From:	Michael P. Brush
To:	planadmin
Cc:	Patin, Greg
Subject:	City Plan Commission Item #160431
Date:	Thursday, November 03, 2016 3:01:56 PM
Attachments:	image003.png

To the Members of the City Plan Commission:

While it is not clear to me if anyone has the legal right to force a change to a building design solely on the basis of aesthetics, it is clear to me as a design professional and Milwaukee resident that we all have an obligation to improve the quality of our city in any way we can. It is with those thoughts in mind that I am asking you to do whatever you can to encourage significant design changes in the proposed office building on Block 16.

According to the Owner's Statement, the proposed design incorporates many admirable qualities, including the use of high quality materials, strong shadow lines, an "activated" streetscape, and an architecture that "seeks to avoid 'flat' facades." Where the statement begins to go awry is when it describes a "traditional, stately building", incorporating "cornices, entablatures and domes." These terms describe a design vocabulary from another era which has culminated in a design that was recently described to me by a non-architect as, "something out of Maryland in the 1800's."

I am hoping that in the course of developing the zoning language for this Planned Development, the CPC can encourage the developer's desire to create a high quality, lasting contribution to Milwaukee's urban fabric in a way that better reflects the forward-looking city we want to be. The current design seems to want to address the frequent shortcomings of modern design. But by reaching for old ideas from another place and another time, it speaks poorly of our ability to advance the art of design. Surely, we can create an architecture of our time that reflects the same values the developer is seeking, and perhaps the Planned Development language can set that course.

Sincerely,

Michael P. Brush

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