

ANN ARBOR HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION

Staff Report

ADDRESS: 317 South State Street, Application Number HDC12-195

DISTRICT: State Street Historic District

REPORT DATE: December 6, 2012

REPORT PREPARED BY: Jill Thacher, Historic Preservation Coordinator

REVIEW COMMITTEE DATE: Monday, December 10 for the Thursday, December 13, 2012 HDC meeting

OWNER

Name: Hogarth Management LLC
Address: 115 Depot St
 Ann Arbor, MI 48104
Phone: (734) 994-5050

APPLICANT

Kurt Beleck
 31850 Northwestern Highway
 Farmington Hills, MI 48334
 (248) 419-6334

BACKGROUND: This two-story, Art Moderne brick commercial building features tapestry brick and fixed-pane ribbon windows that give the building a horizontal flow, an entrance in the southwest corner with a large curved glass display window, a sign band above the entrance with non-original brown-red tiles, a rounded southwest corner with a curved window in the second story, and an aluminum covered fluted column in the entrance. It was built in 1937 and was occupied by Kresge's department store from then until the 1980s. Michigan Book & Supply was located here from 1989 to 2012.

At the November 15, 2012 meeting, a different version of this application was considered, and the commission requested a more appropriate style of blade signs and lighting.

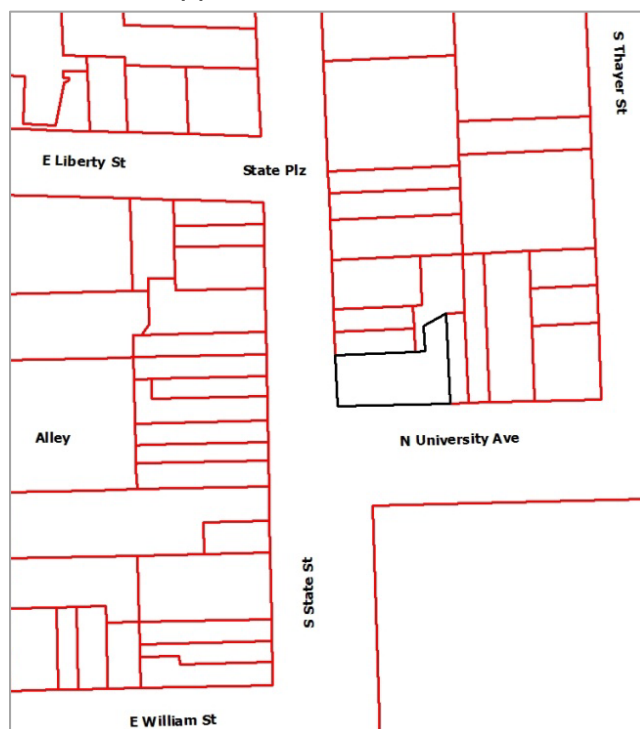
LOCATION: The site is located on the northeast corner of the South State Street and North University Street intersection.

APPLICATION: The applicant seeks HDC approval to install three fabric blade signs and install horizontal LED light strips.

APPLICABLE REGULATIONS:

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

(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):

Storefronts

Not Recommended: Introducing a new design that is incompatible in size, scale, material, and color; using inappropriately scaled signs and logos or other types of signs that obscure, damage, or destroy remaining character-defining features of the historic building; using new illuminated signs.

STAFF FINDINGS:

1. The two "Walgreens" signs in the sign band replace the former Michigan Book & Supply signs are have been approved by staff. The LED light strips above these signs have not been approved by staff; see below.

Blade signs

2. The three proposed blade signs are smaller than those considered last month. The signs previously considered were seven feet tall and two feet wide. The newly proposed blade signs measure six feet and one-and-seven-eighths inches high and two feet wide and are illuminated by lamps beneath eat. The signs do not project beyond the upper and lower portions of the character-defining ribbon windows.
3. The blade signs are fabric and lights are shown on the drawing beneath each one. No detail was provided on the uplighting. Two are located on the south elevation along North University Street, and one is located on the west elevation along South State Street. The signs will be gray in color with white text and a white, blue and green logo. The fabric signs will be attached to the building by aluminum arms that are anchored in a ten inch by ten inch aluminum mounting plate.
4. Staff believes that the revised blade signs, with added illumination, are inappropriate and detract from the historic character of the building, the horizontal orientation of the building, the fenestration pattern, and the decorative brickwork on the locations where they are proposed to be mounted. Further, the addition of lights only intensifies the distractive nature of the banner signs. Four canopy signs and two large wall signs have been previously approved for this location; it is staff's opinion that the business will be readily identifiable, and that the addition of blade signs would be a distraction to the character defining features of the building. Staff does not support the first motion below.

Sign lighting

5. The applicant seeks approval to install seven horizontal LED light strips above the “Walgreens” wall signs. Three light strips would be located on the south elevation, and four on the west elevation. Based on the submitted information, the lights are proposed to be mounted on the double row of raised bricks surrounding the maroon tiled sign band area. The light bars are 3-¼” square, with 5” diameter round mounting plates on either end. The length of each bar is 36”.
6. The light bars are horizontal and small in diameter, and when mounted in a row will match the length of each sign. Installing the lights in the decorative brick banding around the sign area is not appropriate unless attachments and electrical conduit are run through mortar joints only, and no penetrations are made through the masonry. Also, the color of the light bars should match the tan color of the brick in order to minimize the lights’ appearance from the street. Staff supports the suggested motion below that is conditioned on the color of the light bars matching the building, and that no penetration will be made through any masonry unit.

POSSIBLE MOTIONS: (Note that the motions are 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.)

Blade signs

I move that the Commission issue a certificate of appropriateness for the application at 317 South State Street, a contributing property in the State Street Historic District, to add three new fabric blade signs and uplighting on each, as proposed. The proposed work is 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 and Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings*, in particular standards 9 and 10 and the guidelines for storefronts.

Sign lighting

I move that the Commission issue a certificate of appropriateness for the application at 317 South State Street, a contributing property in the State Street Historic District, to add seven LED light strips on the condition that their color matches the tan brick building, and that no penetrations are made through masonry units in their mounting and electrifications, only through mortar joints. The work as conditioned is 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 and Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings*, in particular standards 9 and 10 and the guidelines for storefronts.

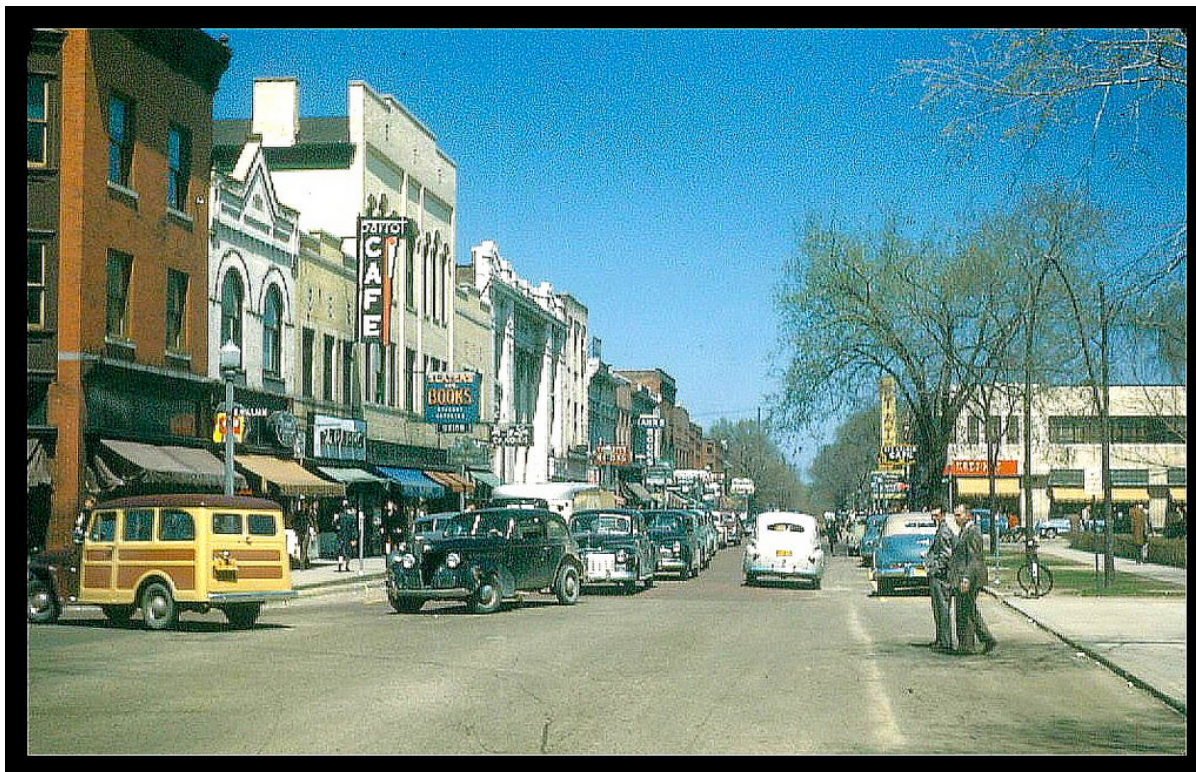
MOTION WORKSHEET:

I move that the Commission issue a Certificate of Appropriateness for the work at 317 South State Street Street in the State 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, photos.



1945 Postcard: Looking north on State Street from William, Kresge's is on the right. Note the band of glass block transom windows above the North U storefronts, and the bright red sign band.



1951 Ann Arbor News photo, paving over the bricks on State Street. Kresge's is on the right. Note the upper floor awnings.



1955 Postcard

Note the fluted column at the corner, and a better view of the glass block transom.



c.1970s. Note that the first window bay on the University side has been bricked in, as have the transoms. The sign band is new and shinier. The letters in the sign band are also new.

March 2007 photos:

