

MEMORANDUM

To: Historic District Commissioners
From: Jill Thacher, City Planner/Historic Preservation Coordinator
Date: December 10, 2020
Re: 603 E William Returning Sign Application

At the November 12, 2020 HDC meeting, a request for a blade sign on the corner of the building at this address was postponed and the applicant was asked to return with a smaller sign design. The new design has been reduced from 6' x 3' to 6' x 2', and the location has been changed to the front elevation between the second story windows. The applicant has been asked to provide an elevation drawing of the front of the building with the sign and the 2nd story windows with dimensions.

Last month's staff report is attached for reference – the same standards and guidelines still apply. The suggested motion for the sign is below.

(Note that the motion 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 portion of the application at 603 E William Street, a contributing property in the East William Historic District, to install a second-floor blade sign mounted through mortar joints, as shown on revised drawings. 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* for storefronts and signs, and *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation* and *Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings*, in particular, standards 1, 2 and 9 and the guidelines for storefronts and building site.

ANN ARBOR HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION

Staff Report

ADDRESS: 603 E William Street, Application Number HDC20-157

DISTRICT: East William Street Historic District

REPORT DATE: November 12, 2020

REPORT PREPARED BY: Jill Thacher, Historic Preservation Coordinator

REVIEW COMMITTEE DATE: Monday, November 9, 2020

	OWNER	APPLICANT
Name:	MLL Williams, Inc.	J.S. Vig Construction
Address:	4655 Executive Dr., #325 San Diego, CA 92121	15040 Cleat Street Plymouth, MI 48170
Phone:	(972) 998-1041	(734) 283-3002

BACKGROUND: This two-story brick commercial vernacular building was constructed in 1915, and the original occupant on the first floor was Oren's Cafeteria. It features two storefronts (at 601 and 603) and two second floor spaces with two central stairs. The cornice is of stepped brick and the windows are one-over-one.

In October, staff approved an awning to be mounted in mortar joints, over the center doors.

LOCATION: The site is on the north side of East William Street, at the northeast corner of Maynard Street. The ground level tenant is New York Pizza Depot.

APPLICATION: The applicant seeks HDC approval to 1) replace a wood front door and transom with a steel and bulletproof glass door and transom, and 2) install a 36" x 72" x 1" second floor blade sign at the southwest corner of the building.

APPLICABLE REGULATIONS:

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

- (1) A property will be used as it was historically or be given a new use that requires minimal change to its distinctive materials, features, spaces, and spatial relationships.
- (2) The historic character of a property will be retained and preserved. The removal of distinctive materials or alteration of features, spaces, and spatial relationships that characterize a property will be avoided.
- (6) Deteriorated historic features will be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature will match the old in design, color, texture, and where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features will be substantiated by documentary and physical evidence.

- (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.

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

Storefronts

Recommended: Identifying, retaining, and preserving storefronts – and their functional and decorative features – that are important in defining the overall historic character of the building such as display windows, signs, doors, transoms, kick plates, corner posts, and entablatures.

Repairing storefronts by reinforcing the historic materials. Repairs will also generally include the limited replacement in kind – or with compatible substitute material – of those extensively deteriorated or missing parts of storefronts where there are surviving prototypes such as transoms, kick plates, pilasters, or signs.

Not Recommended: Removing or radically changing storefronts – and their features – which are important in defining the overall historic character of the building so that, as a result, the character is diminished.

Using substitute material for the replacement parts that does not convey the same visual appearance as the surviving parts of the storefront or that is physically or chemically incompatible.

Introducing a new design that is incompatible in size, scale, material, and color.

Building Site

Not Recommended: Removing or radically changing buildings and their features or site features which are important in defining the overall historic character of the property so that, as a result, the character is diminished.

From the Ann Arbor Historic District Design Guidelines:

Design Guidelines for Storefronts

Appropriate: Designing and constructing a new storefront when the historic storefront is completely missing. It may be an accurate restoration using historical, pictorial, and physical documentation; or may be a new design that is compatible with the size, scale, and material of the historic building. New designs should be flush with the façade and be kept as simple as possible.

Not Appropriate: Installing a new storefront that is incompatible in size and material with the historic building and district.

Signs

Appropriate: Installing signage in the historic sign band area of the building, typically the area above the transoms or just above the storefront.

Installing signage that is compatible in size, style, material, and appearance to the historic resource and district.

Placing signs to align with others along the commercial block face.

Installing signage that is subordinate to the overall building composition.

Not Appropriate: Installing signs that are too large or that are made from a material that is incompatible with the historic building or district.

Installing signs that are overly complex, use more than three or four colors or use fluorescent colors.

STAFF FINDINGS:

The application has two parts, a door and a sign, with different contractors working on each. There are two motions, should the Commission wish to act separately on the items, or they may be combined into one.

Door

1. In an email to staff, the applicant stated that “The intent of the new door is to match the existing and provide added security measures for the new occupied space.” The door is the entrance to the second floor via a staircase. The second floor is to be occupied by a marijuana provisioning center.
2. The building has two storefronts (601 and 603) with two doors at the center that are separate by a brick column. The proportions of the doors and windows appear to be original, but a 1975 photo (at the end of this report) shows different doors and possibly transoms (this needs to be verified by the Review Committee).
3. Assuming the transoms have been replaced, staff does not object to replacing the door, transom, and framing. Wood is the historic material and would be most appropriate, per SOI Standard 6. Since the proposal is to change materials to steel, in dimensions matching the existing wood, the application must be approved by the Commission.

Sign

4. A blade sign is proposed to be mounted on the corner of the building at Maynard and East William, on the second floor just above the stone band. The size is 3’ by 6’ and would be used by the second floor tenant. It is a simple aluminum panel, mounted on two arms through mortar joints. It is not illuminated.
5. Corners of buildings are an appropriate place to install second-floor blade signs. The sign would not impact any historic features of the building. It is distanced enough from windows, and entirely above the stone trim band between the first and second stories. Staff believes the work is appropriate and meets the standards and guidelines.

POSSIBLE MOTIONS: (Note that the motion 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.)

Door

I move that the Commission issue a certificate of appropriateness for the portion of the application at 603 E William Street, a contributing property in the East William Historic District to replace a wood door, frame, and transom with a steel door, frame, and transom in matching dimensions. The work as proposed 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* for storefronts and *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings*, in particular standards 1, 2, 6 and 9 and the guidelines for storefronts and building site.

Sign

I move that the Commission issue a certificate of appropriateness for the portion of the application at 603 E William Street, a contributing property in the East William Historic District, to install a second-floor blade sign mounted through mortar joints, 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* for storefronts and signs, and *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings*, in particular standards 1, 2 and 9 and the guidelines for storefronts and building site.

MOTION WORKSHEET:

I move that the Commission issue a Certificate of Appropriateness for the work at 603 E William Street in the East William 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, photos, drawings, additional door information

603 E William Street (1975, courtesy AADL Old News)



603 E William Street (1975 at left, applicant photo at right)

