

PLANNING DIVISION STAFF REPORT

March 6, 2017

PREPARED FOR THE LANDMARKS COMMISSION



Project Name & Address: 640 W Washington, Milwaukee Road Depot

Application Type(s): Certificate of Appropriateness for exterior alteration of a landmark

Legistar File ID # [42250](#)

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Summary

Project Applicant/Contact: James McFadden, McFadden & Company

Requested Action: The Applicant is requesting that the Landmarks Commission approve a Certificate of Appropriateness for the proposed exterior alterations which include the enclosing of the existing platform and the alteration of some exterior features.

Background Information

Parcel Location/Information: The landmark site is located on West Washington Avenue and is situated adjacent to railroad tracks.

Relevant Ordinance Sections:

- 41.18 STANDARDS FOR GRANTING A CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS.** A certificate of appropriateness shall be granted only if the proposed project complies with this chapter, including all of the following standards that apply.
- (1) New construction or exterior alteration. The Landmarks Commission shall approve a certificate of appropriateness for exterior alteration or construction only if:
 - (a) In the case of exterior alteration to a designated landmark, the proposed work would meet the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation.
 - (b) In the case of exterior alteration or construction of a structure on a landmark site, the proposed work would meet the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation.
 - (c) In the case of exterior alteration or construction on any property located in a historic district, the proposed exterior alteration or construction meets the adopted standards and guidelines for that district.
 - (d) In the case of any exterior alteration or construction for which a certificate of appropriateness is required, the proposed work will not frustrate the public interest expressed in this ordinance for protecting, promoting, conserving, and using the City's historic resources.

Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation

1. A property will be used as it was historically or be given a new use that requires minimal change to its distinctive materials, features, spaces, and spatial relationships.
2. The historic character of a property will be retained and preserved. The removal of distinctive materials or alteration of features, spaces, and spatial relationships that characterize a property will be avoided.

3. Each property will be recognized as a physical record of its time, place, and use. Changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding conjectural features or elements from other historic properties, will not be undertaken.
4. Changes to a property that have acquired historic significance in their own right will be retained and preserved.
5. Distinctive materials, features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property will be preserved.
6. Deteriorated historic features will be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature will match the old in design, color, texture, and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features will be substantiated by documentary and physical evidence.
7. Chemical or physical treatments, if appropriate, will be undertaken using the gentlest means possible. Treatments that cause damage to historic materials will not be used.
8. Archeological resources will be protected and preserved in place. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures will be undertaken.
9. New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction will not destroy historic materials, features, and spatial relationships that characterize the property. The new work will be differentiated from the old and will be compatible with the historic materials, features, size, scale and proportion, and massing to protect the integrity of the property and its environment.
10. New additions and adjacent or related new construction will be undertaken in such a manner that, if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.

Analysis and Conclusion

A similar proposal came before the Landmarks Commission in May and June of 2016. At that time, the Commission issued a Certificate of Appropriateness for the alterations subject to staff approval of final design and details. Because the proposed project has changed from the previously approved project in numerous ways, staff requested that the project come before the Landmarks Commission for review.

The current proposal encloses the existing platform with an operable wall system on the track side and between the passenger depot and the baggage depot on the east side. The remainder of the platform enclosure on the east side is half height windows with narrow horizontal siding below. The previously proposed glass roof extension and entrance on the north east side have been removed. The roof of the north east platform is being modified with a stepped ridge to accommodate the increased width of the enclosed area below.

The current proposal adds an exit stair along the gable end wall of the baggage depot building and because a basement is being created, this stair will also serve the new basement level. The current proposal also alters an original opening of the baggage depot that was infilled in the 1980s renovation so that it will include a door as a second exit. The proposed enclosure wall will allow the existing platform columns to be exposed along the track side and between the depot building and the baggage house building.

A brief discussion of the Secretary of the Interior's Standards follows:

1. The historic depot was previously adaptively reused as commercial space and office space which required minimal change to its distinctive materials, features, spaces, and spatial relationships. This current request will expand the commercial space to include the platform and portions of boardwalk over the tracks. The distinctive historic materials, features, spaces and spatial relationships will remain. The current drawings do not address the boardwalk material at the tracks. The current drawings also show the treatment of the columns and that the enclosure wall engages the bracket toward the interior.

2. The historic character of the property is being retained and preserved. There is not enough information to determine if roof extensions and wall enclosures are being added in ways that will not alter features, spaces, and spatial relationships that characterize the property.
3. Each property will be recognized as a physical record of its time, place, and use. The wall enclosure is expressed in a modern vocabulary so that a false sense of historical development is not created. The roof extension alters the form of the platform roof. It is unclear if the roof material in the area of the extension will match the existing adjacent roof material or be treated in a different manner.
4. Changes to the property that have acquired historic significance in their own right will be retained and preserved. The train engine and cars may have acquired historic significance on the landmark site and the engine and some cars are being retained on site. Two cars may be removed.
5. Distinctive materials, features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize the property will be preserved.
6. Deteriorated historic features will be repaired rather than replaced. Staff is not aware of any deteriorated historic features that will require work as part of this project.
7. Staff is not aware of any chemical or physical treatments that are proposed to be undertaken as part of this project.
8. Staff is not aware of any archeological resources on the site that that will potentially be disturbed as part of this project.
9. The submission materials do not include enough information to determine if the proposed roof extensions and wall enclosures are being constructed in a way that will not destroy historic materials, features, and spatial relationships that characterize the property. The submission materials do not include enough information to determine if the new construction will be compatible with the historic materials, features, size, scale and proportion, and massing to protect the integrity of the property and its environment. There are several areas of concern that require more information and discussion.
 - The glass enclosure system obscures the expression of the column brackets.
 - The glass enclosure system introduces a new rhythm to the platform, but the structural components have been minimized from the previous proposal.
 - The north east enclosure wall treatment should feel different in comparison to the permanence of the historic exterior wall.
 - The drawings do not indicate the proposed material of the low wall/sill of the enclosure system.
10. There is not enough information to determine if the proposed roof extensions and wall enclosures will be constructed in such a manner that, if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment will be unimpaired.

Recommendation

Staff believes that there is not enough information to determine if the standards for granting a Certificate of Appropriateness for the exterior alterations of the landmark are met and recommends that the Landmarks Commission refer the request to a future meeting to allow the Applicant time to provide additional information. In addition, staff recommends that the Commission provide the Applicant with comments that relate to the standards for their use in the refinement and development of the proposal. The following issues require specific information:

- 1) Boardwalk configuration and materials.
- 2) Treatment of entire site.
- 3) Signage shall be reviewed by Zoning staff before being reviewed by the Landmarks Commission.
- 4) Indication of how the roof extension will be over-framed on the north east addition to determine if the proposed over-framing will negatively affect the existing historic platform framing.
- 5) The treatment of the historic platform elements as they relate to the interface with the enclosure wall system to determine if the proposed enclosure will negatively affect the essential form and integrity of the historic property.

- 6) Treatment of roof material at roof extension.
- 7) Details of the modified infilled opening in the baggage depot building.
- 8) Details of the proposed exit stair and how it is supported/connected to the historic building including material of proposed foundation wall and treatment of foundation wall of historic building.
- 9) Any exterior alterations related to the creation of the basement space.
- 10) Any exterior alterations related to the implementation of this project that have not been discussed.