

Lee, Chris

From: Mark Plotkin <nspktr@aol.com>
Sent: Friday, September 9, 2022 2:50 PM
To: Lee, Chris
Subject: St.Mark's apartment building on Hackett

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Dear members of the Zoning, Neighborhood and Development Committee -

Thank you for taking the time to read this letter.

I'd like to bring to your attention a very specific concern I have about the proposed apartment building on Hackett that will be coming before you on Tuesday, September 13th.

I know this meeting concerns the request for a zoning change but I ask that you please (re)consider the impact that the secondary masonry color on the south and east sides of the proposed building will have on this historic district.

I have brought this issue to the attention of the Historic Preservation Commission and as far as I can tell no one has taken it seriously.

My understanding is that the HPC and CPC decisions are advisory only and that your committee has the opportunity to revisit their opinions.

Here is the issue:

The architect/developer, in their pursuit of a Certificate of Appropriateness, chose to specify the building's masonry to reflect the style of many apartment buildings built in Milwaukee in the early 20th century. This entails using an attractive, usually reddish brick on the front elevation and switching to a less expensive light colored brick on the sides and rear of the building, generally not seen from the street.

The light colored brick on the sides was often facing another brick apartment building and helped reflect sunlight into the darkened space between them. The rear of the building often faced an alley.

The reality of the Hackett building is that the lighter brick on the south side elevation actually faces the public view from Cafe Hollander and Downer Avenue. Also, the hard line transition from reddish brick to the light gray is a pronounced element of that elevation rather than the more historically appropriate hidden transition found on most buildings of that era, as pictured

below:



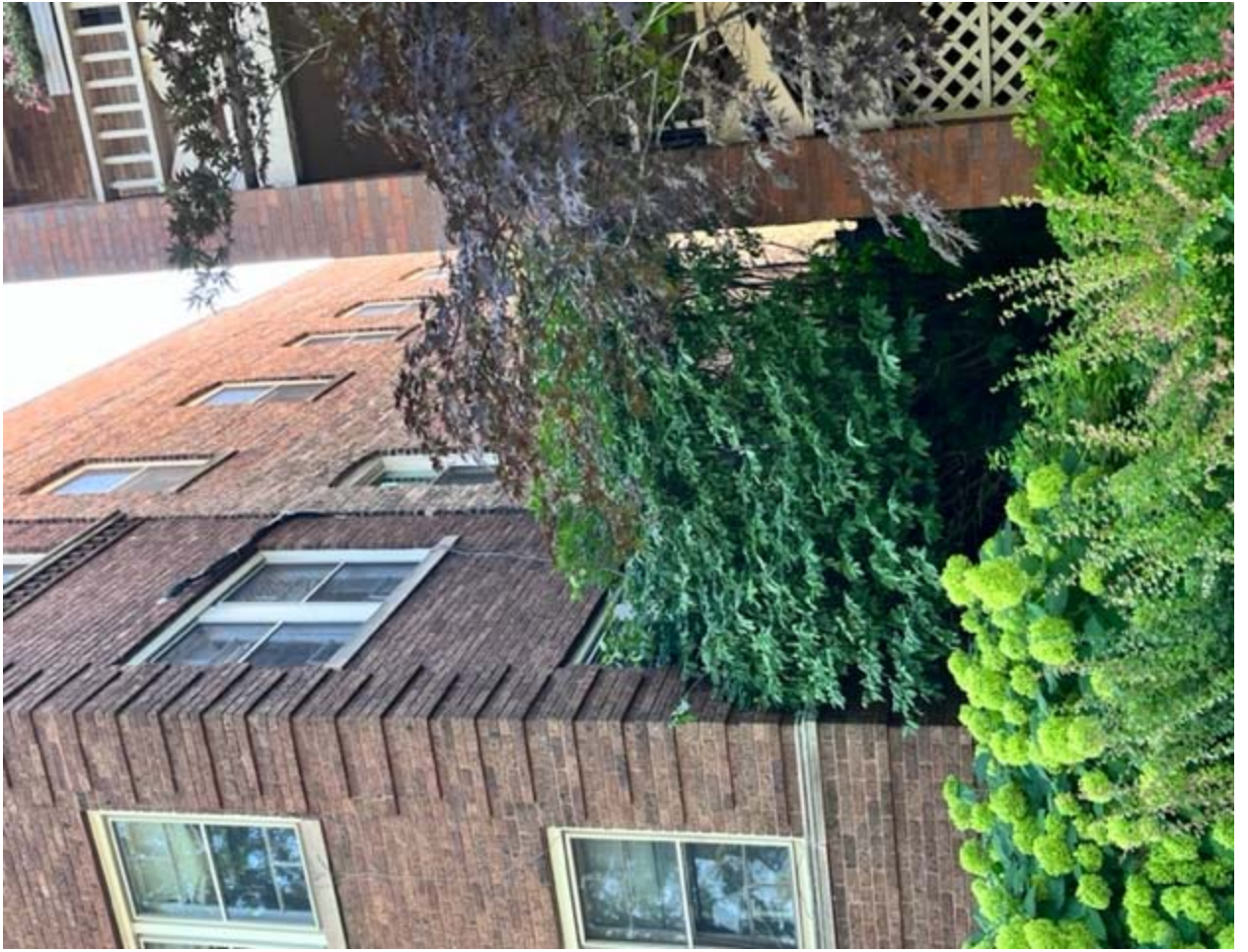
In addition, the rear of the building faces the historic homes of the Water Tower North District - not an alley. Compare this to every other brick building on this block of Hackett Avenue starting with the fully exposed side elevation of the Church in the City below followed by the visible sides and rear of every building (residential and commercial) on the west side of the street.















As you can see, not one building has a white or light grey colored brick on the sides or rear but the Historic Preservation Commission has approved the apartment building for a Certificate of Appropriateness. Appropriate for obtaining the certificate itself? Or appropriate for the site?

I believe the lack of community input and the fast tracking of this development and approval process may be leaving a legacy that doesn't properly represent the best efforts and ideals of this city's professional staff, elected officials and residents of this historic district.

I am perfectly aware that some kind of development will happen on this newly created parcel, and I sincerely hope that in the end it will be truly appropriate for the site in size and density.

And, I have to say that I totally appreciate the fact that the developer's design calls for brick masonry veneer on the entire building. I would urge, however, that this committee reconsider the approval of the Certificate of Appropriateness and ask that the same brick color used for the street elevation be used around the entire building.

Respectfully,
Mark Plotkin

I am a homeowner on Summit Avenue directly behind the proposed apartment building. I have lived here for 44 years. I have a master's degree in architecture

and specialized in historic preservation and adaptive reuse of buildings. I was a professional home inspector for 30 years.