ANN ARBOR HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION

Staff Report

ADDRESS: 113 West Liberty Street, Application Number HDC13-209

DISTRICT: Main Street Historic District

REPORT DATE: December 12, 2013

REPORT PREPARED BY: Jill Thacher, Historic Preservation Coordinator

REVIEW COMMITTEE DATE: Monday, December 9, 2013

OWNER APPLICANT

Name: Mermicorm LLC Aaron Vermeulen

Aaron Schwartz OX Studio Inc.

Address: 255 E Liberty, Suite 281 308 1/12 S State Street, Suite 20

Ann Arbor, MI 48104 Ann Arbor, MI 48104 (734) 812-8121 (734) 929-9012

BACKGROUND: This three story Romanesque commercial building was constructed in 1888 by photographer John Haarer. It features complex patterned brick work, arched windows, horizontal stone banding, and one of Ann Arbor's first plate glass storefronts. Haarer family businesses, including a book shop and insurance agency, occupied the building until at least 1940. In 1964 the city purchased the property, intending to demolish the building for additional parking, but a subsequent city council (fortunately) changed course. The current ground floor retailer is the West Side Book Shop. The upper two floors are residential, which is in keeping

LOCATION: The site is located at the south side of West Liberty Street, between South Main and South Ashley Streets.

APPLICATION: The applicant seeks HDC approval to add a 430 square foot addition, skylight, and deck on top of the third floor roof.

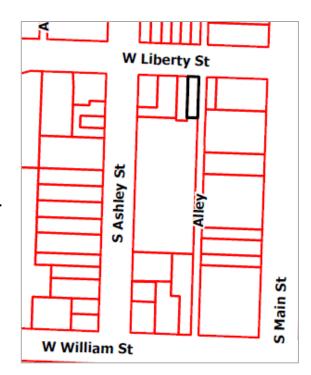
APPLICABLE REGULATIONS:

with the original use of the building.

Phone:

From the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation:

(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.



- (9) 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.
- (10) New additions and adjacent or related new construction shall be undertaken in such a manner that if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.

From the Secretary of the Interior's Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings (other SOI Guidelines may also apply):

Alterations/Additions for the new use

<u>Recommended</u>: Designing additions to roofs such as residential, office, or storage spaces; elevator housing; decks and terraces; or dormers or skylights when required by the new use so that they are inconspicuous from the public right-of-way and do not damage or obscure character-defining features.

Additions

<u>Recommended</u>: Designing new additions in a manner that makes clear what is historic and what is new.

Considering the attached exterior addition both in terms of the new use and the appearance of other buildings in the historic district or neighborhood. Design for the new work may be contemporary or may reference design motifs from the historic building. In either case, it should always be clearly differentiated from the historic building and be compatible in terms of mass, materials, relationship of solids to voids, and color.

Designing additional stories, when required for the new use, that are set back from the wall plane and are as inconspicuous as possible when viewed from the street.

<u>Not Recommended</u>: Designing a new addition so that its size and scale in relation to the historic building are out of proportion, thus diminishing the historic character.

Duplicating the exact form, material, style, and detailing of the historic building in the new addition so that the new work appears to be part of the historic building.

Constructing a rooftop addition so that the historic appearance of the building is radically changed.

District or Neighborhood Setting

<u>Recommended</u>: Designing and constructing new additions to historic buildings when required by the new use. New work should be compatible with the historic character of the setting in terms of size, scale, design, material, color, and texture.

<u>Not Recommended</u>: Introducing new construction into historic districts that is visually incompatible or that destroys historic relationships within the setting.

From the Ann Arbor Historic District Design Guidelines:

Additions to Historic Commercial Structures

<u>Appropriate</u>: Placing additions such as balconies on non character-defining elevations and limiting the number, size and scale in relationship to the historic building.

When required, designing additional stories that are set back from the front and side wall planes and are as inconspicuous as possible when viewed from the street.

Not Appropriate: Designing an addition that overpowers or dramatically alters the original building through size, height, or materials.

STAFF FINDINGS:

- 1. The proposed 430 square foot penthouse addition is set back 30 feet from the front of the building, and 3 ½ feet from the east (alley) side. The addition is 11' tall on average. Materials include anodized aluminum windows, EPDM rubber rolled roofing, and black phenolic siding. The Richlite Rain Shadow siding consists of layered paper and resin, and is a solid color all the way through. In front of the penthouse is a large hipped aluminum skylight, and three decks cover the remaining roof surfaces between the penthouse and front parapet.
- 2. The decks would be enclosed by a wood wall and cabinets along the west edge of the building; the front deck would have a planter box along the north and east sides, tall enough to serve as a guardrail; and the raised deck next to the penthouse would have a simple guardrail. Two chimneys along the north side of the roof would receive new flue extensions.
- 3. The existing roof has several chimneys around the perimeter, but the roof surface empty, unencumbered by mechanical or other equipment. Per the SOI *Guidelines* for additions, no character-defining features of the historic building are obscured, damaged, or destroyed by this proposal. The addition's height is intentionally low, and the penthouse is set back from Liberty Street in order to minimize sight lines from pedestrians looking into the alley. The design is contemporary, and the materials and methods of construction clearly delineate what is historic and what is new. The addition is very visible on the back (south elevation) of the building, but the building backs up to a municipal surface parking lot that is not part of the historic district.
- 4. The design and scale of the proposed addition does not detract from the existing building and uses distinct materials to further differentiate it from the historic structure. Overall, staff feels that the historical integrity and character-defining features of the building will not be harmed.
- 5. Staff recommends approval of the addition, skylight, and deck as proposed. The proposed work is generally compatible in exterior design, arrangement, texture, material and relationship to the rest of the building and the surrounding area and meets *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation*, in particular standards 2, 9 and 10, and the guidelines for additions and district or neighborhood setting.

POSSIBLE MOTIONS: (Note that the motion supports staff findings and is only a suggestion. The Review Committee, consisting of staff and at least two Commissioners, will meet with the

applicant on site and then make a recommendation at the meeting.)

I move that the Commission issue a certificate of appropriateness for the application at 113 West Liberty Street, a contributing property in the Main Street Historic District, to construct a one-story addition, skylight, and decks on the roof, as proposed. The work is compatible in exterior design, arrangement, texture, material and relationship to the rest of the building and the surrounding area and meets the *Ann Arbor Historic District Design Guidelines* and the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation* and *Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings*, in particular standards 2, 9 and 10 and the guidelines for additions and district or neighborhood setting.

MOTION WORKSHEET:

I move that the Commission issue a Certificate of Appropriateness for the work at <u>113 W Liberty</u> Street in the Main Street Historic District

Provided the following condition(S) is (ARE) met: 1) STATE CONDITION(s)

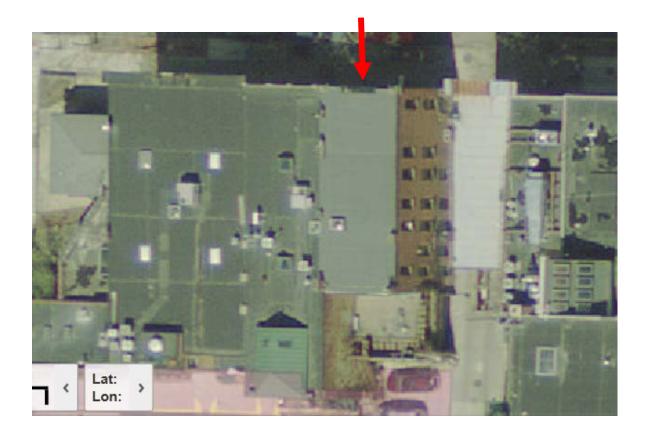
The work is generally compatible with the size, scale, massing, and materials and meets the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation, standard(S) number(S) (circle all that apply): 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10

ATTACHMENTS: application, drawings

John Haarer at 5 West Liberty Street (c.1889)



2010 Aerial Photo



John Haarer Photography Studio

Published In:

Ann Arbor Observer, June 2002

June 2002

Author: Grace Shackman

Continuity and change on Liberty Street

John Haarer, one of Ann Arbor's early photographers, showed that his artistry went beyond photography when he built an elegant brick storefront studio and home at 113 West Liberty. After surviving an attempt to tear it down for parking in the 1960s, the 1888 building is today home to the West Side Book Shop, with the upper stories a wonderful urban apartment.

Haarer was born in 1840 in Öschelbronn, in the German state of Württemberg. The son of a farmer, he was educated from ages eight to fourteen in the village school, where he "became thoroughly familiar with his native tongue and also quite adept in Latin," according to his sketch in the 1891 county history. At age twenty-one he immigrated to Ann Arbor, where he worked as an agricultural laborer and then as a section hand on the railroad. In 1861 he opened a photography business on the third floor of Mack and Schmid's store on the corner of Liberty and Main.

Ann Arbor's first photos were taken by traveling daguerreotypists. Introduced from France about 1840, Louis Daguerre's process produced a direct, mirrorlike image on a polished silver surface. Although these instant portraits had to be held in certain ways to be discernible and images were reversed, they quickly caught on all over the country. By 1846 Ann Arbor had its first resident photographer: an ad that year announced that "L. C. Goodale, having furnished himself with a supply of best Material, is now prepared to take Likenesses at his residence, corner of Catharine and Fifth street."



Haarer moved his studio to the modest frame building, left, in the mid-1870s. He replaced it in 1888 with the Romanesque structure that still exists.

Haarer started out making ambrotypes, a newer type of photograph that replaced daguerreotypes in the mid-1850s. Ambrotypes were easier to view than daguerreotypes and cheaper to make. Working with collodion, a newly developed base, spread on a piece of glass, the photographer produced an image that yielded a positive view when turned over and mounted on a black background. But like daguerreotypes, each

ambrotype was unique and could not be reproduced.

The next step, which Haarer soon took, was to expose the glass plate longer and then use it as a negative to make paper prints. The photo still had to be taken when the collodion was wet, though, so the photographer had to stay close to the darkroom. That's why most early photographs are studio poses. (To get his wonderful Civil War photos, Mathew Brady built a portable darkroom in a horse-drawn wagon.) Haarer had several backdrops that he could use to vary his shots. One extant picture, owned by the present occupants of the upstairs apartment, Bill Read and Tony Harris, shows palm trees in the background. Another one, owned by Carolyn and Joseph Arcure, owners and restorers of the apartment, has a woodland scene with trees and flowers.

Haarer took both carte-de-visite and cabinet photos. The carte-de-visite became popular after 1854, when a French photographer devised a multiple-lens camera that allowed a number of poses to be recorded on a single plate, thus reducing printing costs. These small individual pictures were mounted on stiff cards about four inches by two and a half and used as calling cards. People began collecting them and saving them in albums. Cabinet cards--larger mounted photographs, usually four inches by five and a half--were introduced in 1866. Both the Arcures' photo and an early self-portrait of Haarer at the Bentley Library are cartes-de-visite; the one owned by Read and Harris, and another owned by Jay Platt, the owner of the West Side Book Shop, are cabinet cards.

Sometime in the mid-1870s Haarer moved his studio from Main Street to a two-story wooden building on Liberty midway between Main and Ashley. As was common at that time, he worked downstairs and lived upstairs. He married for the first time in 1871, but his wife died a year later. In 1875 he married Katherine Zimmer, a native of Canada, and they had seven children.

In 1888 Haarer built a beautiful new building to house both his business and his growing family. The story that has been passed down is that Haarer and Martin Noll, a shoe repairman, chipped in to buy a German lottery ticket and won. (Noll used his share to build the gorgeous Queen Anne house at 921 West Huron.)

Haarer moved his existing building onto another lot and then spared no expense on the new one. It was built in the Richardsonian Romanesque style, then much in vogue, with rounded arches above the windows, multicolored brick in ornate designs, and a front gable. Transom windows and fancy brass hardware were used both inside and out.

The upper two stories, which formed the family living quarters, included two parlors (one for everyday and one for important visitors), a kitchen, and a dining room on the second floor. An impressive marble-faced fireplace dominated the front parlor, which was separated from the rear parlor by pocket doors and beadboard. On the top floor a front master bedroom had room for a nursery; five smaller bedrooms were used by the older children. "I'm amazed they could raise so many kids there," says Genevieve Haarer Vergari, the widow of the couple's grandson Ernest. "The streets were dirt then. So was the alley. They turned kids loose. You couldn't keep them cooped up--they had to go out and play ball. There were no cars, just horses and buggies."

Haarer ran his business on the ground level, locating his studio and darkroom in the back with a reception area in front. His darkroom, now the restroom for the bookstore, still has amber transom lights. A door led to the staircase going up, so Haarer didn't have to leave the building to get to the family quarters.

The new store was large enough that Haarer added books and stationery to his offerings, with German books a specialty--Platt found a window shade in the basement that reads "German Book Handler." The books quickly became central to the business, as Haarer's biographical sketch in the county history three years later indicates:

"There is nothing more fascinating to a love of ideas than a bookstore filled with the choice works of ancient and modern writers. Within their uncut pages are the treasures of all the ages. One of the most popular resorts in the city of Ann Arbor to the man or woman who loves books, is that of which Mr. Haarer is the proprietor, he having a fine book and stationery establishment in the college city of Michigan."

Haarer was wise to develop this second line of business to fall back on, because the year he moved into his new building, the Eastman Company introduced a dry film that could be put in a camera and used anytime. It freed the professional photographer from staying so close to the darkroom--and also launched the mass market for amateur photography. In 1888 Eastman began selling Kodak cameras that came with a 100-exposure roll of film inside. After the film was shot, the customer would send in the

whole camera, and Eastman would develop the film and send it back with new film inside. Suddenly almost anyone who wanted to could take photographs.

By 1898 Haarer was still selling books but had given up photography. Instead, he had begun selling insurance--a business that would stay in the family for three generations.

Haarer died in 1916 at age seventy-five, five years after suffering a paralyzing stroke. Two of his sons took over the business-Julius handling the insurance sales and Ernest the bookstore. (Ernest was later joined by his son, also named Ernest.) Two other sons, George, a partner in a clothing store, and Oscar, a pharmacist with Eberbach and Son, also lived in town. Julius and

Oscar never married and shared the former family quarters above the store for the rest of their lives.



John Haarer posed proudly in late 1880s in front of his impressive new photography studio and bookstore on West Liberty.

Oscar may not have strayed as far from the family business as it appears; it is likely that he got interested in producing medicines by seeing his father mix photographic chemicals. He sold some of his own creations out of his brothers' store. Platt found a blue bottle in the basement bearing a Haarer label, which appears to contain some type

of liquid medicine. A box of tins of Wonder Salve was also found. According to the label it was quite a panacea, recommended to treat "burns, sores, cuts, eczema, piles, rheumatism, carbuncles, ulcers, and wounds."

Leroy Ehnis recalls buying his schoolbooks in the 1920s and 1930s from Haarer's. But the main business in the years that followed was insurance of all kinds. Ads say the Haarers sold fire, auto, and casualty insurance. Vergari recalls the setup in the days when her husband was involved. There were two desks in the front room, with Julius sitting closest to the door on the right, and Ernest, her husband, at a desk farther back. The back rooms were used for storage; display cases took up the rest of the front room. "Julius used to put sayings in the window, and people would stop and read and chuckle," recalls Vergari. "I think he got them from an old book."

In 1964 the city bought the building with the intention of tearing it down for a parking lot but gave Oscar and Julius permission to stay there for the rest of their lives. Julius died in 1966 and Oscar in 1967. By 1974 the city still had not torn down the building, so the Sesquicentennial Commission established its headquarters there (Ann Arbor, founded in 1824, turned 150 that year). After a year of events, displays, and meetings in the building, the city dropped the plan to demolish the building and sold it to Carolyn and Joseph Arcure.

The Arcures rented the downstairs to Jay Platt for his bookstore and began work on restoring the upstairs apartment for themselves. They brought back the fine features, still there but run down by years of neglect. They also made a few changes to open the place up more, creating a two-floor atrium by taking out the ceiling above the dining room, and a new master bedroom on the third floor by combining two of the small bedrooms.

By the time the Arcures did their restoration, the custom of store owners' living above their businesses had been virtually forgotten. Upstairs space downtown was usually relegated to storage or sometimes offices. Proponents of a stronger downtown wanted to encourage renewed residential use of the area, arguing that it would make for a safer, more vibrant urban environment. Habits and regulations stood in the way, but downtown living finally caught on in the 1990s. Today the numbers of downtown apartments--and the prices people are willing to pay for them--have soared.

The Arcures recently moved to New Mexico and have rented their apartment to Read and Harris, who love the space and have made it their own with an entirely different look. The Arcures' style was classic and elegant, but Read and Harris's 1950s decor makes a pleasing contrast with the 1880s woodwork and other accourtements.

Downstairs, Platt is equally enthusiastic about his space, appreciating its history and character. He hired artist John Copley to create a sign appropriate for the age of the building, and also to paint the name of the store on the window in a form that mirrors the architectural features of the building. In the back room where John Haarer had his studio, Doug Price now sells antique photographs.



City of Ann Arbor PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT SERVICES — PLANNING SERVICES

301 E. Huron Street P.O. Box 8647 Ann Arbor, Michigan 48107-8647 p 734.794.6265 f 734.994.8312 planning@a2gov.org

ANN ARBOR HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION APPLICATION

Section 1: Property Being Reviewed and Ownership Information
Address of Property: 113 W. Liberty St. Ann Arbor, MI 48104
Historic District: Liberty Street
Name of Property Owner (If different than the applicant): Mermicorm LLC, Aaron Schwartz
Address of Property Owner: 255 East Liberty, Ste 281, Ann Arbor, MI, 48104
Daytime Phone and E-mail of Property Owner: (734) 812-8121 aaron@byhook.com
Signature of Property Owner:
Section 2: Applicant Information
Name of Applicant: Aaron Vermeulen, AIA
Address of Applicant: 308 1/2 S. State St. STE20
Daytime Phone: (734) 929-9012 Fax: (734) 929-9001
E-mail:aaronv@oxstudioinc.com
Applicant's Relationship to Property:/ownerarchitectcontactorother
Signature of applicant:
Section 3: Building Use (check all that apply)
Residential Single Family Multiple Family Rental
Commercial Institutional
Section 4: Stille-DeRossett-Hale Single State Construction Code Act (This item MUST BE INITIALED for your application to be PROCESSED)
Public Act 169, Michigan's Local Historic Districts Act, was amended April 2004 to include the following language: "the applicant has certified in the application that the property where the work will be undertaken has, or will have before the proposed completion date, a a fire alarm or smoke alarm complying with the requirements of the Stille-DeRossett-Hale Single State Construction Code Act, 1972 PA 230, MCL 125.1501 to 125.1531."
Please initial here:

Section 5: Description of Proposed Cha	anges (attach additional sheets as necessary)
Provide a brief summary of propose	ed changes.
see attac	ched sheet
2. Provide a description of existing cor	nditions.
see attac	ched sheet
	ar for the Land
3. What are the reasons for the propos	sed changes?
	sed changes? .ched sheet
4. Attach any additional information that these attachments here.	at will further explain or clarify the proposal, and indicate
4. Attach any additional information that these attachments here.	ched sheet
4. Attach any additional information that these attachments here. see atta	at will further explain or clarify the proposal, and indicate
4. Attach any additional information that these attachments here. see atta 5. Attach photographs of the existing purphotos of proposed work area.	at will further explain or clarify the proposal, and indicate
4. Attach any additional information that these attachments here. see atta see atta 5. Attach photographs of the existing purphotos of proposed work area.	at will further explain or clarify the proposal, and indicate ched sheet roperty, including at least one general photo and detailed
4. Attach any additional information that these attachments here. see atta 5. Attach photographs of the existing proposed work area. Date Submitted:	at will further explain or clarify the proposal, and indicate ched sheet roperty, including at least one general photo and detailed STAFF USE ONLY Application toStaff orHDC Fee Paid:
4. Attach any additional information that these attachments here. see atta 5. Attach photographs of the existing proposed work area. Date Submitted:	at will further explain or clarify the proposal, and indicate ched sheet roperty, including at least one general photo and detailed STAFF USE ONLY Application toStaff orHDC



Ms. Jill Thacher City of Ann Arbor Historic District Commission 100 North Fifth Ann Arbor, MI 48104

19 November, 2013

RE: 113 West Liberty Street (Haarer Building)
Ann Arbor Historic District Commission Application

Please find enclosed the following continuation sheets for the HDC application form.

Section 5: Description of Proposed Changes

1. Provide a brief summary of proposed changes.

We are requesting approval for a penthouse addition (430SF) and skylight shown on the attached Roof Plan. The addition is set-back from Liberty St. and the East Alley in order to minimize site lines of the room addition See . The average height of the addition is 10'-9" above the existing roof.

2. Provide a description of existing conditions.

There are no changes to the existing facade building other than selective masonry restortation. The building was built in 1888 by photographer John Haarer in a Richardsonian Romanesque style. The building has always had residential over a mercantile storefront which will remain.

3. What are the reasons for the proposed changes

Additional bedroom is needed. The existing rooms are small and dark. The room at the 4th level will allow more daylight for the bedroom and the skylight will let light all the way to the second floor level.

- 4. Attach any additional information that will further explain or clarify the proposal, and indicate these attachments here.
 - See attached site line study on Sk-1-2
 - -See Floor plans and Elevations and Colors.
- 5. Attach photographs of the existing property, including at least one general photo and detailed photos of proposed work area.

Photos are attached as part of the formal submittal. Sk-1-4.



Alley View - 113 Liberty
Scale: 3/16" = 1'-0"

Alley View - Proposed



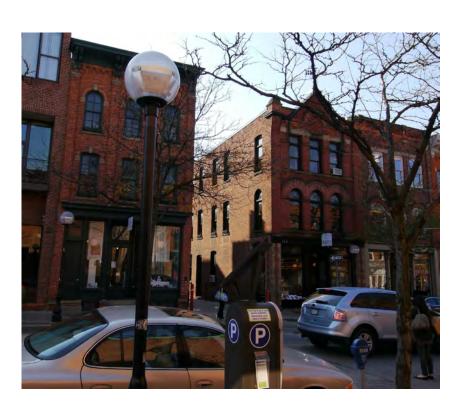
Released For: HDC Submittal 11/21/13

Watts and Schwartz

Job Address: 113 W. Liberty St. Ann Arbor, MI 48104

Job Name: Haarer Building Renovation

Street Views



Released For: HDC Submittal 11/21/13

Job Name: Haarer Building Renovation

Street Views

Job Address: 113 W. Liberty St. Ann Arbor, MI 48104

Cross street view - 113 Liberty SK-2 Scale: 3/16" = 1'-0"

Cross street view - Proposed SK-2 Scale:



2 Cross street view - 114 Liberty

SK-3 Scale: 3/16" = 1'-0"

1 Cross street view - 113 Liberty

SK-3 Scale: 3/16" = 1'-0"

Released For: HDC Submittal 11/21/13

Haarer Building Renovation

Street View Comparison

Drawing Number: SK-3

o|x Job #: HBR13

Job Address: 113 W. Liberty St. Ann Arbor, MI 48104



2 Main St. View - 114 Liberty

SK-4 Scale: 1/4" = 1'-0"

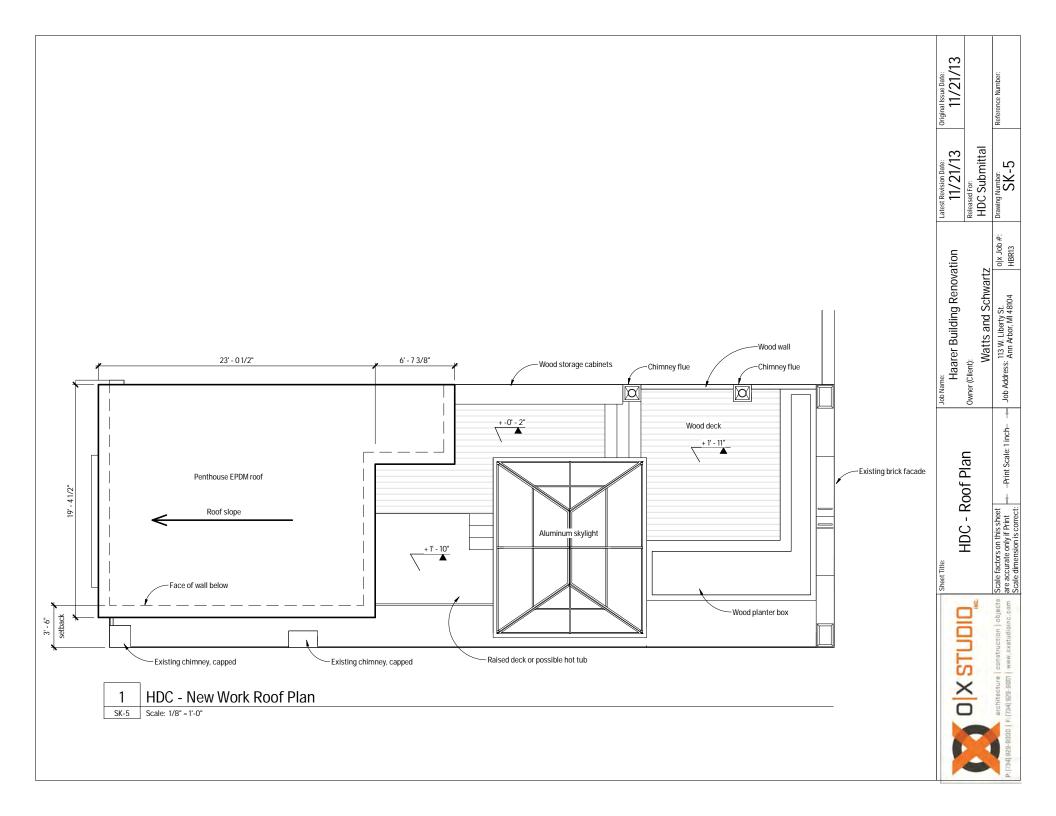


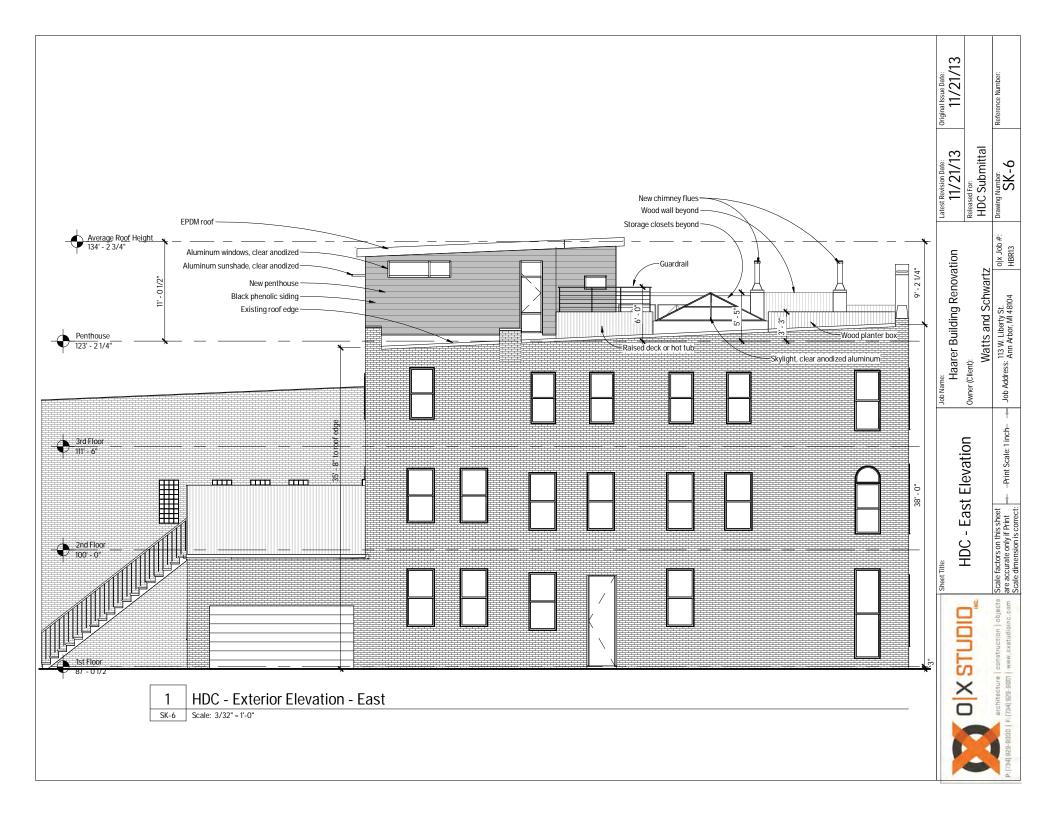
Main St. View - 113 Liberty
Scale: 1/4" = 1'-0" SK-4

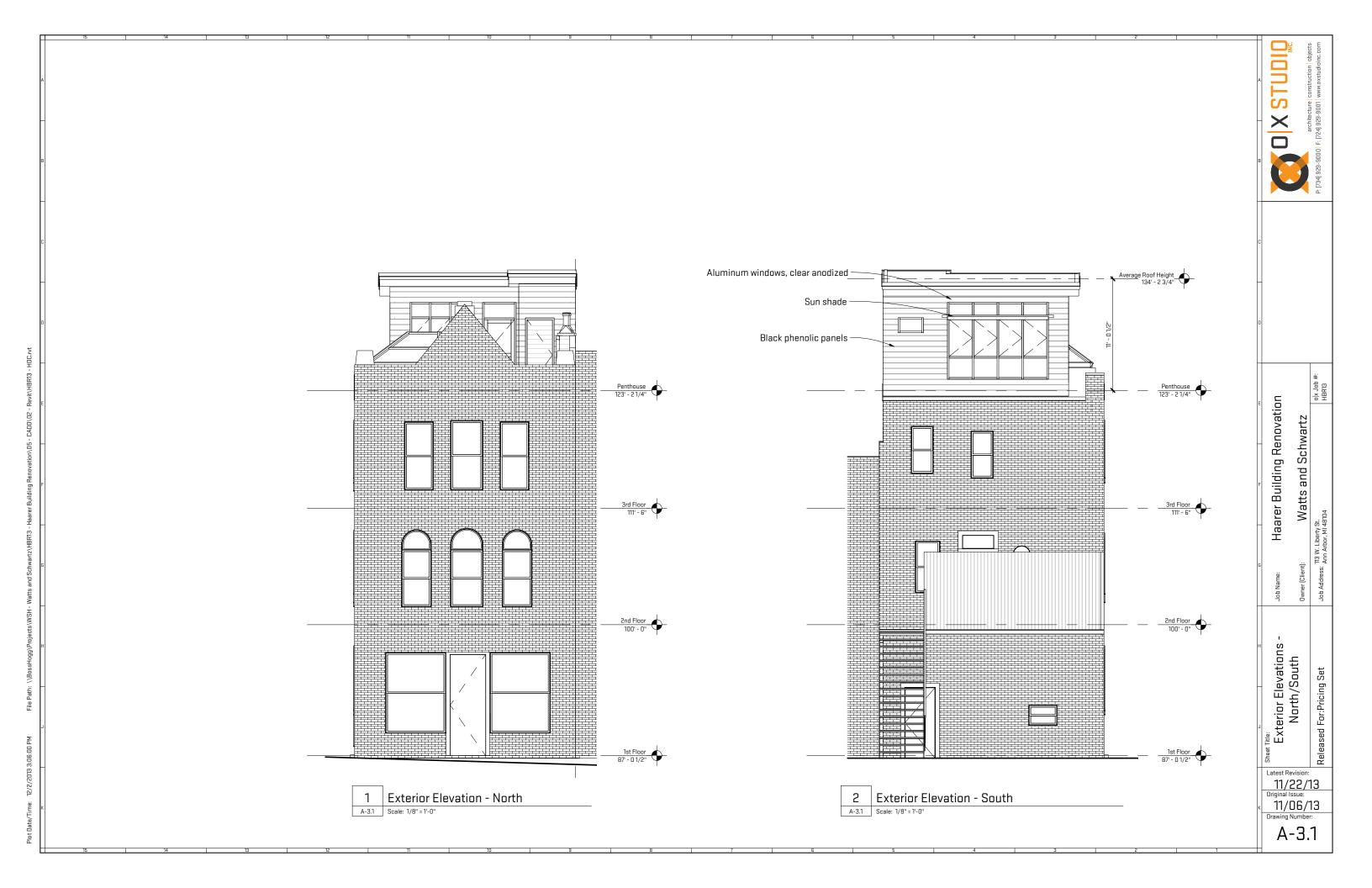
Job Name: Haarer Building Renovation Job Address: 113 W. Liberty St. Ann Arbor, MI 48104 Owner (Client): Street View Comparison

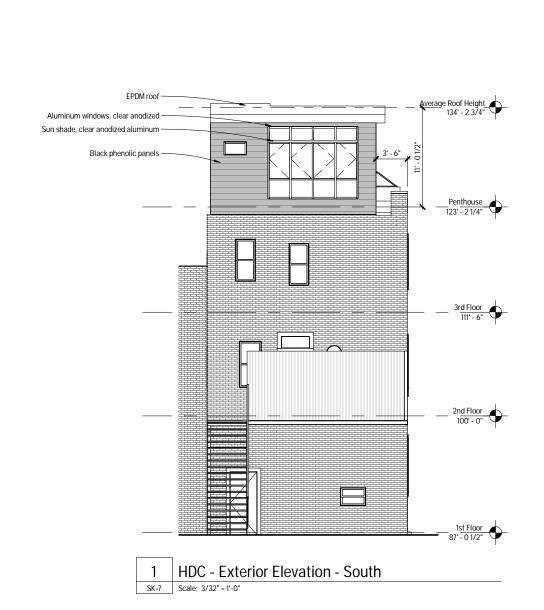
Released For: HDC Submittal 11/21/13

Watts and Schwartz









Original Issue Date: 11/21/13

Job Name: Haarer Building Renovation

Owner (Client):

HDC - South Elevation

O|X STUDIO

Reference Number:

o|x Job #: HBR13

Job Address: 113 W. Liberty St. Ann Arbor, MI 48104

-Print Scale: 1 inch-

Watts and Schwartz

Released For: HDC Submittal Latest Revision Date: 11/21/13





113 W. Liberty Roof, Looking South 12/2013