

June 3, 2024

Project Narrative – Milwaukee Riverwalk Site Plan Review Overlay Zone (SPROZ)

RE: Proposed Enerpac Balcony
ADDRESS: 648 N Plankinton Ave, Suite 400 Milwaukee, WI 53212
TO: City Plan Commission

Enerpac Tool Group Corporation has announced moving their Global Headquarters to downtown Milwaukee. The company is leasing 56,000 sq. ft. of space at the fourth floor of the ASQ Center at 648 N. Plankinton Ave., which is located within the Riverwalk SPROZ. The Center consists of two buildings, with the proposed balcony to be located exclusively on the less ornate South building. Upon completing their relocation plan, the Company will have naming rights to the building, which will transition to the name “Enerpac Center.”

Enerpac is bringing over 130 Global Headquarter employees to our vibrant downtown and the project is one of many recent moves Wisconsin companies have made to relocate businesses to Milwaukee. Milwaukee Mayor Cavalier Johnson commented, “Enerpac Tool Group is making a great choice for the location of its global headquarters. Milwaukee continues to be an attractive place for growing companies with our amenities, our activities, and our concentration of vibrant businesses. My administration looks forward to working with all companies looking to relocate here.” Paul Sternlieb, President, and CEO of Enerpac Tool Group, commented, “We are incredibly excited about this move, as the new space will better accommodate our local workforce and enable Enerpac to better retain and attract top local talent. Our new Global Headquarters will offer a dynamic and inspiring workplace to spur strong collaboration and drive innovation. I’m excited for our company’s headquarters to take this prominent location in our community.”

Renovations are underway for this project and, upon approval by the CPC, will include a balcony on the 4th floor of the South building façade that fronts the Milwaukee River and is subject to the Riverwalk SPROZ standards.

Most of the SPROZ standards are for street level improvements to the Riverwalk and not applicable to this request. That said, the standards recognize that the “City of Milwaukee has placed a great emphasis on the full utilization and appreciation of the Milwaukee River.” The standards also provide that the design and scale of projects enhance the pedestrian experience, and contemplate that “where historic buildings exist along the river, [development should] preserve those historic elements of the built environment.”

The proposed balcony will further help activate the Riverwalk corridor and was a key selling point for Enerpac and for Enerpac’s employees. Enerpac employees already have access to outdoor space in their existing suburban location, but a lively and pedestrian activated Riverwalk corridor that could be enjoyed from the balcony of their Global Headquarters was a key consideration in moving downtown. Their whole team is excited for the enhanced access to outdoor space and all the amenities the Riverwalk has to offer.

The footprint of the proposed balcony does not extend over the river or beyond the current dock line or the dock line of the original historic building. The balcony footprint is significantly smaller

than, and contained well within, the footprint of the existing ground floor addition and certainly will not detract from the pedestrian experience. In fact, experience in the Third Ward and other locations along the Riverwalk has shown that activity above the pedestrian level contributes to the overall liveliness of the Riverwalk.

The Center has some historic significance since it was formerly the Gimbel's Department store. However, the South building exhibits far fewer features as compared to the North building, is not locally designated, and does not have an official listing or record of taking tax credits from the state or federal government. Several stark modifications have been added to the South building, including i) a ground floor structure abutting the Riverwalk, ii) utility doors on the ground floor loading docks and iii) a non-historically accurate 5th floor full window replacement. Several sky bridges have also been added to the Center. The Center, including the South building, was renovated as a mixed-use commercial office building in the early 2000s. Furthermore, the North building has also been subjected to many modifications over the years, including the removal of some floor storefronts along the river. On the west elevation along Plankinton Ave, a faux façade and non-historic courtyard renovation was added, including entry canopy and the skywalk to the Avenue. In summary, the building is not "pristine" by any historical standards.

In accordance with the SPROZ, the balcony must: i) be appropriate in design and scale; and ii) preserve the historic elements of the built environment. In contrast, if this were a historic tax credit project, it would require adherence to the rigorous National Park Service historic preservation guidelines.

As noted, several of the limited historic elements associated with the South building have already been altered, including an entire row of the original windows above the balcony and a ground floor addition below. Nevertheless, the proposed design is sensitive to the building's architectural proportions and design, and utilizes timeless materials like architecturally exposed structural steel, and ipe wood decking that relates to several areas of the Riverwalk. The railing is shown as a glass railing which includes a frit pattern to help avoid bird strikes and deaths. All proposed materials are non-combustible. Exterior lighting will be provided at night for egress and emergencies, and the system can be timed to be on during specific hours of the day. Deliberate and restrained lighting control and design will help visually preserve the historic elements and downplay the alterations.

Placing the balcony to impact only the South building preserves the most historic elements of the Center overall, and the design intentionally differentiates itself from the rest of the Center to purposefully show what is new, versus historic.

It is important to note that the proposed balcony uses a minimally intrusive 8-point means of attachment so that in the future the balcony could be easily removed and the building's façade restored – the same as if removing one of the existing sky bridge connections to the Center. The two existing window bays that will be replaced with operable systems will be preserved and stored if practical; otherwise, they are readily reproducible units with historical accuracy.

The design and implementation of the proposed balcony does the most to preserve the historic elements of the Center, contemplates the possibility of future restoration activities, and creates a viable tenant space. It is an important feature to create the environment in which Enerpac will host its business partners and employees, and in this regard, the balcony will play a role in the success of the Company. Overall, the addition of the balcony will contribute to the City's emphasis on the full utilization and appreciation of the Milwaukee River, activating the Riverwalk corridor and making for a more lively pedestrian experience.

Minimal and appropriately designed improvements to our older structures serves the important need of keeping these buildings occupied and up-to-date. As local Milwaukee architects, our firm strives to save old buildings and add value to them. If owners or tenants are not permitted to make changes to downtown structures like this (even relatively minimal changes with a very minimalistic design), then these older buildings will risk falling into disuse and ultimately likely torn down in favor of newer structures. The applicant feels it is far better to allow minor changes that preserve the existing historical elements with the current structure. As such, we look forward to advancing this important project.

Thank you for your consideration,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Eric Gebhardt', with a stylized, flowing script.

Eric Gebhardt
Workplace Practice Team Leader, Senior Architect
RINKA
756 N Milwaukee St. Suite 250
Milwaukee, WI
egebhardt@rinka.com

May 31, 2024

Department of City Development
City of Milwaukee
809 North Broadway
Milwaukee, WI 53202



Dear Members of the Department of City Development,

We are writing to support Enerpac's proposal to build a balcony on the south side of the ASQ building at 600 North Plankinton Avenue Milwaukee, WI 53203.

This addition will significantly enhance the building's usability by providing valuable outdoor space and improve its aesthetic appeal. Carefully designed to complement the building's historic character, it will preserve the architectural integrity while contributing positively to the neighborhood.

We are committed to meeting all city regulations and have consulted with experts to ensure a structurally sound and historically appropriate design.

Your approval will enable us to enhance our property while preserving the charm of our historic building. Please contact me at 612-355-2602 or Josh@hempelcompanies.com with any questions.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Josh D. Krsnak'.

Joshua D. Krsnak
Chief Executive Officer
Hempel Real Estate

THE AVENUE | 275 WEST WISCONSIN AVENUE | SUITE 5 | MILWAUKEE, WI 53203

hempelcompanies.com