

July 7, 2022

Historic Preservation Commission
Zeidler Municipal Building
841 N. Broadway, Room B-1
Milwaukee, WI 53202

Dear Historic Preservation Commission members,

I am writing to express my strong support for the proposed building plans. I have lived and worked in the area since 1998 and the Downer Ave business district is where we do our shopping and socializing, and our family are members of St. Marks. I am also a member of the building committee for this project.

I work at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee as Professor and throughout my 24 years at this institution I gained much experience understanding the design and budgetary process for these types of projects. I have had the opportunity to interact with our first class Architecture Department, learning much from Bob Greenstreet on Milwaukee's unique land marks, and From Jim Wasely, as specialist in sustainable building. My academic home is at the School of Freshwater Sciences and had the opportunity to work closely with the architects as we designed our new building on Greenfield Ave, which is home to research and teaching labs and central hub for our student body and many water organizations that work hard to keep Milwaukee a highly regarded water centric city. I also have been a member of the University's Executive Committee and Faculty Senate for 6 years and learned much about the difficult decisions of renovating with serious budget constraints in the context of the Columbia Hospital buildings, especially what is possible and what is not.

The St. Marks renovation and new building have been carefully planned with considerable input from the building committee and the members. Below I have listed some of my perspective on the building plans and the needs for the church.

- There has been much thoughtful discussion about building materials and how to blend the old with the new. Every time I drive or walk by the present site, I can envision how much more in tune the St. Marks Church space will be with a smaller addition that does not dominate the original church building and will add an element of class to the site. In particular, the roof line and the matching of the grey color struck me as ideal.
- Accessibility is a major issue, and I have felt it personally since I have been in a wheelchair/ on crutches since early March. I am thankful it is temporary for me (catastrophic knee injury that is healing for the most part); however, I have a new

appreciation for barriers facing those who are not able to walk. Accessibility was the first priority in the design.

- The overall project (both the proposed development of the vacant land and the addition on the church) is a major need for St. Marks to keep the congregation viable. St. Marks welcomed my family more than 10 years ago, and we may not have found them if they were not such an active and vibrant congregation. The current building is a constant drain on the finances of the members, and not sustainable. As a member, I want to be investing in the future, not propping up building that is rapidly declining. St. Marks has been slowly growing with more young people for the past several years. The sale of the land, along with a welcoming gathering space, will keep St. Marks going in this direction and strengthen their positive presence in the neighborhood.
- The new apartment building has been carefully designed to match others in the area. I do not see the density as an issue as it is similar to other blocks surrounding, the business district. My son lives in Brooklyn with wonderful neighborhoods and the east side of Milwaukee would be considered quite suburban comparatively. A new apartment building with updated interiors may attract young professionals to the area (similar to the Prospect area), which would be great for the business district, which I have seen decline over the 24 years I have been in the area.

I regret I am unable to attend the meeting in person as I am traveling the week of July 10th. I would be pleased to offer additional comments or answer any questions you may have. I can be reached at 414-759-7657.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Sandra McLellan". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Sandra" being larger and more prominent than the last name "McLellan".

Sandra McLellan