

Historic District Commission Narrative

Date 7-13-2021
To Historic District Commission
Subject Project Description
Project Name Isaac Agree Downtown Synagogue – 1457 Griswold, Detroit MI 48226

History of the building.

1457 Griswold original building was built for Mary Lucking Apel by her father Joseph Lucking. The building was constructed in 1930 and was occupied by William Apel & Son Coal Inc, the husband of May Lucking Apel. The building went into liquidation and was occupied by a ladies' clothing store, beauty salon and medical offices during 1934 – 1937. In 1944 the Fingris Corporation bought the building and did extensive alterations to the interior and exterior. In 1953 additional changes happened to the interior when one of the tenants was a finishing school for girls. Isaac Agree Downtown Synagogue purchased the structure in 1964. It's believed that around this time in 1965 or 1966 is when the exterior changes happened to the first floor storefront and entry.

Current Description of the Existing Building.

The pie shaped building is a four-story concrete frame that measures 36'-10" at the wide end and 10'-1" at the narrow end. The building measures 100'-0" in length and measures 51'-6" to the building parapet. The building is clad with limestone on the east and north with a granite base at the columns. The west and south elevations are clad in brick in-fill between the exposed concrete structure. The fenestrations on the fourth and third floor are wood double-hung windows. The windows on the fourth and third floor appear to be original to the building. The second floor openings are in-filled with aluminum frame with transparent colored textured acrylic panels. The windows on the second floor are not original to the building as of the most current photo taken in 1964. The first floor openings are in-filled with brick below aluminum frame and clear glass with transparent colored textured acrylic panels on the interior side of the opening. Again, the windows on the first floor are not original to the building as of the most current photo taken in 1964. The corrugated panel detailing between the fenestrations on the fourth and third floor looks to be original to the building and is need of refurbishing.

Description of Project.

The project will include an added roof deck with new stairs and elevator penthouse. The exterior limestone cladding will be rehabilitated and cleaned. Any loose limestone panels will be resecured along with the existing steel support to be cleaned and painted to stop the deterioration of those steel supports. The first floor brick and aluminum frame windows will be removed and replaced with a similar look design that was original to the building back in 1964. The new aluminum storefront system will sit on new black granite base, flush with the existing walls. The storefront windows with transoms on the granite base that is similar in height and location to the original. The transom windows had originally been blanked off they will instead use colored transom windows. The existing colored transom windows are unique to the synagogue and will be salvaged during construction to be used within the design of the interior. In keeping with identification of those colored transom as a part of the synagogue the new design will also incorporate colored transoms. The vertical mullion spacing is an effort to match what rhythm and spacing happening

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on the third and fourth floor windows. The design of the storefront windows with the black granite base is in keeping with the design back in 1964. The window will be ballistic glass on the lower section and the transom units above will be colored film on the interior side of a normal insulated glass unit with ballistic polycarbonate on the interior of the opening. As a goal of the synagogue, they are working to increase the congregante size with a stronger connection to the community. The opening of the first floor windows is an effort to increase the visibility of synagogue by exposing the different community activities happening in that space. The desire for the first floor is for it to be an inviting and welcoming experience. The removal of the brick wall is an effort to make that connection and to have that experience. The special attention paid to the history of the building and the effort to bring back what was original, with respect paid to the identity of Isaac Agree Downtown Synagogue, is what is being proposed.

Detailed Scope Of Work.

- Remove current brick and aluminum frame window system within the first floor openings on the east and north elevations.
- Install new storefront window system with ballistic glass over new black granite base. The storefront window within existing openings will have a 2 to 1, transom over main window ratio with each vertical mullion division similar to the bay division on the fourth and third floors.
- The existing wood double hung windows on the third and fourth floors will be restored per the report by BlackBerry Window and Door Systems.
- Existing elevator penthouse to be removed.
- New elevator with new elevator penthouse to be installed. The penthouse is to be cladded in brick to match the existing.
- New stairs extension from the existing interior stairs. The new stair extension to the roof to be cladded in brick matching the existing.
- New roof deck to be installed with guardrail around the exterior perimeter of the deck.
- New roof Vestibule constructed with new aluminum storefront window system to enclose the doors to the elevator and stairs.
- The existing fire escape will be extended to the new roof deck.
- The existing windows along the west elevation, below the extended fire escape will be removed and bricked in to project occupants using the fire escape.

From

Jim Cummings
