

HERITAGE PRESERVATION COMMISSION REPORT
Certificate of Appropriateness- Downtown Commercial Historic District.
Section 115-320(d)(2)

TO: Heritage Preservation Commission
FROM: Planning Staff
MEETING DATE: August 26, 2021

PROPOSAL: The applicant is proposing stabilize an interior wall to make it an exterior wall on the property located at 123-125 3rd Street S.

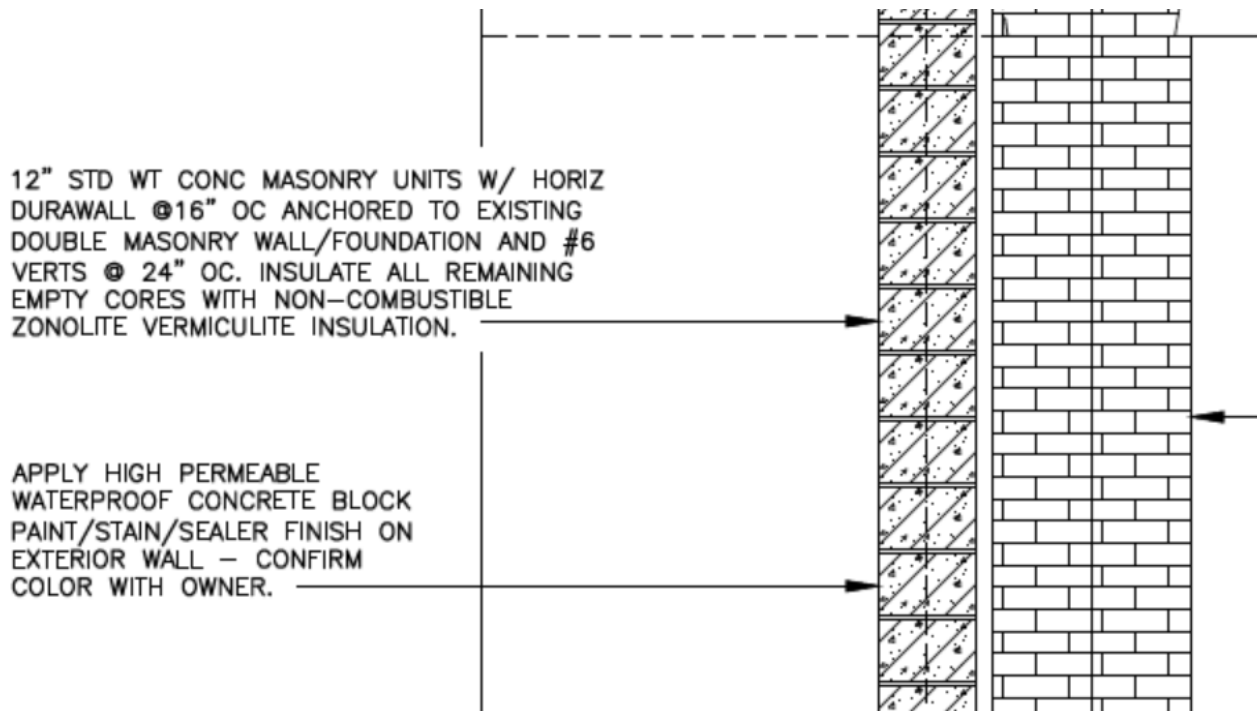
PROPERTY OWNER:
Fortney Fortney & Fortney LLP
PO Box 1621
La Crosse, WI 54602

APPLICANT:
Borton Construction
Dan Miller

BACKGROUND: The Downtown Commercial Historic District was established by Ordinance in April 2016 along with design standards that are specific to the styles of architecture found within. The local district designation of the Downtown Commercial Historic District was created to encourage preservation of the historic resources of the district, which was named to the National Register of Historic Places in 1994. The design standards and review procedures are used to guide preservation, rehabilitation, new construction, relocation and demolitions. Plans or requests must be approved by the Heritage Preservation Commission prior to any building/demolition permit being issued. In determining whether to issue a Certificate of Appropriateness for Demolition, the HPC shall:

1. Consider factors such as whether the structure is of historical significance, the state of repair of the building, and whether denial of a permit would create a significant economic hardship for the owner.
2. Issue the certificate only if the owner can demonstrate that the building is structurally unsound and/or that denial of a demolition permit would create a significant economic hardship for the owner.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: Due to the impending demolition of the building immediately to the north (Club Tucan- 119-121 3rd St S) the shared interior wall needs to be stabilized and converted to be used as an exterior wall. The applicant is proposing to stabilize the wall by anchoring concrete masonry blocks to the existing interior double brick wall that is currently supporting the roof and floor systems. Waterproof concrete block paint/stain/sealer finish will then be applied. The applicant has also stated that they will also apply a plaster finish to the exterior of the block to give it a textured finish.



SEE ATTACHED PLANS FOR MORE INFORMATION

ANALYSIS:

The following design standards apply:

(4) Building materials.

- a. Building materials shall be consistent with the predominant materials in use in the District.
- b. Painting of brick buildings is discouraged and shall not be used on new construction. Brick additions may be painted if the existing building is already painted. The paint color of the addition shall match the paint color of the existing building.
- c. The following materials are appropriate on front or primary façades (those facing the street):
 1. Clay brick
 2. Natural stone
 3. Cast stone
 4. Concrete and stucco may be appropriate for some buildings, if approved by the HPC.
- d. Decorative elements on building facades shall be of materials appropriate to the building style and similar to materials used on existing historic buildings, including metal, wood, stone, polished stone, tile, or glass block.
- e. Additional materials may be appropriate on side or rear facades that are less visible from the street, where permitted by the HPC. Materials that may be considered include:
 1. Precast concrete units and concrete block, provided that surfaces are molded, serrated or treated with a textured material in order to give the wall surface a three-dimensional character.

2. "Jumbo brick" units shall only be used on the lower third of the building wall.
3. Split-faced brick or block is not acceptable for downtown buildings.
4. "Novabrick" may be acceptable in some uses.

As this is considered a side façade concrete block with a surface that is treated with a textured material is considered appropriate to the district. Since this façade also faces the one-way traffic on 3rd Street it could be considered a primary façade. In this case concrete is acceptable at the discretion of the HPC. The applicant has provided the following examples of existing Downtown buildings depicting the proposed texturing.



FINDING

The proposed materials meet the design standards for the district. Although the project comes under an unfortunate situation, in that the adjacent building is being demolished, the applicant has indicated that the new wall will be consistent with other buildings in the district that fell under similar circumstances.

RECOMMENDED ACTION BY STAFF: This Certificate of Appropriateness is recommended for approval with the condition that the color of the textured plaster matches the color of the brick on the front façade facing 3rd St S.