

AGENDA # 5

City of Madison, Wisconsin

REPORT OF: URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION **PRESENTED:** October 2, 2019

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

REREFERRED:

REPORTED BACK:

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ADOPTED:

POF:

DATED: October 2, 2019

ID NUMBER:

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

SUMMARY:

At its meeting of October 2, 2019, the Urban Design Commission **RECEIVED AN INFORMATIONAL PRESENTATION** for a façade alteration located at 7-9 W. Main Street in the Downtown Core. Appearing on behalf of the project were Matt Aro and Elliot Mossanen, both representing 7 West Main, LLC.

Aro gave a recap of the history of what was once two buildings that were combined. The UDC approved a façade grant approximately ten years ago in an attempt to unify those storefronts for Brocach restaurant. There is tension between the historical elements and a more contemporary opening. There are three different colors of brick and sandstone details, as well as different rooflines. Looking at the context of this block on the Capitol Square there are a variety of window openings (Candidas Chocolates, National Bank, BMO Bank); there are newer and older buildings mixed on the block. In response to feedback from the previous presentation, they are proposing a more contemporary solution with a larger window glass to capture the views of the Capitol Square, while creating more activity on that side of the Square. This proposal essentially covers some of those elements, proposing to remove some of those elements and try to bring this building into a more unified state while preserving some of the investment of the City's façade grant at the lower level. While this is not a landmark, the Commission needs to interpret whether there is a historical property that should be preserved, referencing the Downtown Plan and the Downtown Urban Design Guidelines.

The Commission discussed the following:

- I like modern but still struggle with this one. The first floor is not at all modern, it has detail that contradicts the second floor. I struggle with the destruction of the historic nature, but there is still a tension between leaving the first floor and all its details with the contrast above. It's an odd mix.
- It would be easier to consider something that renovated the whole façade to bring it together, or just the base; it would be more appropriate. I struggle with comments that were made before about bringing it all together. It's not beautiful brick work and it's already been altered so I see the challenge you're facing, but I don't think it's there yet.

- What are the panels, metal or composite?
 - That hasn't been determined yet, we are looking at a lot of options. It may be a rain screen.
- I don't think the wood slab option is appropriate.
- I'm sympathetic to what you're trying to do here. I keep looking at the brick work on the existing building, it's kind of a shame because there's something there but it's such a hodgepodge. I don't know how you would ever renovate that to make it look good. But the two options you came up with are just not exciting in any way, shape or form. I realize they are rough proposals, but those large windows seem to be very important to you, just seem so modern and different than the doors and windows on the first floor. There has to be a way to tie these together, but not from these façade options that you presented.
- It seems like you're working really hard to unify the top level from left to right and that could lead to loss of articulation at the parapet and geometries you see from the street, they're kind of cool and compelling from a pedestrian perspective.
- Is this a portion of the building or is this top to bottom? The top of this image. When you unified it you turned it into a brick wall. Unifying 7 and 9 is the right move but I don't think you want to just go with a blank wall. You want to respect that top but that's where I'm struggling.
- I question even why it needs to be tied on the second floor. The proportions when you tie it in together becomes more horizontal but the original ones were narrower and seemed taller, which was downtown Capitol architecture at that time. The buildings around it still kind of keep that. You lose that proportion and it becomes a squatty building and completely loses the feel of what is on the Square. We can debate what is good and bad. I don't see anything wrong with the proportions that are there now existing. What is the impetus behind this needing to be tied together on the top?
 - One of the drivers is to improve the views inside to the Capitol Square and make that second space more viable for tenant uses.
 - The way it is now is a mix of colors and bricks. I think there's a way to get this done where you don't lose much on one end.
- I agree, but think you can unify it but keep the verticality. It doesn't have to bleed across horizontally. Unify in terms of color and material, not necessarily the pattern. Not the same brick all the way across.
- There were historic photographs of the building, I remember noticing that the building maintains much of its original integrity from the 1920s. Although we're not taking action on this tonight, we will have to review this project on its merits and its compliance with the Downtown Urban Design Guidelines. We are going to have to look at this and understand how you are meeting paragraph B which says you should not have windows with different sash configurations or inappropriate to the original design (not historic, but existing traditional buildings). These are the criteria we have to review this project against, as well as paragraph A which talks about the rhythms within its context.
- The struggle will be how you get away from punched openings without a full façade redesign. I don't really see an in-between.
- Maybe you can demonstrate how much of an increase in glazing you will achieve over what we see in the photographs.

ACTION:

Since this was an **INFORMATIONAL PRESENTATION** no formal action was taken by the Commission.