

COUNCIL ACTION FORM

SUBJECT: REVISED DESIGN FOR DOWNTOWN FAÇADE GRANT AT 400 MAIN STREET

BACKGROUND:

In June 2014, the City Council awarded a Downtown Façade Grant for improvements to the east façade of 400 Main. This is the building that contains two restaurants, Bar La Tosca and The Spice. The east facade is on Tom Evans Plaza. The grant amount is \$15,000 plus \$1000 for professional design fees.

The approved design added windows in the same location and of the same type as the original construction. (See Attachment A Historic Image and Attachment B Approved Façade Design.) Other improvements planned to this façade include new steps and landing at the entrance to the steps to the second story and repairing and painting the exterior wall. The steps and landing are encroachments into the City's property abutting the building. At that time it was thought that the existing mural would remain and the design improvements were compatible with the retaining the mural.

The work to add two new windows in this façade has been nearly completed, as well as patching the wall to prepare for painting. During this work, it was discovered that a third window had previously been replaced by a door that was later removed and the opening filled in. Staff approved adding a larger window in the opening and that work has been completed.

When removing the existing "fill-in" materials for these three windows, it became apparent that water is penetrating the east wall of the building and causing deterioration. The work carried out around the three new windows has corrected that problem. However, the water problem still exists where other original windows had been filled in where the exterior mural was created. This situation led to the public hearing on vacating the mural easement on this same Council agenda.

If the Council approves vacation of the mural easement, building owner Randy Pyle proposes to install two additional windows consistent with the historic design of the building. This work will allow the water problem to be corrected. However, the revised project budget does not allow the new steps and landing that were part of the original façade grant approval. Therefore, the owner requests approval of a revision in the approved design and scope of the façade grant project to delete the steps and landing from the project and to add the two windows. (See Attachment C Revised Design.) The grant amount would not change.

The owner of the restaurant in the building, John Reed, has requested an additional revision to the design. The two windows that that have already been installed in the

north (right) portion of the east elevation do not yet have muntins dividing the large pane of glass into four smaller areas. Staff is requiring that inserts be added to these windows to achieve that visual affect. Because the windows without the muntins allow a more unobstructed view to the plaza, Mr. Reed requests that the City Council delete this requirement. Staff does not find deleting the muntins to be supported by the Design Guidelines of the Downtown Façade Program or to be consistent with the design of the building. (See letters attached. Images are available for review at the Planning and Housing Department.)

ALTERNATIVES:

1. The City Council can approve the revised design for the Downtown Façade Improvement Grant at 400 Main as shown on the attached revised elevation, with the requirement for muntins in windows.
2. The City Council can deny the revised design for the Downtown Façade Improvement Grant at 400 Main.

Under this alternative the work to be completed would include the new steps and landing, but not the two proposed additional windows.

3. The City Council can refer this request to staff or the applicant for additional information.

Staff intends to require installation of the muntins as a condition of disbursing the grant proceeds for this project. However, if the Council wishes to remove that condition from either the original or the revised design, that action could be added to any of the above alternatives.

MANAGER'S RECOMMENDED ACTION:

The City Council's decision on this request to revise the façade grant project design is tied to the Council's decision on the future of the mural. If the mural is to remain, new windows within it are not appropriate and the City Manager would recommend Alternative No. 2 to deny the requested revision.

However, if removal of the mural is approved, the City Council may either approve or deny the proposed design revision.

One of the reasons to include the new steps and landing relates to drainage issues around the steps. This paving has settled over time, with the result that surface drainage flows toward the building. It also slopes steeply south along the building, so water does drain away. Drainage running along the building walls can cause serious problems. The owner has determined that correcting the water problems within the building wall at the mural is a higher priority at this time than building the new steps and landing and fixing the drainage problem around them.

By adding the two windows, the proposed revision to the project design restores more

of the historic elements of the building, which is a higher priority within the Downtown Design Guidelines than reconstructing the steps and landing. However, staff believes that deleting the muntins from the windows, as requested by the business owner, is not consistent with the Downtown Design Guidelines or with any of the other windows on the building.

Therefore, it is the recommendation of the City Manager that the City Council approve Alternative #1, thereby approving the revised design for the Downtown Façade Improvement Grants for 400 Main, including the requirement for window muntins.

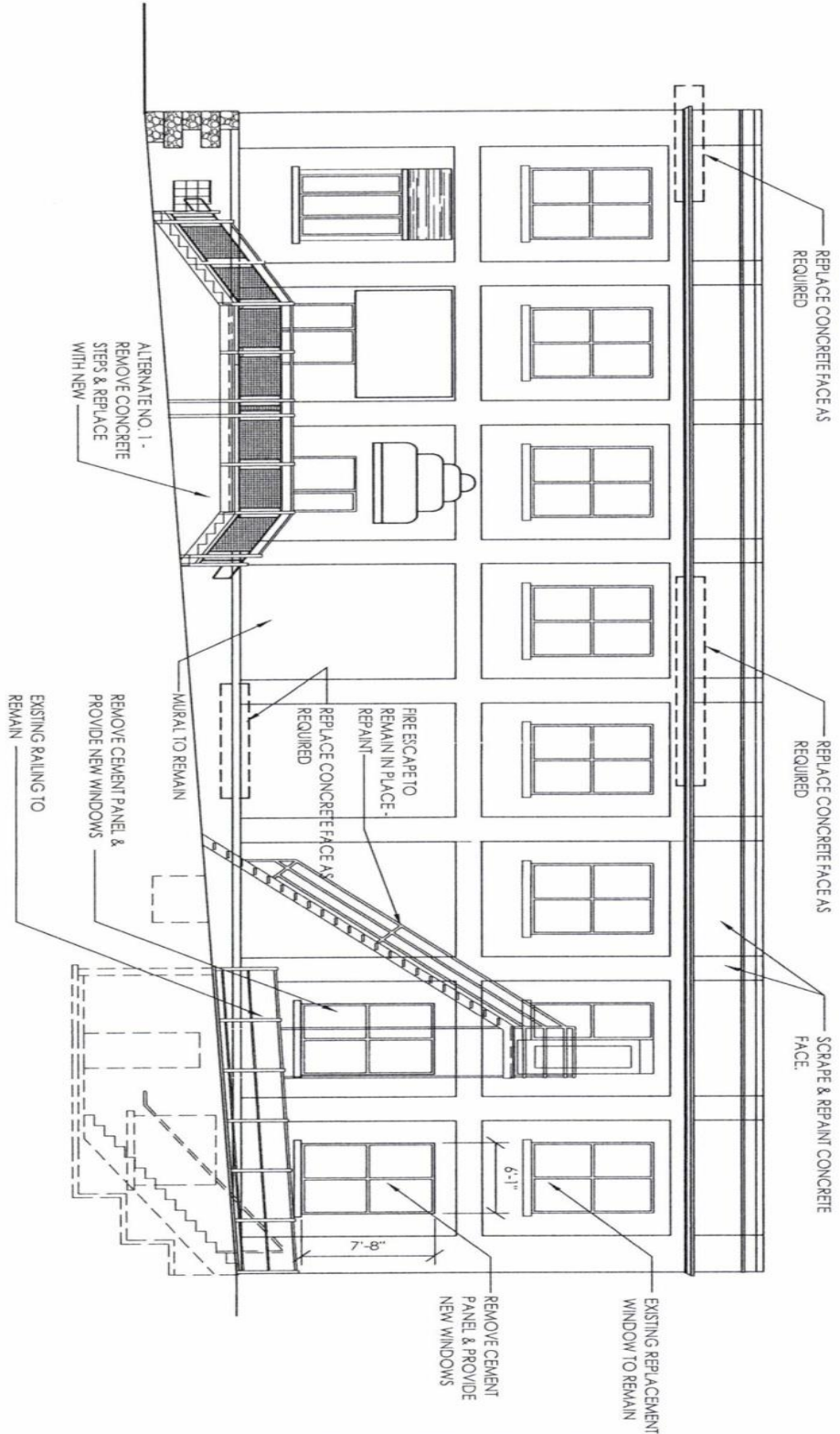
**Attachment A
Historic Image**



Attachment B Approved Design

PROPOSED EAST ELEVATION

SCALE: 1/8" = 1'-0"

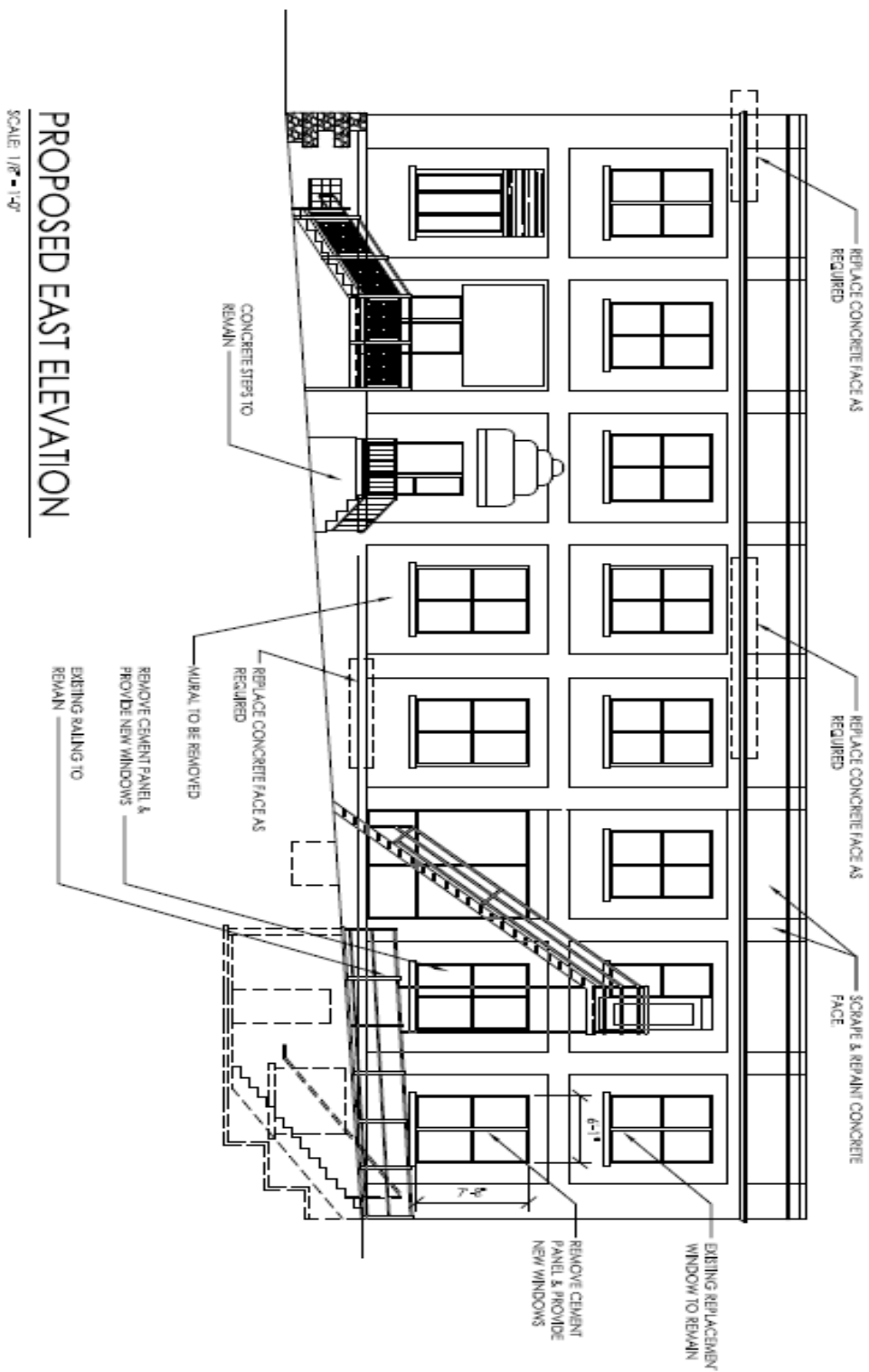


DATE	01-30-13
PROJECT NO.	2196
FILE NAME	2196_BASR
CONTENTS	PROPOSED EAST ELEVATION


OLSAN BUILDING REHABILITATION
RANDY & KRISTIN PYLE
400 MAIN STREET, AMES, IOWA

Benjamin Design Collaborative, P.C.
401 Clark Avenue, Suite 200, Ames, IA 50010
Phone: 515-232-0666 Fax: 515-232-0662 www.benjamin-design.com

Attachment C Revised Design



REVISED 04-23-15

OWNER OLSAN BUILDING REHABILITATION RANDY & KRISTIN FYLE 400 MAIN STREET, AMES, IOWA	 Benjamin Design Collaborative, P.C. 401 Clark Avenue, Suite 200, Ames, IA 50010 Phone: 515-232-0888 Fax: 515-232-0882 www.bdcollab.com	DATE 07-20-13
		PROJECT NO. 2518
PREPARED BY JESSICA BAKER	DATE 07-20-13	SCALE AS SHOWN
REVISIONS 1. REVISED EAST ELEVATION	APPROVED BY JESSICA BAKER	DATE 07-20-13

4/24/15

Dear Ames City Council,

We would like to request your consideration in the matter of modifying the façade grant awarded to the east side of 400 Main to allow the newly opened windows to remain unencumbered by decorative muntins.

The rough window openings were exposed and the new window glass and frames were installed in 2014, each as one large pane of glass. There is no structural need for support in the middle of the windows, and the decorative muntins have not been installed.

In the time since the installation, the feeling of openness and the amount of light that is allowed into the dining space at Bar La Tosca has been enjoyed very much. The windows provide a connection to Tom Evans Plaza outside. Jonathan Reed, the owner of Bar La Tosca, has expressed that leaving the windows as a single large pane of glass would be the preferred choice for the design.

We recognize that the original grant was offered with the intention of working back towards a vision of the historical version of the building. However, by keeping the new windows without obstruction, the design pays homage to the original while appealing to more modern sensibilities. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Kristin and Randy Pyle

From: Randy Pyle <rpyle@ddpyle.com>
To: "jbenson@city.ames.ia.us" <jbenson@city.ames.ia.us>
Date: 04/24/2015 02:53 PM
Subject: Window crossbars letter

Ames City Council,

I'm writing to appeal to you to allow us to leave our large open windows as they are and not be required to add cross bars in the middle of them which would obstruct the view and cost \$800, money which I would much rather use for development of my business.

I spoke with Jeff Benson earlier this week. I understand his point that a part of the grant's purpose is to restore historical accuracy. However, the most important aspect of that is to improve the Ames community. And while not having crossbars is slightly different, the improvement of adding the windows is there, and it is more of an overall improvement.

The windows are much more attractive without crossbars, from both sides, but particularly from the inside. I've included photos of the view of downtown and Tom Evans Park from our dining area.

As to it being consistent with other windows. I would understand and possibly agree with adding crossbars if the rest of the main floor's windows were that way (it used to be 8 uniform windows in a row). But as it is, these are the only two windows on the first floor of their size. The rest have been replaced with different windows or doors. They do not need to match anything because there is nothing left to match.

Randy is doing a lot to improve the building and maintain its historical identity, including painting it the original grey, adding these windows, and fixing problems to its structure. I have always tried to do business in ways that add value to the community, both with Stomping Grounds and Bar la Tosca.

It was disheartening to me, and my staff, to hear we were going to have to obstruct our beautiful, open windows with big black T bars, right in the middle. It adds a sting that we would have to spend \$800 to do it, particularly when we have so many other uses for that money right now. Please allow us to keep them open as the benefits to my business, including my customers, largely outweigh the benefit of slightly-more historically accurate.

Thank you for your consideration,

Jonathan Reed, Owner
Bar la Tosca