

STAFF REPORT: OCTOBER 11, 2023 REGULAR MEETING

PREPARED BY: T. BOSCARINO

APPLICATION NUMBER: HDC2023-00051

ADDRESS: 4300 W. VERNOR

HISTORIC DISTRICT: HUBBARD FARMS

APPLICANT: KENDALL BOWMAN, ARCOS STUDIO, AND LOUIS ANTONIO URIBEGAN, DESIGN THINK TANK

PROPERTY OWNER: OMAR HERNANDEZ, ODDFELLOWS MEXICANTOWN LLC

DATE OF PROVISIONALLY COMPLETE APPLICATION: AUGUST 24, 2023

DATE OF STAFF SITE VISIT: SEPTEMBER 25, 2023

SCOPE: INSTALL WINDOWS AT SIDE WALL

EXISTING CONDITIONS

4300 West Vernor Highway is a three-story, brick commercial building facing south at the intersection of Vernor and Clarkdale Street. It was built in 1894. Decorative treatment includes patterned brick spandrels on the primary (south) façade; brick pilasters on the south and east subdivide the street-facing elevations into vertical bays. As noted in Final Report by the Historic Designation Advisory Board, written concurrently with the 1993 establishment of the Hubbard Farms Historic District:

Although the first story has been altered, the original arched entrance in the center of the front façade and basic arrangements of the storefronts are still intact. Elongated three-part windows occupy the second story; pairs of short double-hung sash windows occupy the third story between the raised pilasters. Round buttresses project above the roof line. Ornamentation is in the form of raised brick blind panels; the inscription “ODD FELLOWS HALL, RIVERSIDE LODGE, 303, I.O.O.F., 1894” is inscribed in the masonry tablet above the middle, second story window.



Subject property viewed from intersection of Vernor Highway and Clarkdale Street (view facing northwest). September 2023 photo by staff.

The ground-level storefronts have been altered since the 1993 description. Most prominently, a recessed, diagonal entrance bay has been created at the southwest corner, allowing access from Clarkdale Street in addition to West Vernor Highway. A vinyl awning and an expanse of T-111 siding have been removed. In their place, the present wood-panel and glass storefront has been added. Two business signs have been removed. Finally, a decorative arch, set within the central, south-facing doorway (noted in the HDAB description above) has been removed. Staff has no record of this work being approved by the Historic District Commission. The work meets the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation, in the opinion of staff, except for the removal of the arch, which is not appropriate.



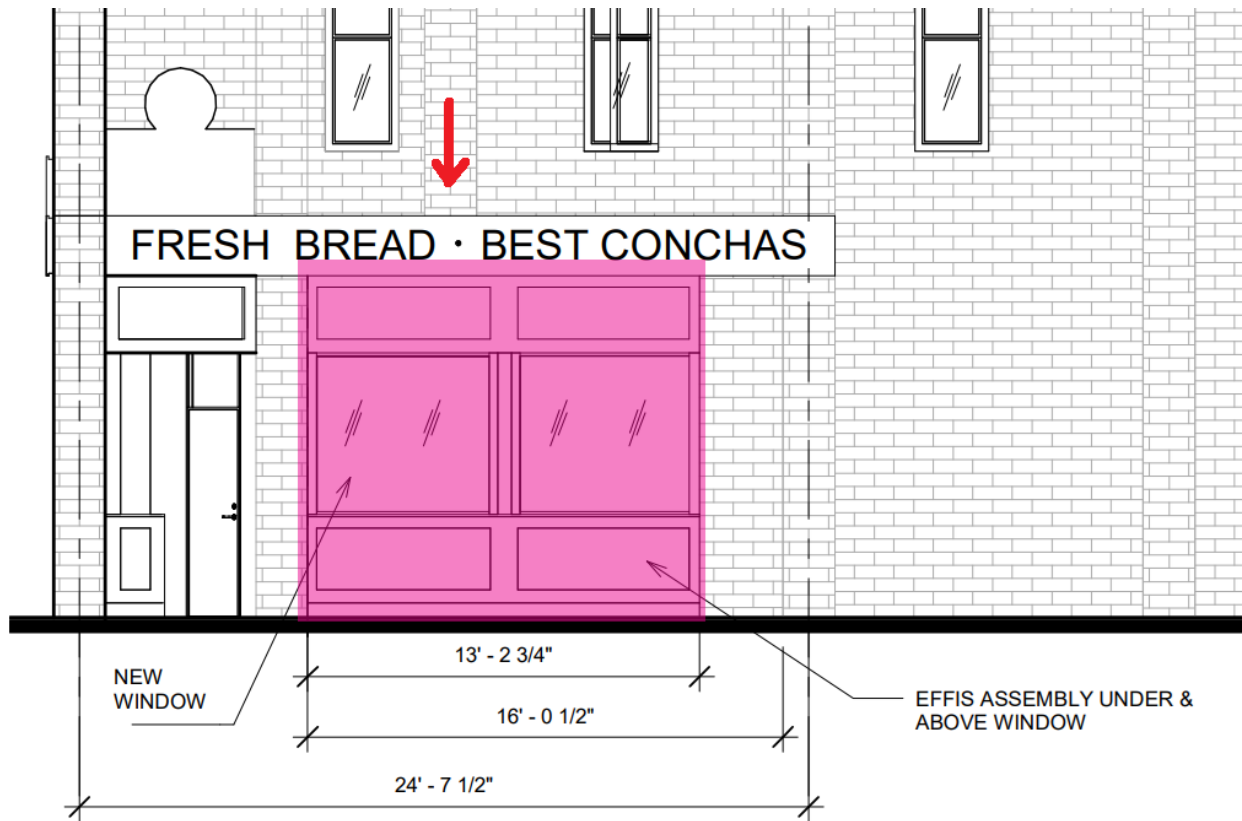
1993 Historic Designation Advisory Board photo, arrow added to indicate missing arch.

PROPOSAL

The applicant proposes to expand the storefront by creating additional window openings on the east elevation. The new window area would have a similar appearance, including profile and color, to the existing storefront on the front (south) façade. The unfenestrated areas of the storefront are proposed to be clad in a proprietary exterior insulation and finish (EIFS) system. Above the window area, a sign is proposed.



Left: Existing conditions. Right: Rendering of proposed work. Illustration from application documents.



East elevation with proposed work highlighted in colored box. Image from application documents. Arrow added by staff to indicate pilaster location, discussed below.

STAFF OBSERVATIONS AND RESEARCH

- The Hubbard Farms Historic District was established by Ordinance 01-93 in 1993. The Final Report provides a Period of Significance of 1870 through 1930. The Elements of Design (Sec. 21-2-157 [d]) provide the following pertinent observations:
 - Brick and wood are the primary building materials originally used. . . . Wood trim is most commonly used for window, porch, and functional elements as well as decorative trim (*Relationship of Materials*).
 - Wooden elements display a variety of colors, depending on what is appropriate for their style . . . Victorian buildings show more freedom, ranging from shades of rose to green, sometimes with a contrasting color highlighting the architectural detail (*Relationship of Colors*).
 - Buildings of Victorian substyles also tend to have details of wood located around the entrance, porch, windows, bays, towers, and dormers. Lathe-turned and jigsaw cut wooden elements and details are common (*Relationship of Architectural Details*).
- Adding a relatively small number of additional openings to a non-primary elevation of a building is generally acceptable, if the new work does not alter character-defining features and spaces (Standard #2)¹

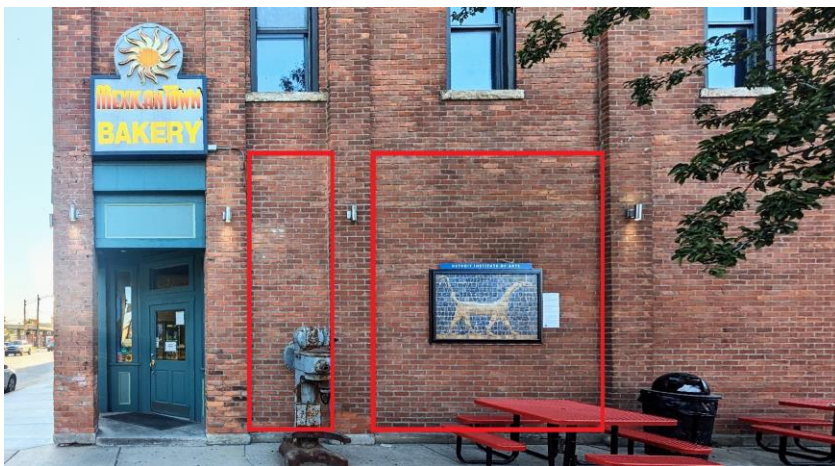
¹ “The historic character of a property shall be retained and preserved. The removal of historic materials or alteration of

and is generally compatible with the remainder of the property and the surrounding environment (Standard #9).²

- As noted in the Final Report, although the first-floor storefront has been altered, the historic arrangement of openings remains as a character-defining feature; the arrangement remains unchanged despite post-1993 alterations.
- The placement of storefront windows and doors between pilasters and directly beneath second- and third-story window openings creates a vertical emphasis and rhythm to the façade. The proposed storefront windows break this established rhythm, with one of the pilasters being truncated by the work. Additional window openings would most appropriately continue this emphasis in order to be compatible with the massing and architectural features of the building (Standard #9).



Vertical emphasis of the façade. Illustration by staff.



Examples of appropriate locations for new openings. Illustration by staff.

features and spaces that characterize a property shall be avoided.”

² “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.”

ISSUES

- The proposed location of storefront window openings, severing one of the pilasters at the first story, is not compatible with the vertical emphasis of the building, as described above, contrary to Standard #9.
- The proposed use of EIFS would introduce a new material that is not historically found in the Hubbard Farms Historic District, contrary to Standard #9.
- Specifications for the proposed sign are not provided.

RECOMMENDATION

Section 21-2-78: Determinations of Historic District Commission (Certificate of Appropriateness)

Staff recommends that the Commission issue a Certificate of Appropriateness for the proposed work as it meets the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation, with the following conditions:

- The proposed openings will be adjusted to avoid severing the brick pilasters on the east elevation.
- Wood, rather than EIFS, will be used for the unglazed portions of the storefront.
- The sign will conform to the *Sign and Awning Guidelines* or be approved by staff subject to the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation.