

STAFF REPORT: 4/12/2023 MEETING

PREPARED BY: D. RIEDEN

APPLICATION NUMBER: #23-8274

ADDRESS: 4152 (4156) THIRD

HISTORIC DISTRICT: WILLIS-SELDEN

APPLICANT: JOHN BIGGAR (STUDIO ZONE LLC)

PROPERTY OWNER: SILK & MORGAN INC (WILLIS SHOW BAR)

DATE OF PROVISIONALLY COMPLETE APPLICATION: 3/21/2022

DATES OF STAFF SITE VISIT: 3/24/22

SCOPE: ERECT PATIO ROOF STRUCTURE

EXISTING CONDITIONS

Built in 1949, the property at 4152 Third (aka 4156 Third), is a single-story modern, commercial building with a storefront facing Third Street and the Willis Show Bar on the northwest corner at Willis Street. Burgundy porcelain enamel and pink marble tiles wrap the curvilinear bar's entrance. A metal-paneled overhang with matching burgundy paint bands the curved cornered entrance, matching the overhangs of the storefronts along Third Street. Glass block windows are on either side of the main metal double-doors, which are under the neon sign "BAR". Along Willis Street, the marble tiles and stunted parapet ends to a banded brick building, painted dark brown, with an emblematic "Willis Show Bar" mural painted on the side, closer to Third Street. The proposed location of the patio roof structure would be placed further down Third Street, so as not to obstruct this mural, and to allow some immediate shelter from the side service entrance that is the toward the midpoint of the building. This north side of the building has a setback from the street, matching the residential front yard setbacks further down the block. The street is lined with concrete curbed planting beds and street trees.

This property has the following former HDC approvals on Detroit Property Information System (DPI):

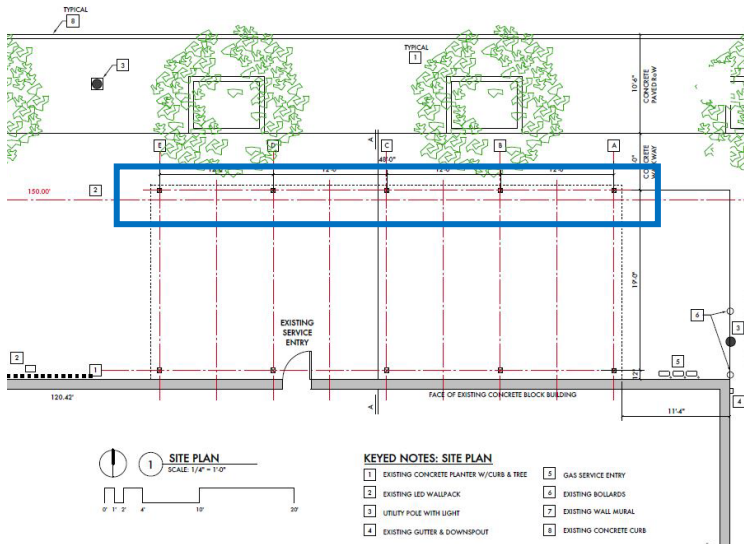
- October 2020, HDC COA: Removal of vinyl graphic signage, and installation of new vinyl graphic signage.



Site Photo 1, by Staff March 24, 2022: (Northwest) front elevation



Site Photo 2, by Staff March 24, 2022: (Northeast) side elevation and adjacent lot, showing location of proposed patio roof structure.



Site plan by Applicant (north side of building). Blue box shows footings located outside of property line.



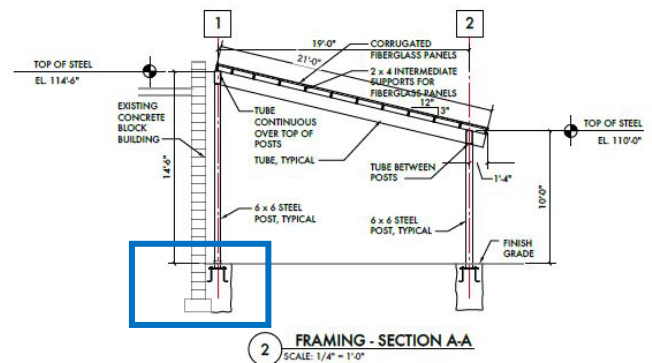
Aerial 1 of Parcel # 04003407 (in gold) by Detroit Parcel Viewer.

PROPOSAL

The proposed work consists of the following: erection of a patio roof structure made from wood and steel beams and wood cross purlins, covered with corrugated fiberglass panels. This structure would be supported by 16” steel beams in concrete footings. All steel and wood posts and beams would be painted brown. All wood purlins would be painted “natural color”. The fiberglass corrugated panels are clear/translucent. (See also attached drawings and product sheets.) No part of the structure shall touch the existing building.

STAFF OBSERVATIONS AND RESEARCH

- The Willis-Selden Historic District was established in 2011. Its Elements of Design (Sec. 21-2-217) provide the following guidance:
 - “Relationship of textures. On a majority of buildings within the district, the major textural effect is that of brick with mortar joints juxtaposed with cast stone or limestone trim. Patterned brickwork is used to create subtle detail on commercial and apartment buildings, such as spandrels and rectangular panels, and more pronounced textural interest...”
 - “The continuous façades of commercial buildings, where they exist in rows, create significant walls of continuity in the district. Fencing, often modern steel units that resemble historic cast or wrought iron fencing, exists at the front lot line of many properties and suggests an additional wall of continuity.”
- Metal, brick and concrete are materials widely used in the Willis-Selden HD as front yard fence, gates, and other threshold materials. Wood was less widely used. Fiberglass is not used, especially in this form.



Section, by applicant: showing pitch of roof, footings and existing building. Blue box shows potential impact of footing and building.

- Staff has the opinion that the simplicity of the patio structure and its placement does not interfere with the character-defining features of the building and therefore is not inappropriate. However, there are some details in the placement that staff noticed in the site plan and in the material choice for the roof that do raise concern.
 - The site plan shows footings slightly outside the property line and the section shows footings that may impact the foundation of the building due their locations.
 - Corrugated fiberglass is not an appropriate material for the stream-lined sophistication of this historic building that exhibits marble and porcelain tile exterior tiling. It is staff's opinion that fiberglass introduces yet another material that detracts from the historic elements already found on the property.

ISSUES

- The structure is proposed to be built slightly outside of the property line.
- The close placement of the structure's footings may impact the building.
- Corrugated fiberglass material for a public facing roofing material is not an appropriate material for roofing in the Willis-Selden HD. Other materials and products should be available for this purpose.

RECOMMENDATION

Section 21-2-78, Determination of Historic District Commission

Recommendation #1: Erect patio roof structure

It is staff's opinion the erection of the patio roof structure is appropriate. Staff therefore recommends the Commission issue a Certificate of Appropriateness for the work as proposed because it meets the Secretary of the Interior Standards for Rehabilitation and the Willis-Selden Historic District Elements of Design.

Staff recommends the COA be issued with following conditions:

- The structure is built inside the property line.
- The footings clear any impact from the building's foundation.
- The fiberglass roof material be changed to a more appropriate material.
- The applicant provide HDC staff a review of the above items before installation.