

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: June 26, 2025

PROPOSAL: The applicant is proposing to install a deck on the rear façade of the building located at 327 Jay Street.

PROPERTY/BUSINESS OWNER:

KLC Properties LLC
PO Box 1534
La Crosse, WI 54602

APPLICANT:

Brent Thielen
Steiger Construction

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:

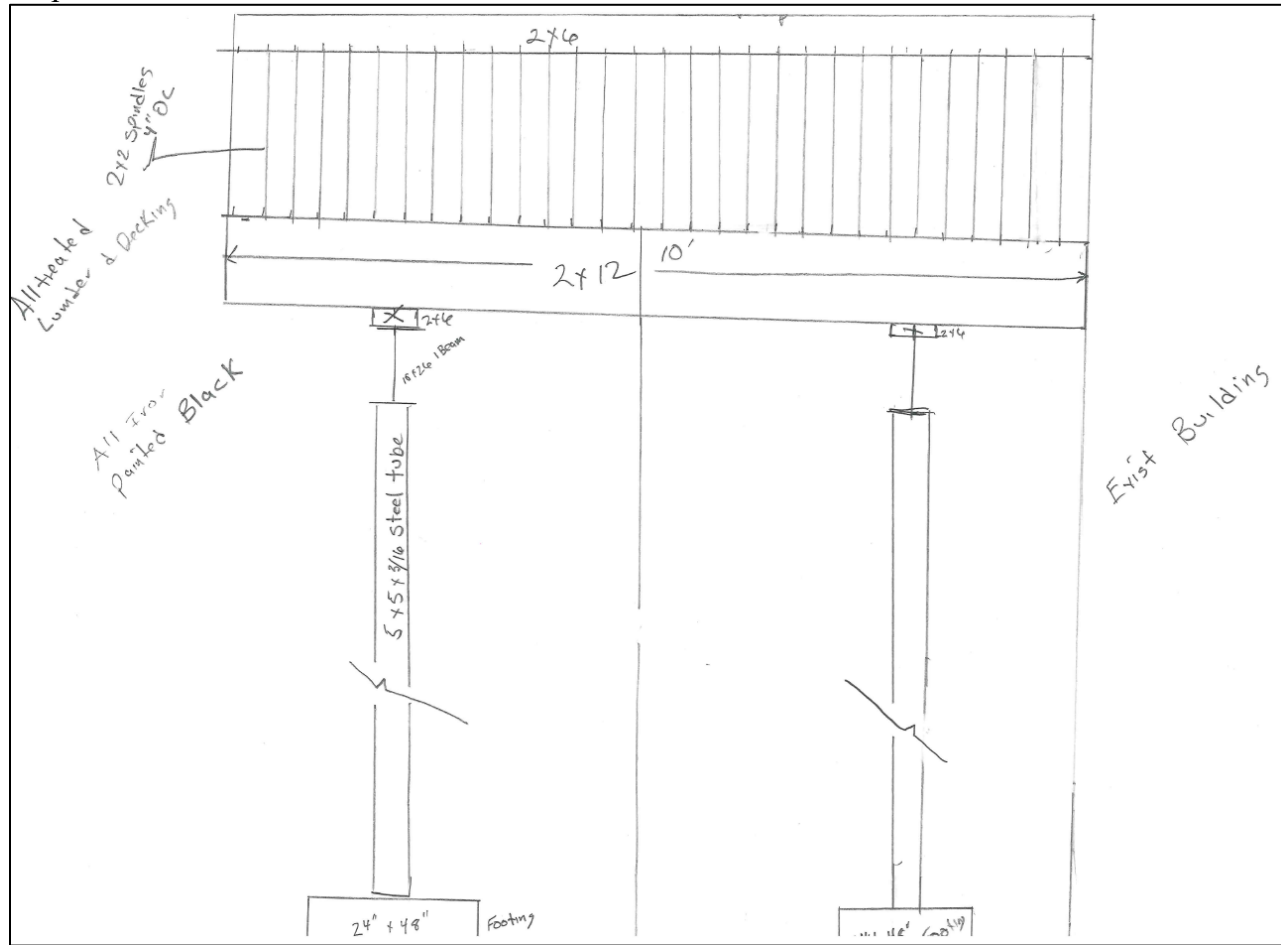
1. Consider factors such as whether the structure is of historical significance, the state of repair of the building, and whether denial of a permit would create a significant economic hardship for the owner.
2. Issue the certificate only if the owner can demonstrate that the building is structurally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

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: The applicant is proposing to install a 10' x 18' deck on the rear faced of the property located at 327 Jay Street. (Pickermans) The deck is intended to serve the second story apartment. The top of deck platform is approximately 12' 6" from grade and supported by four steel tubes. The deck platform is comprised of treated lumber and steel I-beams. The railing and spindles are also treated lumber. The spindles are 2"x 2" in size with no additional ornamentation. The proposed deck will not be attached to the building as the brick is too soft. It will be built flush up to the building.

Project Location



Proposed Plan



SEE ATTACHED FOR MORE INFORMATION

ANALYSIS:

The relevant design standards to this project are: (There are few that directly correlate to this type of project)

(f) New Construction

(4) Building Materials

(a) Building materials shall be consistent with the predominant materials in use in the District.

(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:

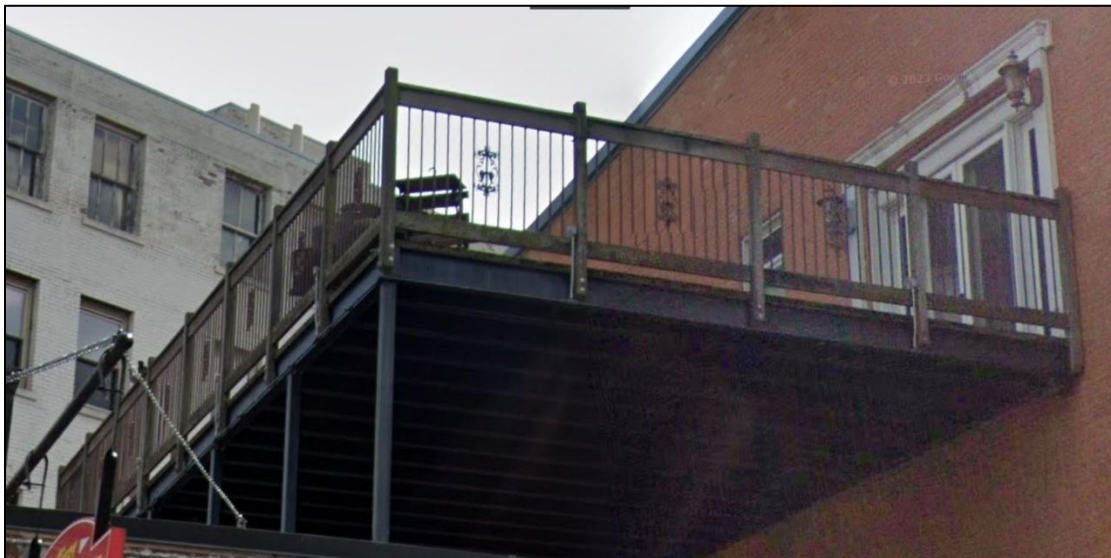
1. Precast concrete units and concrete block, provided that surfaces are molded, serrated or treated with a textured material in order to give the wall surface a three-dimensional character.
2. "Jumbo brick" units shall only be used on the lower third of the building wall.
3. Split-faced brick or block is not acceptable for downtown buildings.

4. "Novabrick" may be acceptable in some uses.

(6) *Accessory buildings.*

(a) Design of accessory buildings should be simple and unobtrusive. Materials similar to those of the principal building are encouraged, but lower cost materials may also be appropriate as determined by the HPC.

The above standards were intended to be applied more so to buildings instead of decks but are the most relevant. When evaluating its consistency with predominant materials in the district staff looked at what other decks have been added. There are very few.



Whole both of these examples use wood in their design, there is some inclusion of wrought iron or metal components, particularly with the railing.

FINDING: The proposed deck is at the rear of the building where there is typically more flexibility in design and use of materials. However, due to its location and high use of the adjacent alley, it will be highly visible, even from Jay Street. The design standards for the district are not particularly clear when reviewing these types of projects so staff looked at other decks that were added. All of them have a mix of visible wood and ornamental metal, especially as part of the railings. This design element was proposed to the applicant, but they chose to submit it as is. The proposed design is, in staff's opinion, not consistent with other decks and materials but the design standards are not crystal clear on this.

RECOMMENDED ACTION BY STAFF: This Certificate of Appropriateness is recommended for approval with the condition some ornamental metal is worked into the design of the railing.