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From: jacob arndt [mailto:jcb.arndt@gmail.com]

Sent: Wednesday, March 07, 2012 8:43 AM

To: Martin, Al

Subject: Vallender building

Dear Commission members,

I want to weigh in with my opinion on the State St. block 89 project as a masonry restoration contractor for over 30 years and consultant on masonry preservation issues. The two masonry structures at the corner of Fairchild and State, the Vallender building and the Castle & Doyle, are in excellent structural condition. I was able to investigate the buildings as part of a structures report for Findorff last fall and came to the conclusion that they are in sound condition.

There needs the usual 75 year maintenance cycle, removal of old paint, cleaning, comprehensive tuckpointing, new mechanicals, but nothing out of the ordinary to bring the structures back to fine condition.

One anecdotal example that any non-expert will recognize, while investigating the Castle & Doyle building I happened to open one of the 12 foot tall windows on the second story State St. side and the double hung window in its sash slit up like it was built yesterday, with one hand. Structurally these buildings are sound. They do need considerable cleaning and maintenance to bring them back to their original solid form. That will require a crew of trained preservation masons who know soft brick, terra cotta, lime mortars, etc. The skill-set for that will need to be built into these new-construction companies who tend to prefer demolition and re-build strategies mainly because they haven't the staff to skillfully handle old masonry materials. That is no excuse though for opting for demolition. The scale and history embodied in these buildings is a subtle influence to passers-by. It's well worth preserving these buildings while at the same time adapting the interiors to modern uses to make them pay their freight as economic entities. You will be pleasantly surprized at how direct and solid these buildings present themselves once cleaned up and dressed up for another hundred years or so.

Regards,

Jacob Arndt, Principal

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