

From: gtipler@tds.net
To: stuartlevitan@sbcglobal.net; [Scanlon, Amy](#)
Subject: Fwd: Note from Jack Holzhueter re:State Street
Date: Monday, October 17, 2011 4:19:27 PM

A note from Jack Holzhueter on the State Street proposal.
GT

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **John Holzhueter** <holzhueter@uwalumni.com>
Date: Mon, Oct 17, 2011 at 3:55 PM
Subject: Re: In your statement, 127 State Street
To: "gtipler tds.net" <gtipler@tds.net>
Cc: Marsha Rummel <marsha.rummel@gmail.com>, kitty.rankin@gmail.com

Dear Gary, Marsha, and Kitty--

A million years ago--I think in the 1970s or 1980s, but probably before the Historical Society had any Hist. Pres. employees--I lobbied heavily for preserving the facade of the old GAR Hall or the hall of its related women's organization on Monona Blvd., now Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd. Bill Thompson (Boss Thompson to some) had influence in city government, and the facade was removed and "stored" for future reuse. A flop. The stone is rotting away in some park, I think, and no one has ever found a use for it. I regret making the suggestion.

I also thought that reusing the facade of the Yost-Kessenich store was a good idea in the early 2000s. I was wrong again. It looks silly. The Overture Center should have had a unified facade from Fairchild through the 2000 block of State Street. The results are very unsatisfactory aesthetically and do not honor the architectural history of the city because no stranger or newcomer can make sense of the building visually. It's a hodge-podge. A page or so of background is not even available to the potentially bewildered on the facades of Overture or inside its doors.

I have seen many photographs of--and some actual--buildings with retained facades and larger buildings behind them. They are jokes--aesthetic pastiches that say, well, "we liked the old building, but to heck with it. We really want a new building and so we are visually thumbing our nose to the past and its aesthetics, not to mention the history of growth and development in our community. And then there's the money. Progress is measured only by construction of new buildings that serve investors. Screw the past."

For God's sake, retain the few remaining downtown Madison historic blocks--the 100 blocks of West and East Main, the 100 and 200 blocks of King, the 100 block of North Pinckney, and the 100 block of State. Their elevations, variety, facades, and purposes tell the story of the city, of development, of architecture, growth, etc. Think of Boston, think of Philadelphia. They have integrated the new and the old. Indeed, Philadelphia (a true metropolis) honors the past by rebuilding what once was there in William Penn's neighborhood 250 years ago.

Madison is not a metropolis and should not try to look like one. It should try to honor its history in imaginative ways, not in ways that have been discredited again and again within its own precincts and precincts around the country. And it should

balance aesthetics, history, and commercial development, giving all three equal weight.

Instead, create a marvelous vest-pocket park "inside" the 100 block--a space once used for gardens by the German owners of businesses in the block. Get rid of the piano bar and the old Leath building. Encourage pleasant (no pun intended) retail, restaurants, and services, not high-end commercial. Restore lost fenestration (not with aluminum and plastic). Condoize upper floors or make them into private dining rooms for first-floor restaurants. Keep the two-to-three-story character of this historic block.

Aesthetic compromise doesn't work. Take it from me. I was wrong to have supported it thirty or more years ago.

An honorary resident of Madison--decreed such by Sue Baumann when she was mayor,

Jack Holzhueter