



Milwaukee Historic Preservation Commission Staff Report

Living with History

HPC meeting date: 9/15/2015
Ald. Robert Bauman District: 4
Staff reviewer: Dean Doerrfeld
PTS

Property 1037 W. JUNEAU AVE. Pabst Brewery Historic District

Owner/Applicant BLUE RIBBON REDEVELOPMENT Blue Ribbon Management, LLC
FUND V, LLC 735 W. Wisconsin Ave., Ste. 610
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Proposal This project involves restoration and adaptive reuse of the First German Methodist Church/Forst Keller Restaurant Building. The proposal calls for the restoration of the exterior of building, including masonry cleaning and repair, repair of existing windows, removal of paint from masonry, structural repairs of wing buttresses, and replacement roofing. An additional element of the proposed work is the construction of a new two-story, masonry addition to the south of the existing structure. The addition is configured to house restrooms, mechanical equipment, and an elevator. An outdoor seating and serving area is adjacent to the new addition to the south and east.

Staff Comments The First German Methodist Church (later the Forst Keller Restaurant) was constructed in 1872. The building stands two stories tall with a cut stone lower level and Cream-City brick sanctuary level. The building is roughly rectangular with two minor cross gables to the south creating a modified cruciform plan. The church was designed by architect Carl L. Linde in a highly articulated Victorian Gothic style. The building features a castellated parapet and central tower flanked by twin eave towers, lancet windows, pier and angle buttresses, corbelled brick cornice, and stone accents at corners and window openings. Modifications to the building exterior include infilled window and door openings—the sanctuary is a large open space with the lower level interrupted by evenly spaced ornamental columns. The building retains a high level of material integrity with only minor exterior changes. The building was acquired in the early 1890s by the Pabst Brewing Company after which it was used for employee meetings and training. It is probable that some interior detail was removed at that time although considerable historic fabric remains.

Exterior work on the building is restorative in character and adheres to both historic District Guidelines and the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation. . A complete schedule for the repair of various elements are detailed in the technical and graphic materials submitted by the applicant. Work includes the following:

- Cleaning of masonry
- Removal of paint in selected areas
- Repair of damaged masonry at existing openings
- Re-pointing of masonry, as required
- Repair of existing windows
- Repair of existing doors
- Removal and replacement of existing shingles
- Repair/reconstruction of chimneys, as required
- Reconstruction of damaged buttress at southeast corner

The applicant proposes limited modifications to openings to facilitate adaptive reuse. The changes are limited to six openings, primarily on the south elevation. On the south elevation: two windows on the lower level of the wall be removed and openings filled; one new opening on the sanctuary level will be cut into the masonry

near the west wall; and, an existing door near the east wall, not original to the building, will be removed and the opening widened, if necessary. Two openings on the east wall will be infilled—the door at southern end of the wall will be closed but the cut stone arch will be retained, and the infilling both locations set back from wall plane to reflect the original opening. Additionally, the applicant proposes to modify the existing materials at two openings. At the southwest corner of the building, an existing vehicle opening covered with plywood, is noted as receiving either a glass panel overhead door, or an overhead door simulating a double-leaf entry. This item requires further clarification. Specifications also call for the replacement of the main entrance in the lower level of the north elevation, but no details provided.

A two-story masonry addition is proposed to the south of original church. This addition measures 21'x38' with a flat roof encircled by a parapet wall. The proposed construction material for the first floor chisel-faced masonry with upper level of ground-face brick laid in a vertical running bond. Vertical ribbons of glazing will define the juncture of the original and current construction periods. The chisel-faced masonry is depicted as extending through the upper level of the south and east face of the southeast corner. This area is inset slightly from the south plane of the wall. Vertically oriented ribbons of glazing open the upper level of the southeast corner on both wall surfaces. A single leaf door is placed on the lower level of the east wall, slightly north of the corner. This opening is asymmetrically placed with the upper window, and it may be preferable align these features to maintain the rhythm of east elevation. A large glazed area is centered on the west wall, and a glazed storefront at the southwest corner provides access to the patio area from the commercial space. This addition is located on a secondary elevation of the building that lacks the detail exhibited on the remaining building. The proposed scale, mass, materials, and fenestration do not diminish the visual qualities of the historic building and serve to distinguish it from original construction.

The 2,300 ± S.F. patio area features an outdoor bar covered by a canopy constructed of wood and translucent panels. The west side of the patio area is enclosed by a fence composed of chisel-faced masonry piers and a wrought iron fence. A gate on the 11th Street side provides access from that thoroughfare. The existing concrete retaining wall defines the south side of the patio area. The proposal calls for a garden element and landscaping along the concrete wall. The visual transparency of the bar canopy and the wrought iron fence is compatible with proposed addition and the historic structure.

A trash enclosure is proposed for the east elevation of the building near Juneau Avenue. The proposed construction method consists of large metal panels supported by vertical metal posts. This enclosure is visible to both pedestrian and vehicle traffic on Juneau Avenue—it is located directly behind the eastern eave tower of the façade. This will impart a visual impact from the southwest. Alternate materials or location should be considered for the trash receptacle.

In general, the commission does not review interior alterations, but it is important to note that the applicant has strived to maintain the historic integrity of interior spaces: the expansive sanctuary retained, interior finishes refurbished, modern alterations removed exposing historic finishes, glass demising walls used in the lower level to maintain openness, and the lower-level columns exposed to preserve column features. The two-story addition to the south, will allow for the placement of new mechanicals, preventing intrusion these items into historically open spaces.

Recommendation

Restoration of building envelope: Approve with conditions
Construction of masonry addition: Approve with conditions
Construction of patio area and outdoor bar: Approved with conditions

Conditions

Method and materials for masonry cleaning and paint removal, including manufacturers specifications shall be submitted to staff for approval.

Method, materials, and a mortar sample for re-pointed shall be submitted to staff for approval. This shall include any masonry units need for replacement.

Details and specifications for window replacement, if necessary, shall be submitted to staff for approval.

Details for front door replacement shall be submitted to staff for approval.

Final details for overhead door in west elevation shall be submitted to staff for approval.

Samples of roofing material shall be submitted to staff for approval.

Final details for patio fence, such as type of wrought iron shall be submitted to staff for approval.

Materials and/or new location for trash enclosure shall be submitted to staff for approval.

Previous HPC action**Previous Council action**