

STAFF REPORT: OCTOBER 9, 2024 MEETING

PREPARED BY: A. DYE

APPLICATION NUMBER: HDC2024-00489

ADDRESS: 1550 TRUMBULL (1451 BAGLEY)

HISTORIC DISTRICT: CORKTOWN

APPLICANT: JOSEPH HUMPREYS, CATALOGUE LLC

PROPERTY OWNER: DEVON CALDWELL, BALLPARK BAGLEY, LLC

DATE OF PROVISIONALLY COMPLETE APPLICATION: SEPTEMBER 16, 2024

DATE OF STAFF SITE VISIT: SEPTEMBER 20, 2024

SCOPE: PAINT MASONRY FACADE

EXISTING CONDITIONS

The two-story structure is located on the southeast corner of Bagley and Trumbull. Previous changes to the exterior elevations are evident through the ghost outline of a removed second floor door facing Bagley, mottled surface texture and thicker mortar joints for the brick areas above the corner storefront (which was a painted area at time of district designation) and white brick clads the first floor of the building on both facades. A metal coping system offers a finished edge at the roof. Non-historic storefront systems are located at the corner of the building, as well as the southern end of the Trumbull façade. Historic supporting iron columns remain in place at the center of both storefront entrances. Newly installed Anderson aluminum-clad one-over-one double-hung units are in place at the second floor window openings and the wood brick mould remains in place.



Above: Looking southeast; Bagley (left) and Trumbull (right) elevations. Staff photo, September 20, 2024.

Below right: Location (blue dot) of property within the Corktown Historic District.





Trumbull elevation looking northeast. Staff photo, September 2024. The building has a registered address of 1451 Bagley, but the section/storefront subject to this application is identified with the address of 1550 Trumbull. (area between the yellow lines).

PROPOSAL

Paint the exterior brick “alabaster” white and the trim “bare” white. Storefront system will retain its black finish.

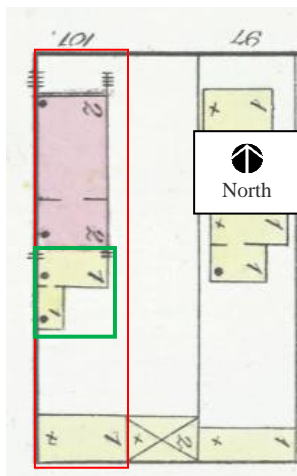
STAFF OBSERVATIONS AND RESEARCH

- The Corktown Historic District was established in 1984.

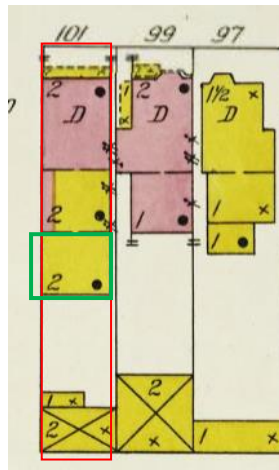


Designation photos, HDAB, 1984

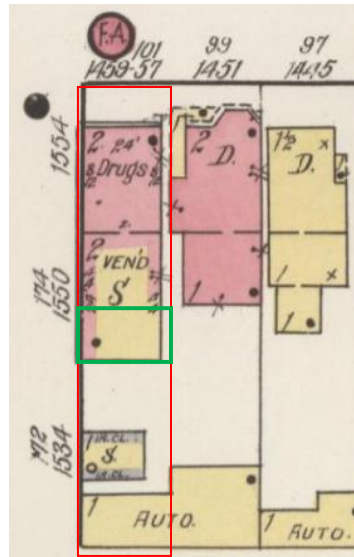
- According to the Corktown Final Report, development of the Woodbridge Farm, from approximately 8th to 10th street, in which this property is located, occurred between 1860 and 1880. Development of this area was spurred by the opening of the Michigan Avenue street railway line in 1863 and the Baker (Bagley) street line in 1873.



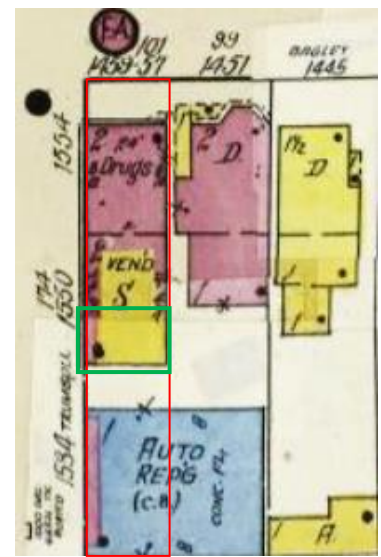
1884



1897



1921



1921 - 1950

The Sanborn maps show the material and structural changes to the two-story corner building, highlighted by a green box.

- The earliest Sanborn map shows the majority of the building was in place by 1884 and the southern section was expanded to its current footprint by 1897. The façade of the wood-framed section was likely clad with brick shortly after 1900. The rear wall remained wood siding, which was eventually covered with T1-11 siding.



View of east wall in early 2024. Photo provided by building owner.

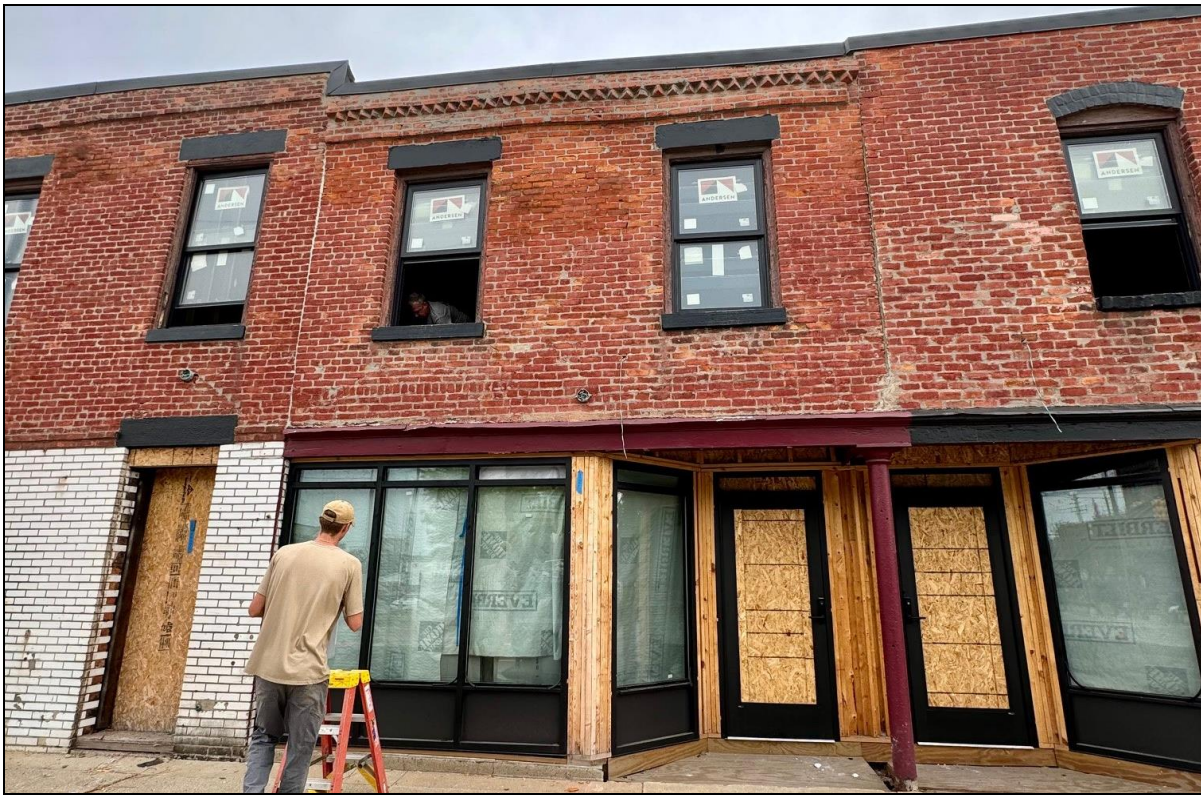
- The Commission reviewed the rehabilitation of the corner structure and the erection of a new structure to the east at its December 2022 meeting. The exterior construction of the new structure is almost complete.



1451 Bagley façade. Staff photo, September 2024.



Trumbull façade, looking southeast. Staff photo, September 2024.



Trumbull façade, 1550 Bagley in center of photo. Staff photo, September 2024.

- Physical evidence of the additions to the original structure includes changes in roof height, vertical joints within the masonry, differing masonry details including shapes of window headers.
- The facades of the existing structure at the first floor have been altered (glazed brick, storefronts, altered door opening at second floor facing Bagley). The new storefronts are compatible with the architectural style of the building and the glazed brick covers a minimal amount of wall surface and its uniform installation at the first floor created its own consistency of color and pattern.
- The massing of the building and many exterior elements remain at the first and second floors, including supporting iron columns, window openings with original headers and sills and decorative masonry detailing, and reflect the 19th and 20th century decades of their construction. The building's historic relationship to the neighborhood also remains intact (corner two-story building with ground level commercial space).
- As the additions to this building were in place by 1884, staff can surmise that the brick which remains at the second story was fabricated in the 1860s-1870s.
 - When repointing, the mortar must be softer than the brick and include lime.
 - 19th century masonry wall construction anticipates that some moisture will be absorbed (but not saturated) when it rains, so that the stored water can be slowly released through evaporation during dry weather. With this type of wall system, it is imperative that the surface of the bricks and mortar remain exposed to air, therefore not covered or coated.
- The mottled surface of the brick above the corner storefront is a lasting example of the impact of previous surface alterations. Once a coating is applied, it might not ever be fully removed; or the coating's full removal may permanently damage the brick.
- Staff does not know when the white glazed brick was installed at the first floor on the Trumbull and Bagley facades, however it was in place at time of the 1984 district designation. It is staff's opinion the glazed brick may have been installed as a wall repair.

- Looking closely at the building, the brick extends to grade as opposed to sitting upon a stone/block foundation. The latter condition is in place at the adjoining new construction at 1451 Bagley, as well as the similarly-aged 19th-century masonry building at the east end of Bagley (at 8th street).



Transition from storefront to brick at 1451 Bagley



Consistent stone base at 1401 Bagley.

- When the building was erected circa 1870, there was likely a patch of grass between the building and the original sidewalk, allowing for adequate drainage of water at the building fronts. However over time, the sidewalk was expanded to extend the distance between the building and street, as well as being composed of impervious surfaced concrete. This could have caused the brick walls abutting the concrete walkway to wick a substantial amount of water from melting snow and puddling rain. Rising damp over many decades along with freeze/thaw cycles could have caused significant deterioration to the historic brick leading to structural issues. Replacing all of the brick at the first floor created a uniform condition that would alleviate or minimize future structural problems.
- Painting the brick of the central bay a solid “alabaster” white, with accenting “bare” white window sills, headers, and ½ of the steel lintel at the store entrances, will obscure the decorative brick coursing near the parapet as well as create a disjointed appearance to the Trumbull façade by the disruption of the dark color palate present on both facades of the building. Furthermore, the alabaster and bare paint colors will be adjacent to the white glazed brick, creating an additional contrast of color.
- The applicant states the painting of the brick is to “create some separation and distinction between the three tenants in the building and will reflect the aesthetic of our space and brand”.



Applicant's rendering and submitted color samples.

- Painted brick is not maintenance free. Once a coating is applied, there must be a maintenance plan to take care of the normal wear and tear of the painted surface due to weather and sun exposure, as well as any deeper maintenance issues to the building that can be caused by the reduction and possibly elimination of the porosity and breathability of the brick.
- The building is around 150 years old and has had many owners and tenants since it opened and will have many more in the years to come. The building was not erected to serve a single business (i.e., Kresge or contemporary CVS/Walgreen's), therefore the building should not be permanently altered, in an inappropriate manner, to suit the marketing strategy of tenants.

ISSUES

- 19th century masonry wall construction anticipates that some moisture will be absorbed and slowly released through evaporation during dry weather. With this type of wall system is imperative that the surface of the bricks and mortar remain exposed to air and not covered or coated.
- Painting the central bay two different colors of white will obscure the decorative brick coursing near the parapet as well as create a disjointed appearance to the Trumbull façade by the disruption of the dark color palate present on the building, as well as a contrast with the white glazed brick.
- The building is approximately 150 years old and will continue to have many owners and tenants. The building was not erected to serve a single business (i.e., Kresge or contemporary CVS/Walgreen's), therefore the building should not be permanently altered in an inappropriate manner to suit the marketing strategy of tenants.
- The applicant states the painting of the brick is to “create some separation and distinction between the three tenants in the building and will reflect the aesthetic of our space and brand”. A sign affixed to the building, whether it be on the door, in a storefront window or attached to the masonry wall through the mortar joints, has historically served as a major communication tool without causing long-term damage, or inappropriate alteration, to the building.

RECOMMENDATION

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

Staff finds that the proposal does not meet the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the following reasons:

- 19th century masonry wall construction anticipates that some moisture will be absorbed and slowly released through evaporation during dry weather. With this type of wall system is imperative that the surface of the bricks and mortar remain exposed to air and not covered or coated.
- Painting the central bay two different colors of white will obscure the decorative brick coursing near the parapet as well as create a disjointed appearance to the Trumbull façade by the disruption of the dark color palate present on the building, as well as a contrast with the white glazed brick.
- The building is approximately 150 years old and will continue to have many owners and tenants. The building was not erected to serve a single business (i.e., Kresge or contemporary CVS/Walgreen's), therefore the building should not be permanently altered in an inappropriate manner to suit the marketing strategy of tenants.
- The applicant states the painting of the brick is to “create some separation and distinction between the three tenants in the building and will reflect the aesthetic of our space and brand”. A sign affixed to the building, whether it be on the door, in the storefront window or attached to the masonry wall through the mortar joints, has historically served as a major communication tool without causing long-term damage, or inappropriate alteration, to the building.

Staff therefore recommends that the Commission issue a Denial for the work as proposed, as it does not meet the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation, specifically Standards 2 and 5:

- 2) The historic character of a property shall be retained and preserved. The removal of historic materials or alteration of features and spaces that characterize a property shall be avoided.
- 5) Distinctive features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property shall be preserved.
- 7) Chemical or physical treatments, such as sandblasting, that cause damage to historic materials shall not be used. The surface cleaning of structures, if appropriate, shall be undertaken using the gentlest means possible.