

AGENDA # 7

City of Madison, Wisconsin

REPORT OF: LANDMARKS COMMISSION

PRESENTED: 5/20/19

TITLE: 640 W Washington Ave - Exterior
Alteration to a Designated Madison
Landmark (Milwaukee Road Depot)
- Modification to previously
approved plans to enclose
passenger platform; 4th Ald. Dist.

REFERRED:

REREFERRED:

REPORTED BACK:

AUTHOR: Heather Bailey, Preservation Planner

ADOPTED:

POF:

DATED: 5/21/19

ID NUMBER: 55790

Members present were: Stuart Levitan, Anna Andrzejewski, Richard Arnesen, and Katie Kaliszewski. Excused were Arvina Martin and David McLean.

SUMMARY:

James McFadden, registering in support and wishing to speak

Bailey explained that the applicant would like to renew the Certificate of Appropriateness previously issued in April 2017 with a few alterations. She said that there will be no exterior stairs, the train cars will not be moved, and the applicant is proposing two solid walls for the passenger platform rather than glass, as well as a solid wall to divide the interior space rather than a clear divider. She mentioned that when originally approved in 2017, the Commission had discussed preserving the overall character and openness of the passenger platform. At that time, they had welcomed the glass walls and folding doors that would allow it to be largely a glass space on the track side. She said that staff's recommendation regarding the conditions for approval includes returning the trackside enclosure to the glass system that was previously approved and dividing the interior space with clear or occluded materials that are able to convey light.

McFadden described the reasoning behind the design changes, and said that originally there was going to be one owner for the entire property who would run the coffee shop, a restaurant, and farmer's market. However, now two independent restaurants will occupy the space, which requires more privacy and separation. He explained that near the restrooms on the western end and in the center, they are proposing to use a solid wall to add privacy. He said that the biggest change is in the train car locations; now that they are all remaining near the platform, he pointed out that the two sections of opaque wall near the restrooms will not be visible from anywhere except the train cars. He said that the nature of the two restaurants is quite distinct, with one edgier and louder, and the other more sedate, making it important to provide a separation of the two spaces. He said that it will not be a solid wall dividing the interior spaces, but rather a partition that will be installed in a way that can be removed in the future. Levitan confirmed that McFadden is not agreeable to staff's conditions for approval. McFadden said that he would prefer not.

Arnesen asked what materials will be used for the majority of the wall on the platform side. McFadden said that it is a foldable glass wall. Arnesen asked if the bathrooms near the center of the platform are new, and McFadden responded that they added the second set of restrooms now that there are two separate restaurants. Bailey said that the bathrooms in the middle of the platform are not attached to the historic portion of the building. Levitan asked if all of the plan modifications are due to the tenants. McFadden said that the

changes were driven by the tenants; there are two different restaurants serving distinct populations, and the necessity of separating them is important. Levitan asked if there are separate bathrooms for each restaurant, and McFadden confirmed there are.

Arnesen asked if noise was the primary concern with a partial height wall. McFadden said there will be noise, and may also be events or parties where they want to make that separation. Regarding condition two in the staff report recommendations, Levitan pointed out that the interior partitions are perpendicular to someone looking from the outside, and asked how that would affect how much light one sees. Bailey said that it was in reference to the Commission's 2017 discussion about looking throughout the platform and it continuing to read as open space. Arnesen asked why staff wants the wall along the platform to be translucent if there are restrooms there. Bailey said that it would require a new location for the restrooms. Bailey spoke about condition one in the staff report recommendations, and pointed out that while she recommends it be glass, the solid wall by the restroom on the western end is probably the least visible part of the structure. Bailey discussed condition two and said that in the view from W Washington Ave looking horizontally, there should be a way to create an open space for light to come through while still protecting privacy. Levitan pointed out that requiring a translucent or occluded wall doesn't preclude it from extending to the roof. McFadden said that he was also considering acoustic privacy, and a solid wall provides more acoustic insulation between the spaces. Andrzejewski said that it should be a clear partition, and Kaliszewski agreed.

Arnesen said that the glass bike enclosure already comprises the view from W Washington Ave, so you cannot see down the platform. Levitan asked if we will be able to see this from W Washington Ave as we look northwest, and Bailey said that it will not be very visible. Levitan asked who will be able to see the interior partition. McFadden said it is barely visible, but could be seen from the platform looking through the folded glass walls. Arnesen pointed out that the train cars are blocking that view, and McFadden said the train cars will be there permanently. Kaliszewski said that the bike shop is the current occupant, but use can change and the glass enclosure could be removed in the future, so to say you can't see it now is the wrong way to look at this. Arnesen said that he would prefer that the interior partition not go all the way up to the canopy so you could get a sense of the underside of the roof. Andrzejewski said that it would read as more of a platform that way. Andrzejewski asked what would happen in the future if the use of the spaces change. Bailey said that once the platform becomes enclosed, the Landmarks Commission loses its purview over any future interior changes. Andrzejewski said that is her concern about this.

Arnesen suggested a solution to allow a drywall partition up to 8' with clear glass above so one can still see the roofline down the platform. McFadden said that he would like the wall height to match the other interior solid wall. Levitan said that the wall on the east should be the same height as the west wall, then be clear above. Andrzejewski said she can live with that option. Arnesen said that he is sympathetic to the applicants, and it is important to recognize that people are willing to invest a lot of money to make a beautiful historic building in Madison viable. Andrzejewski said that while they are bending on this solution, she acknowledges that they have done a lot to preserve the character-defining features of the building. McFadden said that he will let Bailey know the exact height of the wall they need to match.

Kaliszewski said that she doesn't think this is enough of a compromise, as they are already agreeing to allow the two solid walls. She pointed out that there are other things one could do to block off the space while allowing more light through.

ACTION:

A motion was made by Arnesen, seconded by Andrzejewski, to approve the request for the Certificate of Appropriateness to enclose the passenger platform as proposed, with the modification that the interior partition be a solid wall up to 10' and topped with clear clerestory windows that extend to the roof. The motion passed by voice vote/other, with Kaliszewski voting opposed.