



## HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION – STAFF REPORT

## DISCUSSION

**Address:** 1031-35 South Boulevard  
**Meeting Date:** December 12, 2024  
**Property Owner:** Sachem Building LLC  
**Historic Designation:** Oak Park Historic Landmark, 2007  
**Historical Name:** Boulevard Arcade Building  
**Zoning:** DT-3: Downtown - Pleasant Sub-District  
**Project Description:** 10 – Story addition behind an existing landmark building located in Downtown Oak Park  
**Requirements:** 7. New Construction and Addition Projects



2024 GIS Photo

### Architectural Review Guidelines

The purpose for architectural review is to protect the unique visual qualities of a building and its site that define their sense of history from inappropriate proposed alterations that will reduce that sense.

The relevant standards from the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation include the following:

1. A property shall be used for its historic purpose or be placed in a new use that requires minimal change to the defining characteristics of the building and its site and environment.
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.
3. Each property shall be recognized as a physical record of its time, place, and use. Changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding conjectural features or architectural elements from other buildings, shall not be undertaken.
4. Most properties change over time; those changes that have acquired historic significance in their own right shall be retained and preserved.
5. Distinctive features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a historic property shall be preserved.
6. Deteriorated historic features shall be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature shall match the old in design, color, texture, and other visual qualities and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features shall be substantiated by documentary, physical, or pictorial evidence.
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.
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.

Relevant standards from the Requirements for New Construction, Addition, & Demolition Projects include the following:

### **Additions**

#### ***Maintaining Historic Character***

- An addition shall not change the historic character of the historic building.
- An addition shall be compatible with the historic building to which it is attached, including siting, massing, scale, materials and street rhythm.
- An addition shall not remove character-defining features, historic windows, historic siding or other historic material from the historic building that are visible from the street.
- Exterior finish materials of the addition shall be compatible with that of the historic building.
- An addition shall protect the historic character of the building by making a visual distinction between the historic building and addition.

#### ***Size and Configuration - Horizontal Additions***

- The size, configuration and massing of all additions shall be such that when viewed from the street, the addition does not visually overpower the historic building.
- Additions shall be constructed only on a rear or side façade so that the historic building retains its prominence as the primary structure viewed from the street.
- The shape and slope of roofs on an addition shall be compatible with those of the historic building.

Relevant standards from the Requirements for Porch, Balcony, or Deck Projects include the following:  
*Property Owners Shall:*

- Paint new and existing wood on porches and balconies that are visible from the street, unless it can be documented that the original wood was unpainted or stained. Unpainted pressure-treated wood is not permitted in locations that are visible from the street.
- If constructing a new porch, property owners shall construct proposed new porches to be similar to historic porches which have been removed with regard to size, style and detail, to the extent that such historic porches can be documented. Where inadequate documentation exists for the original porch, proposed new porches shall be typical of those built in the style of the historic building.

## **Applicant’s Proposal**

The applicant plans to construct a ten-story addition in Art Deco Architectural Style behind an existing landmark building located in Downtown Oak Park. The addition will consist of 6 levels of residential space (24 units) above 4 levels of parking. Exterior façades of the addition will have metal panels on light gauge framing. In the project narrative submitted by the applicant, he states:

*“The genesis for the development of the Hope Building, as this application proposes, started with the notion that Oak Park as a community needs to mark its identity with a core characteristic of its residents – Hope. Since the early 1960s, this applicant’s experience with the town of Oak Park has been one of welcoming new residents eager to be part of a larger community and aspiring for better lives. Hope embodies that aspiration better than any other. So, with that underpinning, the developers reached out to local architects, designers and other professionals to aid in the design for a residential tower of twenty-four residential units with parking levels below which includes a total of 39 parking spaces – 24 for the residential units and 15 for the Boulevard Arcade building’s commercial tenants. One key condition was that the historic building would not be impacted by the potential development. Located at the rear of the Boulevard Arcade Building on South Boulevard, The Hope building was conceived as an addition complementary of the original building that would aid in the long-term stabilization of the original historic building.*

*Aided by the research work of Forest Park based leasing firm of AvenueOne, the need for two and two-bedroom plus units was determined in the core downtown district in Oak Park – more specifically at 1035 South Boulevard. The proximity to public transportation and other urban amenities made this location ideal for upper scale rental apartments. With a Walk Score of 97 A Walker’s Paradise the proposed apartments were a perfect lifestyle fit as noted in AvenueOne’s report.”*

The applicant is seeking feedback from the Historic Preservation Commission on the current design prior to attending the HPC meeting in January 2025 for a formal Historic Review.

## Historical Summary

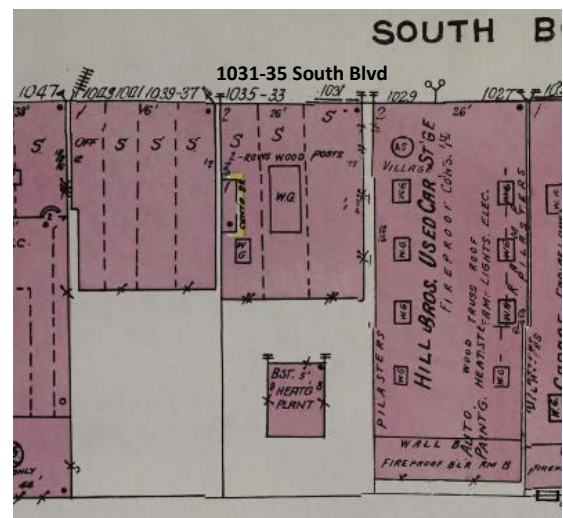
1031-35 South Blvd known as The Boulevard Arcade Building is a 2-story brick commercial building in the 20th Century Commercial style. The building was designed by the prominent Oak Park architect Eben E. Roberts in 1906 as a one-story, one-tenant retail structure, but with the capacity to add a second story if needed. In 1922, a local entrepreneur hired Chicago architect Arthur Jacobs to remodel the structure into a multi-tenant shopping destination to serve the expanding shopping district which would soon be the lead shopping district of west Cook County. In 2007 the Historic Preservation Commission designated the Boulevard Arcade Building as an Oak Park Historic Landmark. In 2008 the building was restored to approximate the 1922 exterior appearance, including restoration of the original 1906 cast iron posts and replication of its distinctive transom glass. Its defining interior features remains the same, including a central skylight and light court, terrazzo floors, and an ornate central staircase. The building has exterior brick walls, a mansard roof with parapet walls clad in replacement clay tiles, and replacement windows in aluminum clad wood, 1/1 double-hung sashes.

### Historic Permit Summary:

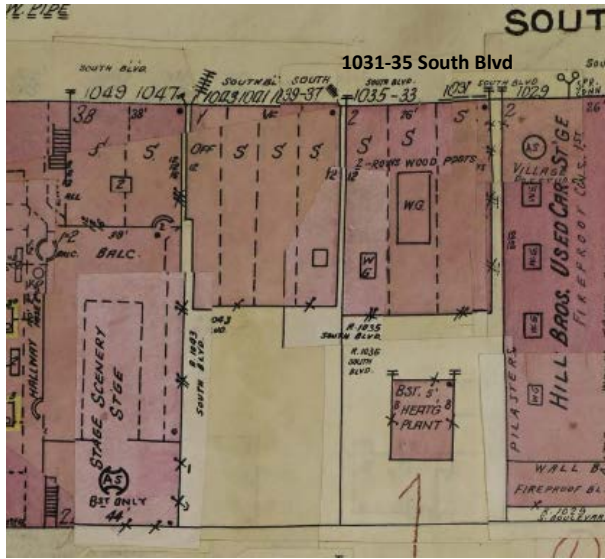
- 1906 Construction of first floor
- 1922 Construction of second floor
- 1942 Permit for Boiler room
- 1947 Lowering in-store ceiling height by 2 ft
- 1962 Removal of boiler room and constructing a new smaller boiler room on the rear of building.
- 1966 Partitioning offices
- 1974 Application for Business License (Crown Health Equip.)
- 1977 Permit for 8 ft of mansard style roof at top of building and 4-6 ft around on sides
- 2007 Designated as an Oak Park Historic Landmark
- 2008 Major exterior restoration
- 2013 Stairwell and exhaust system
- 2016 Installation of Skylight



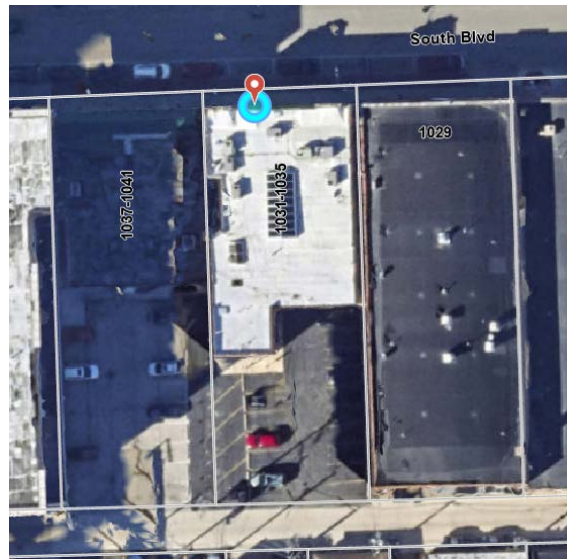
1908 Sanborn



1947 Sanborn



1950 Sanborn



2024 Existing Condition

## Staff Comments

The applicant plans to construct a ten-story addition in Art Deco Architectural Style behind an existing landmark building located in Downtown Oak Park. The Architectural Review Guidelines allow for vertical additions as long as they are set back so that they do not visually overwhelm the primary façade of the building. The size, configuration and massing of additions shall be such that when viewed from the street, the addition does not visually overpower the historic building. Additions at front façades are generally prohibited and rear additions are generally most appropriate. The overall massing and scale of a vertical addition shall be compatible with the scale of the neighboring buildings, and contemporary design compatible with the historic buildings and their surroundings is encouraged.

The applicant is attending the HPC meeting to receive feedback on the current design prior to attending the HPC meeting in January 2025 for a formal Historic Review.

## Attachments

- 1031-35 South Blvd – Hope Building project narrative submitted by the applicant
- 1031-35 South Blvd proposed rear addition site plan, plans, elevations, renderings, and photos

# The Hope Building Oak Park

## Narrative

The genesis for the development of the Hope Building, as this application proposes, started with the notion that Oak Park as a community needs to mark its identity with a core characteristic of its residents – Hope. Since the early 1960s, this applicant's experience with the town of Oak Park has been one of welcoming new residents eager to be part of a larger community and aspiring for better lives. Hope embodies that aspiration better than any other. So, with that underpinning, the developers reached out to local architects, designers and other professionals to aid in the design for a residential tower of twenty-four residential units with parking levels below which includes a total of 39 parking spaces – 24 for the residential units and 15 for the Boulevard Arcade building's commercial tenants. One key condition was that the historic building would not be impacted by the potential development. Located at the rear of the Boulevard Arcade Building on South Boulevard, The Hope building was conceived as an addition complementary of the original building that would aid in the long-term stabilization of the original historic building.

Aided by the research work of Forest Park based leasing firm of AvenueOne, the need for two and two bedroom plus units was determined in the core downtown district in Oak Park – more specifically at 1035 South Boulevard. The proximity to public transportation and other urban amenities made this location ideal for upper scale rental apartments. With a *Walk Score* of 97 *A Walker's Paradise* the proposed apartments were a perfect lifestyle fit as noted in AvenueOne's report.

In order to develop the Hope Building, the developers are seeking relief from the following zoning metrics: Building Height and parking for the commercial uses in the Boulevard Arcade Building. It should be noted that the Boulevard Arcade Building currently has 16 of parking spaces.

As part of the Planned Development process, the team is scheduled to appear before the Historic Preservation Commission on December 12, 2024; Oak Park's Plan Commission in January of 2025 and to Oak Park's Village Board of Trustees shortly after that.

The developer, the design team and all the other consultants look forward to presenting The Hope Building and its key features to the Historic Preservation Commission, Oak Park's Plan Commission and Oak Park's Village Board of Trustees.