



Milwaukee Historic Preservation Commission Staff Report

Living with History

HPC meeting date: 3/14/2016
Ald. Tony Zielinski District: 14
Staff reviewer: Carlen Hatala
PTS #109077

Property	2469 S. KINNICKINNIC AV. Avalon Theater Building, an individually designated historic property	
Owner/Applicant	LEE R BARCZAK 5130 W LOOMIS RD GREENDALE WI 53129	Andy Farrell 2014 North 53 rd Street Milwaukee, WI 53208 Phone: (414) 423-4020
Proposal	<p>The Avalon Theater building includes both the theater and adjacent apartment building that has a main entrance at 620 East Homer Street. The Avalon was locally designated on March 2, 2004. The theater recently underwent an extensive rehabilitation and is again showing movies.</p> <p>The apartment building is currently vacant. As a continuation of the work started at the theater, the apartments are now undergoing renovation with new utilities and repairs. Before designation, windows in the apartment building had been replaced over time. There is currently a mix of wood windows and metal clad windows. In some openings plywood was installed to replace windows. The current proposal is to replace all of the windows in the apartment building to bring uniformity to the facade and have more energy efficiency.</p>	
Staff comments	<p>The new windows proposed are the Renewal series by Andersen Windows. The windows will be one-over-one sash and feature the traditional check rail (Andersen also offers a contemporary check rail).</p> <p>The windows will be made of Fibrex, a material that combines wood fibers and plastic, much like Trex decking. The material is paintable. The owner proposes to paint the windows. The material was patented by Andersen in 1992. Product literature from Andersen emphasizes its strength, thermal insulating properties, low maintenance, and the fact it uses 40% reclaimed wood as part of its composition. The company has positioned itself as a competitor to vinyl window manufacturers.</p> <p>The owner has selected this brand of window due to its claims of low maintenance, insulating properties and for energy efficiency.</p> <p>As one of their selling points, Renewal by Andersen stresses that the Fibrex is so strong that the styles and rails of the windows can be thinner and thereby provide larger panes of glass. This feature is not appropriate for historic properties.</p> <p>On line research has shown some problems with air infiltration, sagging sills, bowing top rail, and peeling paint. Some respondents, however, have had positive results with their Renewal by Andersen windows but on the websites viewed, no owners have had windows that date before 2008. And some of the satisfied respondents are comparing these windows to their earlier vinyl window replacements. Some of the dissatisfied customers, however, preferred their former vinyl windows. The longevity of the Fibrex product is not known.</p>	
Recommendation	Recommend HPC Denial	

The HPC has not approved Trex-like material in decks. The HPC has not approved metal, fiberglass, vinyl or clad wood windows in historic properties, particularly residential properties. Some exceptions have included clad wood windows in all-new construction or the return of metal or metal clad windows in industrial buildings where there has been evidence of this type of window in the past.

Wood windows, constructed of decay resistant wood and properly painted and installed, have a proven track record with historic properties. Renewal by Andersen has a 20-year limited warranty on glass, 5- year limited warranty on installation and 10-year limited warranty on components other than glass.

Conditions

Previous HPC action

Previous Council action