

AGENDA # 7

City of Madison, Wisconsin

REPORT OF: URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION **PRESENTED:** June 26, 2019

TITLE: 7-9 W. Main Street – Façade Alteration in
the Downtown Core. 4th Ald. Dist. (56318) **REFERRED:**

REREFERRED:

REPORTED BACK:

AUTHOR: Janine Glaeser, Secretary

ADOPTED:

POF:

DATED: June 26, 2019

ID NUMBER:

Members present were: Cliff Goodhart, Acting Chair; Jessica Klehr, Tom DeChant, Shane Bernau, Christian Harper, Craig Weisensel, Syed Abbas, Lois Braun-Oddo and Rafeeq Asad.

SUMMARY:

At its meeting of June 26, 2019, the Urban Design Commission **REFERRED** consideration of a façade alteration located at 7-9 W. Main Street in the Downtown Core. Registered in support of the project was Matt Aro, representing Seven West Main, LLC. The new owner of the building is excited to bring new life to the property on the Square. The goal is to enhance the views from the second floor to the Capitol building and make it more viable for use. The previous owner had a difficult time using this space. The building is formerly two buildings that had been combined into one interior-wise and one façade at the street level. The changes proposed would remove the clock element (more associated with Brochach) and flag poles, removal of existing windows on the second floor and enlarging of those with the addition of one larger window. To bridge the gap in terms of look and feel they would create a moment frame that is expressed outside that will give depth and shadow line to the frame as it surrounds the clear glass windows. The existing lighting scheme will remain, the center pier of brick would be removed. The urban design experience is enhanced by this interior experience and not just by the façade. While these changes are not in keeping with the character of the building it will enhance the viability of the project. There is no distinct window pattern within this block. The existing façade grant will remain in place.

The Commission discussed the following:

- Removing the clock is simplifying. I actually like the band of windows, it's more contemporary. My struggle is the bottom looks like one but then you have these two older façades. Why not make the whole façade look like one space like the bottom does, the brick itself? It looks better in the black and white because you can't tell the top and bottom are different.
 - We're trying to preserve some of that character. It's also a big cost consideration.
- I have no problem with the clock removal. I don't like the window for a lot of reasons. I would agree with the staff comments and what is stated in the Downtown Plan. I think this would have a negative impact on the building's mass, how it's experienced by pedestrians. The alternative is a little better because it distinguishes the two buildings but I would agree with staff comments, it's not appropriate.

- I share the same concerns. The preferred façade, that new window, I get what they're going for and why they want it but it looks completely inappropriate to me. The fact that it bridges those two different façades is inappropriate. I'm glad to see the faux coach lights go. The existing brick façade is not well-kept and really needs some cleaning and tuckpointing. It's not a beautiful example of brick work, it's two different colors and patterns. What is there is preferable to what is being proposed. There are also several trees in front that are only going to get bigger.
- The band of light brick on the right, is that paint?
 - It's a different colored brick that was part of the original storefront.
- If the façades were restored and cleaned up, keeping the original windows would be much more dramatic. I'm very opposed to doing any alterations. I've been up in that room many times, you don't need to do this. It's incongruous. Keep the windows and enhance the existing façade, that would be much more successful.
- Exactly same words. I don't remind removing the clock, that's the only thing I agree with.
- In addition, if you are going to make this proposal there should be a compelling reason why. You don't even have a tenant yet, you could come back with a tenant that wants something totally different. On something as important as this, it needs to be justified.
- I'm opposed to changing them. I think there's a benefit to having operable windows at a venue like this that would actually outweigh the view. I also worry about your removing a header and doing a bit of structural change. As much as I like modern, it's way too foreign for these buildings; they deserve to have that individuality and not mask that. The preferred image reminds of a mis-stepped historic main street with curtain walls that tried to be modernized. This would be irreversible, you could never go back to the original.
- The Downtown Urban Design Guidelines are pretty clear. I appreciate you sharing images from years ago, what it demonstrates to us is that the building still maintains some of its integrity. To lose that second story integrity doesn't seem to warrant the change in rhythm to the openings, as well as cost to major structural modifications it would take to accomplish that.
- If this was a total façade change would you feel differently about the windows?
- Perhaps if the building didn't maintain some of its original integrity.
- It's still a matter of proportions, scale and basic design elements.

ACTION:

On a motion by Braun-Oddo, seconded by DeChant, the Urban Design Commission **REFERRED** consideration of this item. The motion was passed on a unanimous vote of (8-0).