



Milwaukee Historic Preservation Commission Staff Report

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HPC meeting date: 11/4/2019
Ald. Russell Stamper II District: 15
Staff reviewer: Tim Askin
PTS #114870 CCF #191021

Property	4243 W. NORTH AV.	Sherman Boulevard HD
Owner/Applicant	FINNEY ARTS INCUBATOR LLC C/O MATTHEW BOHLMANN 4905 W WASHINGTON BLVD MILWAUKEE WI 53208	Matthew T Bohlmann Phone: (414) 688-6639

Proposal This project involves the creation and redesign of two areas along the western and southern facades to produce new entrances. The proposals affect the 1979 addition and the 1987 parking lot. The exterior of the original 1953 section will not be impacted.

The first, southern entrance currently exists as a concrete block wall. It will be replaced with concrete knee wall topped with aluminum sash storefront windows and a double door entrance in similar design to the original main entrance. 36" square Luster board panels replicating porcelain enamel steel panels will be utilized to clad this entrance. A "mid-century" color palette will be utilized.

At the western facade, an existing loading dock will be converted to an accessible entrance. It will serve as the new Sherman Boulevard entrance. In its current state and design, the loading dock is incompatible with modern delivery trucks. The applicant proposes to replace the overhead door with aluminum sash storefront doors and sidelight windows. To make the entrance accessible, the applicant proposes to install a hardwood deck that would rise the below grade concrete loading dock surface. The deck will be utilized as a patio space and aid in making the entrance more accessible.

Staff comments

Overview

The 1979 addition to the building was inelegant and was built to the lot line. When the parking lot was expanded in 1987, walls that were never meant to be seen became highly visible on the south of the building. The proposal generally brings the addition more into the design character of the original portion of the building, while accommodating new uses and accessibility problems.

Landscape

The parking lot area will be modified to current zoning requirements for directly abutting residential property. This will primarily involve new planting beds and the planting of several trees. Staff has no objection or concerns and would defer to the plan examiners on layout, but retain oversight on required fencing. The Commission may request oversight of a final planting plan including species, but should recognize that locations of plantings are already highly regulated and unlikely to detract from the district or the building.

New South / Parking Lot Entrance

For the new south entrance the design is inspired by the North Avenue elevation of the original building with square paneling and large aluminum-framed windows. LusterBoard panels, a painted aluminum panel mounted to exterior grade plywood are intended to "replicat[e] porcelain enamel steel panels commonly used in Mid-Century Modern Architecture." They are traditionally a sign material, as is this modern replacement. For building material, a glass-fused enamel coating developed by AO Smith was more common. However, the glass-fused material does not appear to be produced for architectural use any longer. Clarification is needed on the brownish, woodlike material at the west corner. Exposed wood has a poor track record when it has been used as cladding in Milwaukee. Maintenance needs are much higher than with painted wood.

As bare aluminum-framed windows are original to this building, it is appropriate in this specific case to allow bare/clear-anodized aluminum frames for the new windows and entries.

New West/Loading Dock Entrance

The project here is generally compatible with the character of the building. As the applicant notes, the loading dock is no longer functional and cannot be made so without either significant grade changes or significant changes to the building. The new fenestration creates better interior space. The door and sidelights would be improved with a modest bulkhead in the sidelights and some horizontal dividers in the glass. The deck is an excellent solution to bring back the essence of the original outdoor reading pavilion. The treatment of the existing entry door needs to be clarified.

Recommendation

Recommend HPC Approval with conditions

Conditions

1. More detail is needed on guards and railings. Woven wire style is generally not appropriate. Work with staff on these details.
2. Provide window product sections and specifications to staff for approval.
3. Provide more thorough materials specifications including brownish cladding.
4. Clarify original loading dock pedestrian door treatment.

Previous HPC action

Previous Council action