



Milwaukee Historic Preservation Commission Staff Report

LIVING WITH HISTORY

HPC meeting date	3/2023	CCF # 231653
Ald. Spiker	Staff reviewer: Tim Askin	
Property	3774 S. 27 th Street.	Wildenberg Hotel
Owner/Applicant	Rakesh Rehan	Thomas Stachowiak Stack Design Group

Proposal

The proposed redevelopment of the property will include a complete restoration of the original architectural features of the building. The original windows were reduced in size with masonry infill added at upper portion of most of the windows. The windows will be brought back to their original size with a new window being installed to replicate the appearance and detailing of the home. All of the visible cream city brick will be repaired and restored including the replacement and reconstruction of the two brick chimneys that have been patched with a brick that does not match the original building. There are portions of the original roof cupola remaining. The renovation includes the complete recreation of this original roof adornment. The existing (non-original) front entry canopy will be removed. The existing grade will be lowered at the front of the building so that the original front porch can be recreated, inclusive of the double wood columns and roof detailing. The footprint of the original structure is approximately 2,800 square feet.

To the rear of the existing building we are proposing the construction of an addition entirely designed to match and compliment the architectural character of the original building. Every material proposed for the addition is one that is also found on the original building. The addition is proposed as 14,452 square feet all on one level and designed to not overpower the stature of the original building. The proposed use of the existing portion of the building is a sit-down restaurant and the addition to the building will add a commercial kitchen, ADA compliant toilet rooms and a 9,800 square foot event center/banquet hall. The original interior formal staircase located directly inside the front door remains relatively intact and will be restored to its original condition. The staircase will lead to the second floor of the building where two additional meeting rooms will be located. An outdoor dining patio will be added to the northwest corner of the building with an access door being added at the location of an existing window opening. The new door opening, which does not face the primary street facade, will be trimmed out in an identical manner as the original and new windows of the home. The patio will have cream city brick piers with limestone caps and a wrought iron railing with a double baluster pattern that compliments the detailing of the front entrance. A secondary entrance will be created on the north facade to allow for an ADA compliant entry that is convenient to the parking. This entrance is designed to mimic the architectural detailing of the main entrance without overpowering the importance of the front facade.

Staff comments

This an exceptional restoration project and a needed use in the neighborhood. We must first note that HPC has jurisdiction only over the building and its addition. Other City design and code review processes are in place for the rest of the site and the proposed new building to the north. HPC staff have been participating in these review processes and will continue to do so with regard to various unresolved concerns. HPC has no jurisdiction over the proposed new building to the north and it should be ignored in our review. It is shown only as a matter of transparency with HPC. The new building may also be constructed as part of a separate phase of the project.

There are no significant issues with the restoration or the original structure. The design is well-researched and replicates and restores countless features. Marvin all-wood windows be used to replicate the originals to the extent possible with SDLs. A detailed material list is needed, but that is all.

There are some minor issues with the design that need to be addressed by the Commission and its guidance is requested. The rear addition is larger than we would typically approve on a building of this scale and it is designed to be too similar to the original building. The size of the addition is necessary to the use and its street presence is minimized, so it does not break any firm rules. HPC and DCD staff have raised this issue with the applicants multiple times. Differentiation can be modest, but it must exist. Suggested changes are listed in the conditions section. The new side entry replicates the front too closely and is thus out of scale on a one-story section of the building. The design of the entry should be tweaked. Widening the entry area may be sufficient to reduce the excess vertical emphasis.

The front patio presents some complications. Typically front additions are not approved. This is a minor deck feature that while not historically accurate, does not detract from the appearance. Details must be provided on how it will be differentiated in appearance from the original structure. It also must be shown to be as structurally independent as possible so that future removal would be possible.

Planning is awaiting a response to site questions, in particular to the grades, in order to complete their review of the site and the proposed new buildings. The rear of the site is within a floodplain, among several other issues. As this is a city-owned property, they have extensive authority over site design and will address it competently.

Recommendation

Conceptual approval, design work to this point is sufficient for the city to move forward with the sale. Applicant should return at the 60% or 90% design phase for final approval.

Conditions

1. DCD Planning has grave concerns over site grading that HPC staff share. DCD has 99% of jurisdiction on landscaping on this site. We should defer to DCD and withhold COA issuance until they are satisfied.
2. Provide complete materials list.
3. Simplify detailing on addition to make visually clear that it is an addition.
 - a. Require new rather than salvage brick for the addition
 - b. If NPS or WHS require design changes to this same effect, we should defer to them and adopt their requirements. If they do not, we should require two or more of the following:
 - i. Eliminate window muntins or change muntin grid pattern on the addition
 - ii. Simplify window trim
 - iii. Dated cornerstone
 - iv. Clad or fiberglass windows
4. Front patio must also show differentiation. New, modular brick may be sufficient differentiation or may be distracting. Work with staff/NPS/WHS on appropriate differentiation.
5. Standard masonry conditions for work on original building
6. Natural, non-clad wood windows, trim, and shutters for the original building. Modern materials other than vinyl can be considered for the addition.