

Landmarks Preservation Commission

of the City of Racine, Wisconsin

AGENDA BRIEFING MEMORADUM

for

GOLD MEDAL LOFT APARTMENTS 1701 PACKARD

AGENDA DATE: October 29, 2018
SUBJECT: Conversion of industrial building into apartments.
PREPARED BY: Matt Sadowski
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: <p>The project calls for the historic restoration of the building and repurposing the inside to provide a mix of studio, 1, 2 and 3 bedroom dwellings, 77 units in total. Parking areas, landscaping and fencing are proposed for the exterior of the site.</p> <p>A finding of appropriateness will be necessary, and the Wisconsin Historical Society's State Historic Preservation Offices has requested comments by the Landmarks Commission.</p>
BACKGROUND & ANALYSIS: A Little History <p>Source: Racine, Belle City of the lakes, and Racine County, Wisconsin : a record of settlement, organization, progress and achievement; Chicago: S. J. Clarke Pub. Co., 1916, 1216 pgs</p> <p>This excerpt being Written in 1916, the company continued operations in to the 1980's. "The Gold Medal Camp Furniture Manufacturing Company had its inception in a business started by R. B. Lang in 1890 and incorporated in 1892, its first officers being R. B. Lang, president ; William G. Gittings, vice president; and J. G. Teall, secretary. This company manufactures all kinds of camp furniture and outing outfits, although at the beginning the output included only six or seven articles, among which was the Gold Medal Cot invented by Louis Latour. Since that time the output has been extended in its scope until there is no accessory to camp furnishings that cannot be supplied by this establishment.</p> <p>About 1894 they removed to their present location from their old quarters on Thirteenth Street. They now occupy about two entire blocks, which includes the lumberyard. Their buildings, two and three stories in height, are of modern construction, supplied with sprinkler system, are well lighted and ventilated and are supplied with the latest improved machinery to facilitate their manufacturing interests. They employ one hundred and twenty-five people, mostly skilled labor, and their product is now shipped all over the world, about one-third being called upon for the export trade.</p> <p>The Gold Medal Cot has been adopted as the standard by the United States army and navy, also a chair bathtub and stool used by the medical department of the United States army. The company furnishes the National Guard with its cots and it also supplies a large trade that equips camping parties with their outfits.</p> <p>This is a close corporation, of which the present officers are: Christopher C. Gittings, president E. E. Bailey, vice president William G. Gittings, secretary : and Ward Gittings, treasurer. The name of Gittings has ever been a synonym for progressiveness and reliability in Racine business circles and it has become known in the same connection throughout the country."</p>

The project analysis

The building that is subject for the current conversion project is the 1701 Packard Ave. Building. It was built in 1894. Aside from the Cream City brick, the most prominent/distinguishing feature is its intact window systems (inset glass panes, muntins, arched header).

The project seeks to retain the building's exterior form and the courtyard. Fire escapes will also be retained. However, all windows are to be replaced.

Design/Preservation Recommendations

Retain all existing windows, or at minimum, replacement windows must display same lite/muntin patterns (muntins to be true or, at minimum exterior surface mounted and have same dimensions and appearance as the existing/original muntins), and original window opening (no infill in arch areas).

Retain railroad tracks found in Packard Ave. Constructed in 1854, the Racine, Janesville, Mississippi Railroad passed by here (one of the early Wisconsin Railroads).

Retain all existing exterior doors or at least replace with ones which replicate the authentic appearance.

Submit detained signage plans. Sign should be compatible with time period of the building and not a fully internally illuminated panel. Site allowed up to three signs each totaling 16 square feet in size, one facing each street frontage. Signs can be up to six feet in height (114-1064).

The Evaluation Criteria

Chapter 58, Historic Preservation, offers guidance in evaluating a project impacting a historic property to determine if the result is appropriate given the buildings architectural and historical context. 58-64(e) states that " Findings of appropriateness shall be rendered unless it is determined that:

- (1) The activity will be detrimental to the maintenance and overall historic character of the landmark, landmark site, contributing property or district;
- (2) The activity will impede the current or future preservation or restoration of the subject property or district;
- (3) Adequate measures will not be taken to protect the integrity of distinctive features, finishes, construction techniques, or examples of craftsmanship of the subject or adjacent landmark, landmark sites or contributing property;
- (4) The activity is contrary or detrimental to the findings of the original designation of the subject property or district;
- (5) The activity will not stabilize the landmark, landmark site or contributing property for future preservation or restoration efforts; or
- (6) The activity does not conform to criteria adopted by the common council to provide guidelines for the alteration and restoration of historic properties such as, but not limited to, those contained in [section 58-64.5](#), H-Historic Properties district design guidelines and [section 114-619](#), Architectural guidelines."

Chapter 58 also restated guidance put forth by the U.S. Department of the Interior Secretary's standards for historic preservation.

Section 58-64.5 (a) General Guidelines states that " The following general guidelines are based on 36 CFR Part 67, the Secretary of the Interior's Standard, and shall be applied to projects taking into consideration economic and technical feasibility.

- (1) A property shall be used for its historic purpose or be placed in a new use that requires minimal change to the defining characteristics of the building and its site and environment.
- (2) The historic character of a property shall be retained and preserved. The removal of historic materials or alteration of features and spaces that characterize a property shall be avoided.
- (3) Each property shall 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 architectural elements from other buildings, shall not be withdrawn.
- (4) Most properties change over time; those changes that have acquired historic significance in their own right shall be retained and preserved.
- (5) Distinctive features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a historic property shall be preserved.
- (6) Deteriorated historic features shall be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature shall match the old in design, color, texture, and other visual qualities and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features shall be substantiated by documentary, physical, or pictorial evidence.
- (7) Chemical or physical treatments, such as sandblasting, that causes damage to historic materials shall not be used. The surface cleaning of structures, if appropriate, shall be undertaken using the gentlest means possible.
- (8) Significant archeological resources affected by a project shall be protected and preserved. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures shall be undertaken.
- (9) New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction shall not destroy historic materials that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible with the massing, size, scale, and architectural features to protect the historic integrity of the property and its environment.
- (10) New additions and adjacent or related new construction shall 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 not be impaired.

(b) New construction on vacant, cleared lots.] New construction on vacant or cleared lots or parcels within an H-Historic Properties district shall be executed in a manner that is not detrimental to the district or adjacent properties.

BUDGETARY IMPACT:

N/A

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

Review plans and evaluate the project based on the guidance from Sec. 58-64(e) and Sec 58-64.5 (a) of the municipal code. Determine if the project, at this time, can be issued a certificate of appropriateness, and consider comments to be forwarded to the SHPO for their review and consideration.