



Milwaukee Historic Preservation Commission Staff Report

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HPC meeting date: 6/6/2022
Ald. Seat: Vacant District: 3
Staff reviewer: Carlen Hatala
PTS #115268

Property 1119 E. KNAPP ST.

Owner/Applicant Daniel Slade
1660 N. Prospect Ave. Unit 2702
Milwaukee, WI 53202
Abacus Architects
313 N. Plankinton Ave.
Suite 208
Milwaukee, WI 53203
Phone: (920) 452-4444

Proposal The applicant seeks HPC conceptual approval for one of two proposals to add ADA accessible lift and ramp to building.

Option One is at the front of the building at the sidewalk and enlarges the original porch.

Option Two is at the rear east entry to the building. It enlarges the rear porch and front porch, adds a long walkway from the sidewalk, and adds two retaining walls to the property.

Staff comments Conversion of a residential property to commercial use is always difficult. Building codes and accessibility often impact the architectural details, entry areas, fenestration and other features for which the building was determined significant.

In this instance the owner wants to install a coffee shop. The main floor is 6'8" above sidewalk level. Some means is required to provide access for those with disabilities.

As with every historic property, preservation of original fabric is paramount (barring extensive deterioration). How much will be removed, how much altered? Can the changes today be easily reversed tomorrow? In any given location, the economic health of the adjacent neighborhood plays a big role whether or not a conversion can be reversed and whether or not alterations can be reversed.

Recommendation There are pros and cons to each of the options. With Option One the front lift is visually intrusive to the historic property. It also involves altering the front porch by enlarging it 6'4" to the east. The architect indicates this is the most cost effective.

Option Two has a lesser impact to the front of the building by allowing more of the front to be visible. The rear porch would be extended 5' to the east. The front porch would still need expansion by 3' 5" to the east. The applicant said this would be the most expensive option. HPC staff thinks that the retaining walls could be modified to be more compatible with the First Ward Historic District.

Staff recommends Option Two.

Conditions Option Two needs some revisions.

Previous HPC action

Previous Council action