are not up to the Commission's standards.

PRIOR ACTION

N/A