

Askin, Tim

From: Michael DeMichele <michael@demichele.com>
Sent: Thursday, March 29, 2018 12:51 PM
To: Askin, Tim
Cc: Steph Salvia
Subject: 2567 Downer Project

Dear Tim,

Thank you for the opportunity to review the proposed modifications to the facade at 2567 N. Downer. First, let me preface by saying that we certainly do not wish to make it difficult for the business going into this space. Optix on Downer is an institution and a valued member of our east side community. Furthermore, my family and I are customers and we are very pleased they are staying on the street. So, these comments are not about Optix but about trying to return Downer to its former glory prior to the sins of the recent and not so recent past.

As we discussed, as president and representative of Business Improvement District No 41, Historic Downer Avenue, it was a real disappointment to discover that the Stone Creek Proposal to revise the facade was approved without consideration for the historic context and the balance of the eight other storefront openings along the rest of the building and the actual historic proportion. A real miss that we are stuck with to have low storefront head heights and raised knee walls.

It is in that context that we wish to object to the current design and request modifications to keep the proportions of this storefront more appropriately proportioned.

First, one can only review historic renovations with an understanding of what actually is historic. Please find attached a historic photo I have showing the old facade. We certainly wish the building owner would consider this type of renovation. Opening the entire storefront to glass and removing the bad 1980s brick facade infill that was inappropriately and insensitively applied in the past. You will also note that the historic end columns and spandrel was granite cladding, some of which still exists, and the storefronts were within one large opening from one end of the building all the way to the other with glass infill and a very high head height. You can see that some of that north end vertical cladding still exists around the old north entrance to the upper floors - see next current photo. The bad 1980s brick I referred to earlier should really be removed in its entirety so the storefront head heights match the two adjacent buildings such as it did in the past.

If it is not possible to affect that level of restoration, then it certainly makes sense to retain the most vertical proportion that is appropriate, which in this case, since one would have to relate it to the existing infill, then it would seem that matching the door opening height and maintaining the brick casing detailing around the window opening. I have included a rough sketch of that which shows the head height moving up in the neighborhood of a foot for the three window openings.

I am sorry I cannot attend the hearing in person as I am out of town this week. Thank you very much for taking our input and concerns.

Cordially,
Michael DeMichele

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