



Milwaukee Historic Preservation Commission Staff Report

Living with History

HPC meeting date: 2/8/2016
Ald. Jose Perez District: 12
Staff reviewer: Carlen Hatala
PTS #108148

Property	906 W. HISTORIC MITCHELL ST. Mitchell Street Historic District
Owner/Applicant	MITCHELL INV PROPERTIES-II C/O HERBERT M HILLMAN SS CPA 11520 N PORT WASH RD STE 204 MEQUON WI 53092 Quorum Architects, Inc. 3112 W. Highland Blvd. Milwaukee, WI 53208 Phone: (414) 265-9265
Proposal	The applicant is requesting approval for the conversion of the Hills Building into a branch public library with residential apartments on floors 2 through 5.

Staff comments

This building was originally constructed for the Lion Store in 1919 and included a free standing receiving and garage building to the north that was connected to the department store by way of a common basement. R. E. Oberst was the architect. From 1928 to 1962 the building was known as the Hills Building after its acquisition by the owner of the Hill's Dry Goods chain. Later occupants included Empire TV and Appliance (1964-1973) and National Hardware (1973-1983). In 1986, the building was converted into commercial and governmental offices and the project was overseen by the Historic Preservation Commission.

The building has two principal facades, one fronting Mitchell Street and one fronting South 9th Street. The west and rear elevations are utilitarian in character. A fifth story was added to the rooftop after 1919 but does not match the original building in its cladding, fenestration or size; it sits back from the Mitchell street facade and is more like a large penthouse structure. The service building has one primary facade that fronts South 9th Street.

Prior modifications to the exterior of the main building included replacing the large plate glass windows in 1986 and again in 1996. Fenestration on the west elevation was irregular and over time the openings have been filled in with brick or metal grilles

Modifications to the receiving and garage building include the blocking up of two garage door openings and the addition of various openings.

At the main building the following work will be done:

- 1) Roofing systems will be removed and new sheet waterproofing membrane will be installed over new rigid insulation. New rooftop mechanicals will replace current ones at the same locations and will not be visible from the street.
- 2) Fire escapes will remain but the lowest movable ladder will be removed. The exit doors accessing the fire escapes will be replaced with windows
- 3) Existing windows were replaced either in 1986 or 1996. These will be retained, repaired or replaced in kind as necessary on floors 2-3-4. On the west elevation, facing the former Goldmann's, window openings will be lengthened so that operable windows can be installed for tenants. Current sills are too high. Blocked openings at service areas will remain closed.

Storefront windows along Mitchell Street and South 9th Street were replaced in 1986. New insulated glass storefronts will be installed, matching the existing opening configuration. The metal transom will be repaired and repainted. The new storefront glass will have low-e Solarband 60 glazing. The 2 curved portions of storefront will be restored and the Plexiglass sections along South 9th street will be rehabilitated with curved glass storefront sections. The transoms will be replaced with reeded, insulated glass.

Entries remain in their current, mostly original, condition on both the Mitchell Street and South 9th Street elevations. Automatic door access will be added to the entrances on both elevations. The canopy/marquee over the Mitchell Street entrance was recreated in 1986 and will remain. Signage will be presented later.

The north receiving/garage building will be converted into 8 units of housing necessitating exterior changes.

New openings will be cut into the north and south non-primary facades to provide windows and entrances. A new garage door and man door will go into the existing openings on the west elevation. New double hung windows will be metal clad wood windows with a painted exterior having low-e clear Solarband 60 glazing. The vacated alleyway between the main building and the north building will serve as a courtyard from which to access the new apartments.

Brick and masonry surfaces will be cleaned at the the 9th Street facade, the first story of the south elevation (where unit entrances will be located) and the first story

Recommendation Recommend HPC Approval

Conditions

Previous HPC action

Previous Council action