

HISTORIC DESIGNATION STUDY REPORT
EAST SIDE COMMERCIAL HISTORIC DISTRICT

I. NAME

Common: East Side Commercial Historic District

II. LOCATION

The East Side Commercial Historic District is located in the Milwaukee central business district on the east side of the Milwaukee River. It is located within the area bounded approximately by North Water Street, East Wisconsin Avenue, North Milwaukee Street and East Clybourn Street.

III. CLASSIFICATION

District

IV. OWNER

Multiple

V. YEAR BUILT

1854-1900

VI. PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

A. Boundaries

The East Side Commercial Historic District is bounded beginning at the intersection of East Wisconsin Avenue and North Milwaukee Street; then south along the west curb line of North Milwaukee Street to the north curb line of East Michigan Street; then west along said north curb line to the west curb line of North Broadway; then south along said west curb line to the north curb line of East Clybourn Street; then west along said north curb line to the east curb line of North Water Street; the north along said east curb line to the south curb line to the beginning point at the west curb line of North Milwaukee Street.

B. Architectural Character

The East Side Commercial Historic District includes three city blocks in Milwaukee's central business district east of the Milwaukee River. The district is comprised almost exclusively of mixed business uses. There are retail shops, restaurants, a variety of commercial service firms and numerous professional offices. The district is compactly built with many buildings of party-wall construction. There are forty-four buildings in the district. The architecturally and historically significant buildings in the district represent the major periods of commercial development in Milwaukee from 1850 to 1900. All of the buildings in the district are listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

The district is distinguished from its environs by its visual cohesiveness and by the change of character in the adjacent commercial areas. To the east of the historic district are some of the largest commercial buildings in downtown. These buildings, mostly modern, generally cover most of a city block and some rise thirty stories or more. They contrast with the low-rise, ornately detailed Victorian buildings in the district. Along the south boundary are expansive surface parking lots and the East-West Freeway. The elevated freeway is a dominant visual barrier that divides the district and the rest of downtown from the Historic Third Ward National Register Historic District. Large scale, high-rise office buildings also bound the district on the west and north. Surrounded as it is by modern buildings, surface parking lots and the freeway, the historic district comprises a distinctive enclave of low scale, Victorian buildings set within the larger context of the east side central business district.

Within the district, the wide range of building sizes, types and uses is the result of the successive generations of building that occurred on the east side. Milwaukee's commercial district developed as it did as a result of the original town settlement pattern of three independent villages: Juneautown east of the Milwaukee River, Kilbourntown west of the Milwaukee River and Walker's Point at the confluence of the Milwaukee and Menomonee Rivers. Upon the incorporation of the three villages as the city of Milwaukee in 1846, Juneautown and Kilbourntown emerged as the city's central business district. Today, the surviving buildings in the district reflect the differing commercial functions that distinguished the east from the west side commercial area. Banking and commodity trading were concentrated on the East Side on Michigan Street with extensive wholesale and commission offices on Water Street and Broadway. Professional and business offices were located on Broadway and Wisconsin Avenue. In contrast, the West Side became the city's major retailing and entertainment center.

There are three periods of commercial development represented in the district. The majority of the buildings from the earliest period (1854-1875) were built as small two- and three-story Italianate commercial structures with retail and service shops on the first floor and offices and manufacturing space above. Most are rectangular blocks with flat roofs, sometimes with gabled parapets. In the second period of development (1875-1890), four-to-ten-story office buildings, wholesale blocks and commission houses were built. In form, these range from the palatial banking and insurance blocks on Michigan Street to some of the long, narrow loft buildings on Water Street and Broadway. The last period of development (1890-1900) was characterized by the advent of the high rise loft industrial structure and office tower. Built to accommodate the increasing demand for office space in the central business district, these early, steel-framed skyscrapers range up to 12 stories tall. The McGeoch Building, 322 East Michigan Street, the Button Block, 500 North Water and the Railway Exchange Building, 229 East Wisconsin Avenue are typical examples.

The buildings in the district range in style from Italian Renaissance Revival to Italianate, Second Empire, Victorian Italianate, Romanesque Revival, and Neo-Classical influenced Commercial Style. Some of the finest examples of each style are contained in the district. Some of the more outstanding structures listed in chronological order include:

514 North Water Street	Eliphalet Cramer Building	1854
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View east-southeast of original Follansbee block built in 1867 in the French Second Empire architectural style. (undated photo - estimated 1870-1880s)



View east-southeast of original Follansbee block.



Mansard roof detail.



View East on Wisconsin Avenue showing detail of French Mansard Roof (undated)



View southwest to original Follansbee block.

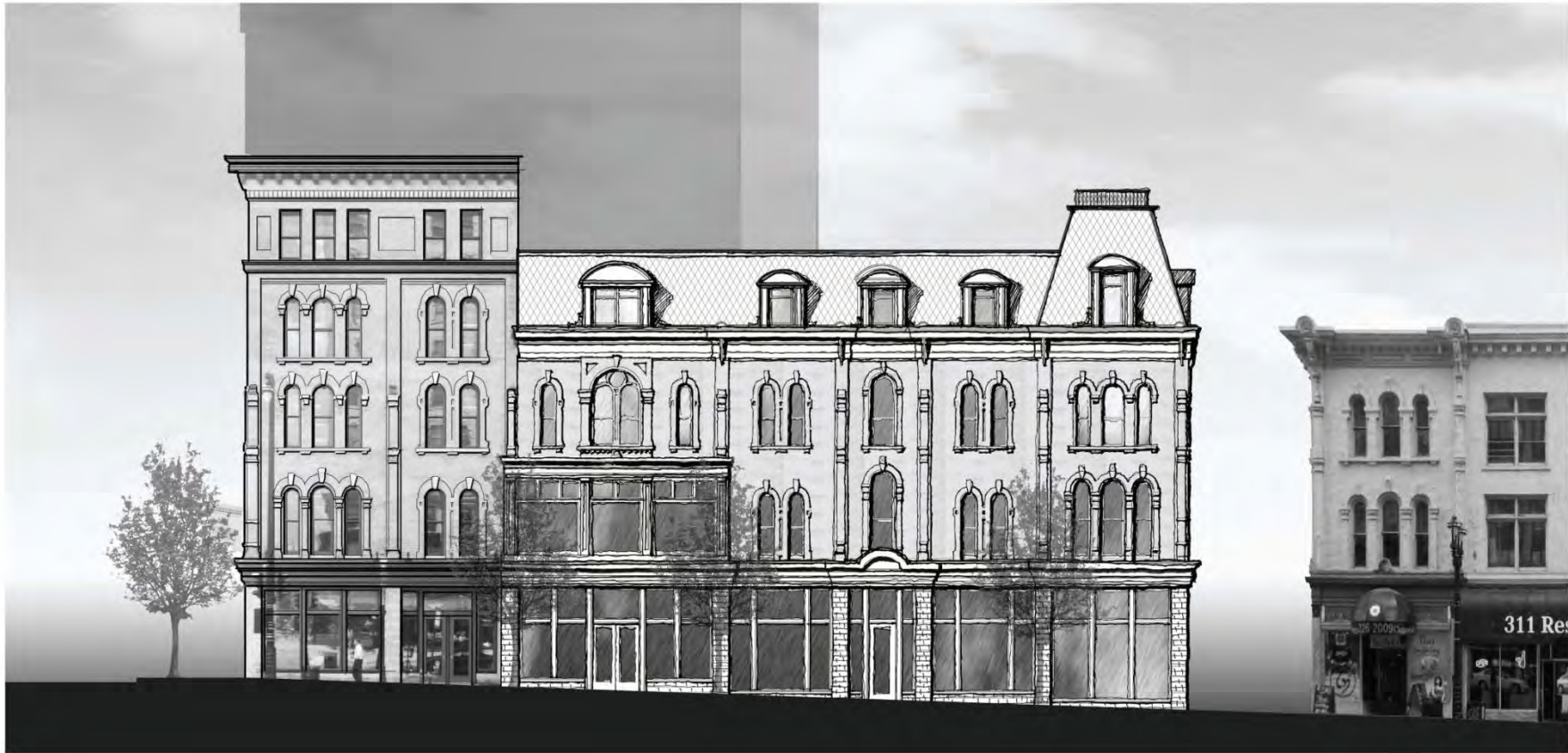
Historic Photographs



Existing Photographs



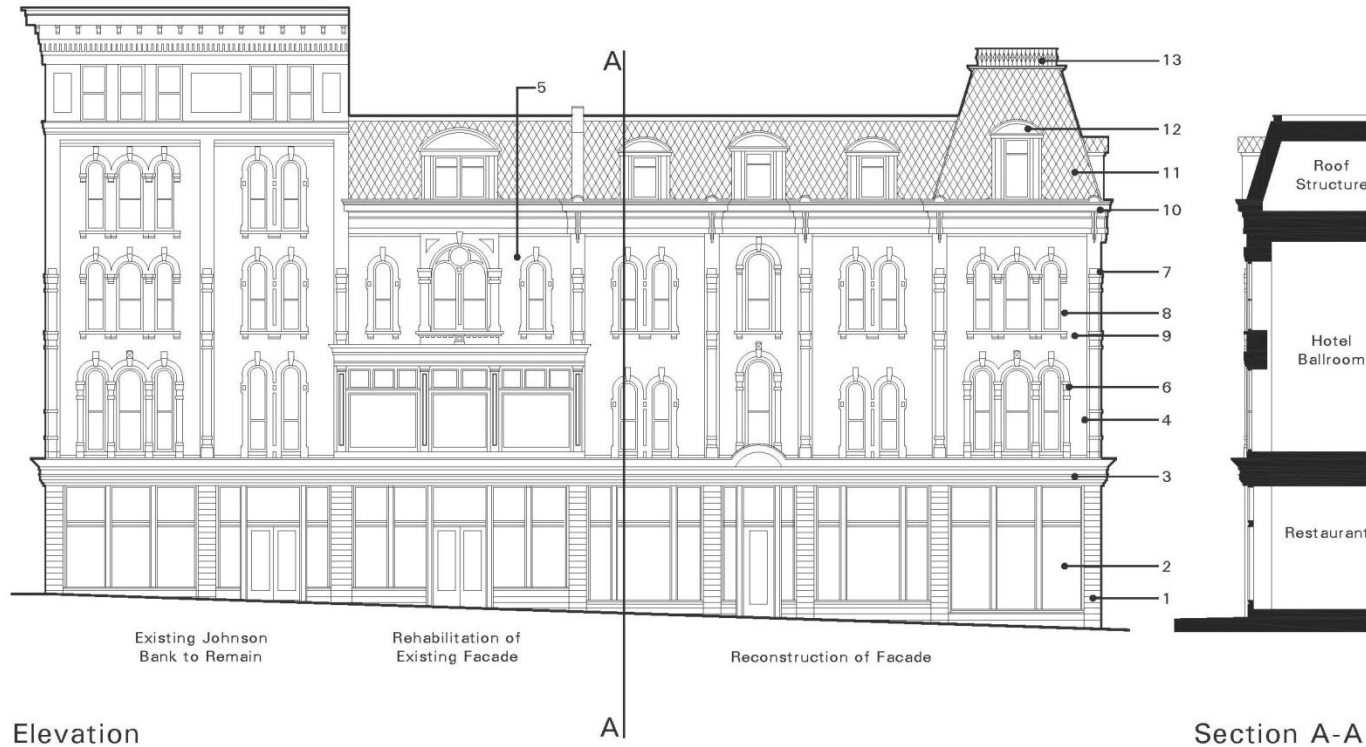
Streetscape Elevation



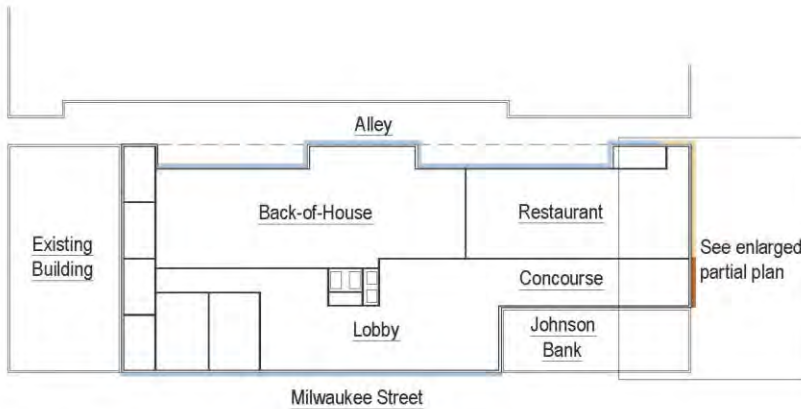
Elevation Sketch

KEYED NOTES

1. Wisconsin dolomitic limestone base to match Johnson Bank.
2. Painted wood storefront system with clear insulated glazing.
3. Painted wood storefront cornice. Profile to match Johnson Bank.
4. Reconstruct second and third floor façade per historic photographs and existing fabric, using salvaged Cream City brick and lime mortar.
5. Remove paint from existing brick using chemical paint stripper.
6. Brick pilasters and window surrounds to match existing.
7. Tin pilaster ornament to match existing. Manufactured by W.F. Norman or equal.
8. Painted wood double-hung windows with custom round brick mold to match existing. Magnum Series by Marvin, Kolbe or equal.
9. Limestone window sills and keystones to match existing.
10. Painted tin cornice to match existing profile. Ornament manufactured by W.F. Norman or equal.
11. Diamond-patterned slate roofing.
12. Tin-clad dormers with wood double-hung windows. Ornament manufactured by W.F. Norman or equal.
13. Cast iron cresting.

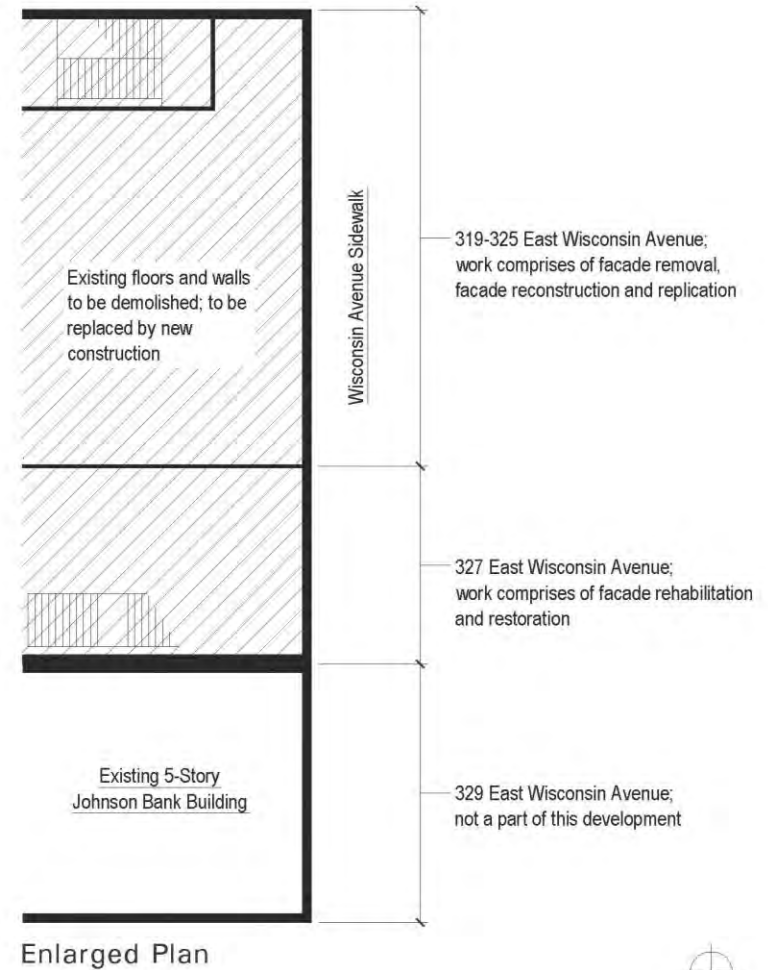


Elevation Detail



Key Plan

- Existing facade to be rehabilitated.
- Facade to be removed and reconstructed.
- New facade construction.



Plan Diagram





Comparison of Existing to Proposed



625 North Milwaukee Street (“Pioneer Building “)



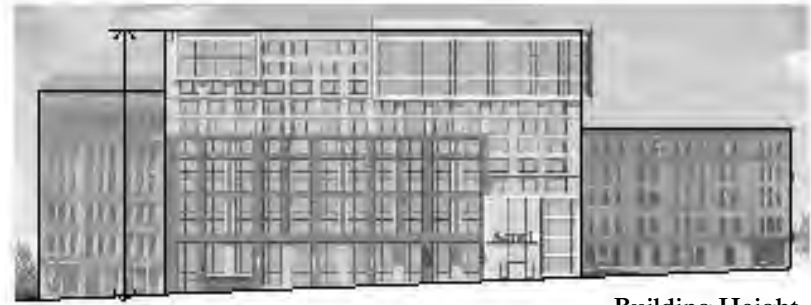
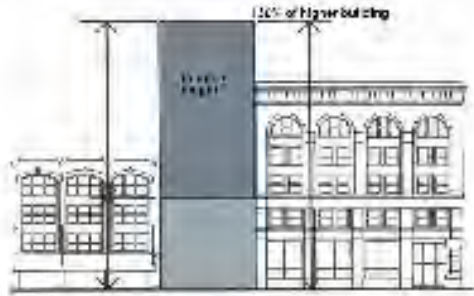
VIEW LOOKING SOUTHWEST



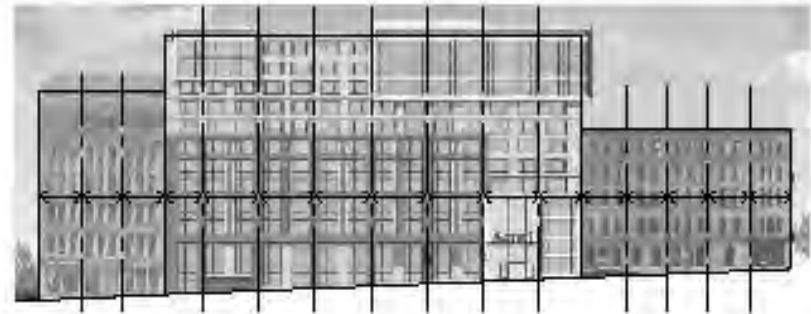
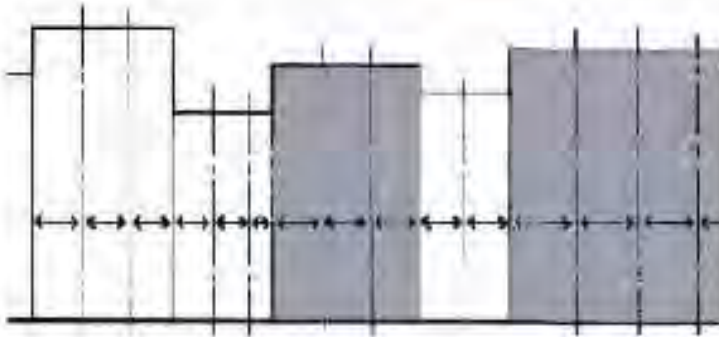
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VIEW LOOKING NORTHWEST

Maximum Height = 130% of higher adjacent building



Building Height



Structural Rhythm

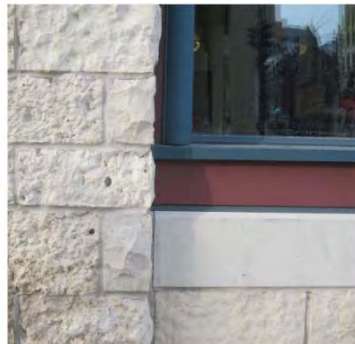


Expression Line

"Design Principle: This guideline does not suggest a repetition of the street architecture. Compatible designs which are clean, simple, and functional, and of a modern attitude could be equally appropriate."

"Design Guideline: New buildings or additions developed in the neighborhood shall be built up to the street edge to contribute to street enclosure."

Reference to Historic Third Ward Design Guidelines



HISTORIC MATERIAL PALETTE



CURTAIN WALL AND ALUMINUM TRIM



PHENOLIC ACCENT PANEL



BRICK BLEND 1



BRICK BLEND 2

NEW CONSTRUCTION MATERIAL PALETTE