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7 September 2024

Katie Pereny, Secretary  
Historic District Commission  
City of Mackinac Island  
P.O. Box 455  
Mackinac Island, MI 49757

Re: **GHMI MERCHANT STOREFRONT RENOVATION**  
Design Review

Dear Ms. Pereny:

I have reviewed the GHMI Merchant proposed storefront renovation in the Market and Main Historic District.

Should you have any questions, please contact me.

Sincerely,

RICHARD NEUMANN ARCHITECT

  
Rick Neumann

- c. Barry Polzin, Barry J. Polzin Architects  
Dennis Dombroski, City of Mackinac Island  
David Lipovsky, City of Mackinac Island



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## **DESIGN REVIEW**

### **GHMI MERCHANT STOREFRONT RENOVATION**

7377 Main Street

Market and Main Historic District  
Mackinac Island, Michigan

## **INTRODUCTION**

The proposed project is renovation of the covered front entry to the GHMI Merchant retail store at 7377 Main Street, in the Market and Main Historic District. The building is a Contributing structure in the district. Proposed work would replace the four existing columns supporting the porch roof, rebuild the eave around the roof, and replace the railings on the roof. New beaded wood paneling would be added to the bulkhead areas under the display windows. Also, existing concrete paving in the recessed entry would be replaced with new brick pavers.

This design review is based on City Code Sec. 10-161 "Design Review Standards and Guidelines", of Article V. "Historic District", of the City of Mackinac Island Ordinance No. 443, adopted October 21, 2009. The review standards are those of the Department of the Interior entitled "The United States Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation" and "Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings", as set forth in 36 CFR, part 67, as well as the factors set forth in City Code Sec. 10-161(b).

Materials submitted for Review consist of photographs of existing conditions and drawings of proposed work of the project, dated 26 August 2024, by Barry J. Polzin Architects.

## **REVIEW**

Of the Secretary of the Interior's Standards, and the Standards Under Sec. 10-161(b), the applicable Standards for review are the following:

**Standard 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 building shall be avoided."*

The existing columns, steel pipe columns with square wood wraps (two of which have been removed) are very plain, as is the larger storefront. The proposed use of larger diameter round columns with classic Doric capitals and bases would be an alteration of historic features, and out of step with the existing simple architectural character of the building. Also, as proposed,

the beam spanning the columns would be eliminated, and the columns would extend up to the underside of the roof. This would be a departure from an architectural element that is typical (the columns supporting a beam), and which is characteristic of the type - also an alteration of historic features.

In terms of historic materials, although not mandated in historic districts, the use of wood, as required by the Zoning Ordinance, Article 18.06, C, 1. Siding, for surfaces accessible to the public, or exposed to public view, would be more appropriate than composite columns.

**Standard 3** - *"Each property shall be recognized as a physical record of its time, place and use. Changes that create a false sense of historic development such as adding conjectural features or architectural elements from other buildings, shall not be undertaken."*

The proposed classical Doric order columns would create a false sense of historic development, and be a conjectural feature very unlikely for such a simple building.

And while the proposed second floor balcony railing would be a grand elaboration on the existing code non-compliant design, it does reflect the spirit of the existing "X" design, and with some simplification, and use of square posts with square tops, would likely be appropriate.

#### **Standards Under Code Sec. 10-161(b)**

In reviewing applications, the Commission shall also consider all of the following:

**(1)** - *"The historic or architectural value and significance of the resource and its relationship to the historic value of the surrounding area."*

Although the GHMI building is anything but high style, its simplicity is characteristic of much of older Mackinac Island downtown, and should be preserved as representative of such to maintain the historic and architectural value of the building, and its relationship to the historic value of the surrounding historic district.

**(2)** - *"The relationship of any architectural features of the resource to the rest of the resource and to the surrounding area."*

The use of classical columns would be out of synch with this Contributing resource and the historic district.

**(3)** - *"The general compatibility of the design, arrangement, texture and materials proposed to be used."*

The proposed project would alter the simple design, arrangement, and materials of the front covered entry, and be incompatible with the historic building.

**(4)** - *"Other factors, such as aesthetic value, that the Commission finds relevant."*

While gussying up the front would fit in with many neighboring buildings, such would be a departure from the plain and simple aesthetic value of this particular building.

#### CONCLUSION

As such, the most significant changes proposed for renovation of the GHMI Merchant storefront (column replacement and beam deletion) would not meet the Standards for review.

END OF REVIEW