

**COUNCIL ACTION FORM**

**SUBJECT: DOWNTOWN FAÇADE GRANTS – 2015/16 FIRST ROUND AWARDS**

**BACKGROUND:**

The City Council annually budgets \$50,000 for the Downtown Façade Grant Program. This program has an eligibility requirement for projects to be within the downtown area, which is generally described as from 6<sup>th</sup> Street to the railroad tracks and from Duff Avenue to Northwestern Avenue (see Attachment 1). The program includes up to \$15,000 of matching funds per façade and allows up to \$1,000 for architectural services. The program requires compliance with specified design guidelines, ground floor use of office or retail trade, and historic façade removal of non-compliant elements; and allows one year to complete the project after signing a grant agreement. In addition, the program includes preferences for façades that have not had previous funding, for front façades, and for façades along Main Street. The accompanying scoring criteria prioritize visual impact, financial impact, extent of improvements, and historic design (See Attachment 2).

**The Downtown Façade Grant Program has a carryover balance of \$22,423 in unencumbered funds remaining from FY14/15 and an additional \$50,000 for FY2015/16. The available combined funds total \$72,423 for façade grants in FY15/16.**

**Grant Applications**

The City solicits a first round of grants applications in the spring for award in the summer of each year. If they are remaining funds, the City solicits for a second round of application in the winter for a spring award of grants. The City requested applications in April of 2015 for award in July 2015. An invitation for grant applications was sent to all eligible property and business owners and was also publicized by the Main Street Cultural District. Two property owners submitted applications for multiple building facades for consideration by the Council.

The first grant application is for the property at 100 6<sup>th</sup> Street for the Freidrich Realty building requesting \$15,000 in grant funds and an additional \$1,000 in design fees. The second application is for the property at 301-311 Main Street for the Sheldon Munn building requesting a total of \$101,457 for the remodeling of multiple commercial storefronts for the building. **The total requested amount of grant funding, \$117,457, exceeds the combined FY2014/15 and FY2015/16 amount of \$72,423 available for award in this round.** Project information, a location map, and project design illustrations are attached for each project.

**100 6<sup>th</sup> Street (Friedrich Realty):**

The grant application for the project at 100 6<sup>th</sup> Street consists of a renovation to the northwest corner of the building to install two new windows into the entry lobby (one on the north façade and one on the west façade). The project also includes a raised roof parapet over the northwest corner of the building, new stone pilasters on the north and west facades, a new front sidewalk and planter area at the east side of the entry door, and new signage for the building. The grant request is for the 6<sup>th</sup> street facing façade.

**This façade grant request is being made under the non-historic criteria of the Grant Guidelines.** The non-historic guidelines have only been applied on one other occasion. The Grant program for non-historic buildings allows for grant funding for “improvements to select portions or features of a façade when it is not feasible to do an entire façade renovation.” The proposed project has addressed some of the guideline requirements but has complications when trying to match the existing brick colors of the building to include other architectural features described in the guidelines. Therefore, the focus of the work has been on the northwest corner entry area, including the two new windows and stone pilasters and parapet, and the new landscape planter with sidewalk walls to bring the project in compliance with the guidelines for the grant. Staff has requested and the applicant agreed to wrap the improvements around the corner of the building to the west to meet more of the interests of the guidelines. **Staff recommends approving the 6<sup>th</sup> Street façade request conditioned on including the west façade improvements as well as the planter and landscape enhancements with the 6<sup>th</sup> Street Façade. The applicant is requesting a \$15,000 grant with an additional \$1,000 grant for design fees for a total of \$16,000. The total project cost for the project is estimated at \$77,846.**

**301 to 311 Main Street (Sheldon Munn):**

The grant application for the project at 301 Main Street consists of 7 commercial storefronts along Main Street and Kellogg Avenue as evaluated by staff. Additionally there are two residential lobby entrances to the building that are not counted as commercial storefronts and, therefore, not eligible for grant funding. The proposal is to reestablish the historic style of the first floor commercial facades consistent with the Historic Design Guidelines. The applicant is proposing to renovate the first floor commercial facades to remove non-compliant elements of the historic façade and re-establish the historic elements of the original building design. This will include refurbishing existing clear glass transom windows, pulling the storefront windows forward to align with the front façade of the building, recessing the new storefront doors, and repairing the kick plate and brick columns of the building.

After review of the scope of the proposed project, staff has determined that there is the possibility of 6 full grant awards and one partial grant award that could be awarded for the entire building subject to the availability of funding. The two residential entrances (one on Main Street and one on Kellogg) for the upper story apartments do not qualify for grant funding under the downtown façade guidelines as they are not interpreted as commercial storefronts. Based on staff’s review of the project, the following table shows the storefronts eligible for potential grant funding under the submitted application and the project total for each storefront. Staff notes that the total grant request for the

Sheldon Munn exceeds the total available funding for Downtown Façade Grants FY15/16 without considering other requests.

<b>Address</b>	<b>Business</b>	<b>Grant Request</b>	<b>Project Estimate</b>
311 Main	Natures Touch	\$11,457*	\$93,390
307/309 Main	Shield Comics	\$15,000	\$134,232
305 Main	House of Hair	\$15,000	\$89,949
303 Main	Barbershop	\$15,000	\$82,845
301 Main, #6	Hair Professionals	\$15,000	\$124,179
301 Main, #5	YOUnique	\$15,000	\$164,347
405 Kellogg	Firehouse Books	\$15,000	\$75,957
<b>Totals</b>		<b>\$101,457</b>	<b>\$764,899</b>

\* 311 Main received a previous grant of \$3,543 for the front awning.

While the current program preference is to not approve second grants for a façade in the first round of funding for façades that have had a previous award, in this case 311 Main (Natures Crossing) received a grant of \$3,543 for only the awning back in 2007. It is the intent of the proposed renovation project for the Nature’s Crossing façade that the awning be removed and replaced; therefore staff is only noting a partial grant award request of \$11,457 for that façade to total the allowed maximum of \$15,000 that could be awarded for a single façade.

The total grant request for the Sheldon Munn exceeds what the total Façade Grant program has in available funds FY15/16. **Should Council approve the grant application for the \$16,000 for the Freidrich Building, a total of \$56,423 would remain in the grant budget and could be awarded to the Sheldon Munn to cover the cost of up to four façades (storefronts) for four grant awards.** This project does not qualify for funding for any design fees as the applicant is a licensed architect.

**ALTERNATIVES:**

1. The City Council can approve Downtown Façade Improvement Grants for both projects listed above, awarding 100 6<sup>th</sup> Street a grant in the amount of \$16,000 and awarding up to four grants for 301-311 Main Street in the amount of \$56,423 for the total amount of remaining budgeted funds for the façade grant program FY15/16.

Approval of this alternative includes five grants totaling \$72,423 from the combined Downtown Façade Grant fund FY2014/15 and FY 2015/16. Under this alternative no funding would remain for a second round of façade grants FY15/16 in the spring of 2016.

2. The City Council can approve an alternative selection of façade grants and amounts to those projects that the Council finds meet its priorities for downtown façades, including awarding fewer grants to the Sheldon Munn to reserve funding for a second round of applications in the spring of 2016.

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

**MANAGER'S RECOMMENDED ACTION:**

City staff has determined that the proposed Downtown Façade Improvement projects for the Friedrich Building and the Sheldon Munn are consistent with the Downtown Design Guidelines. Staff believes that these two projects have sufficient visual and financial impact, and extent of improvements to warrant support of the façade grant program.

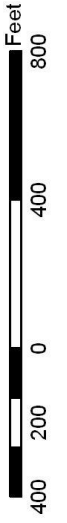
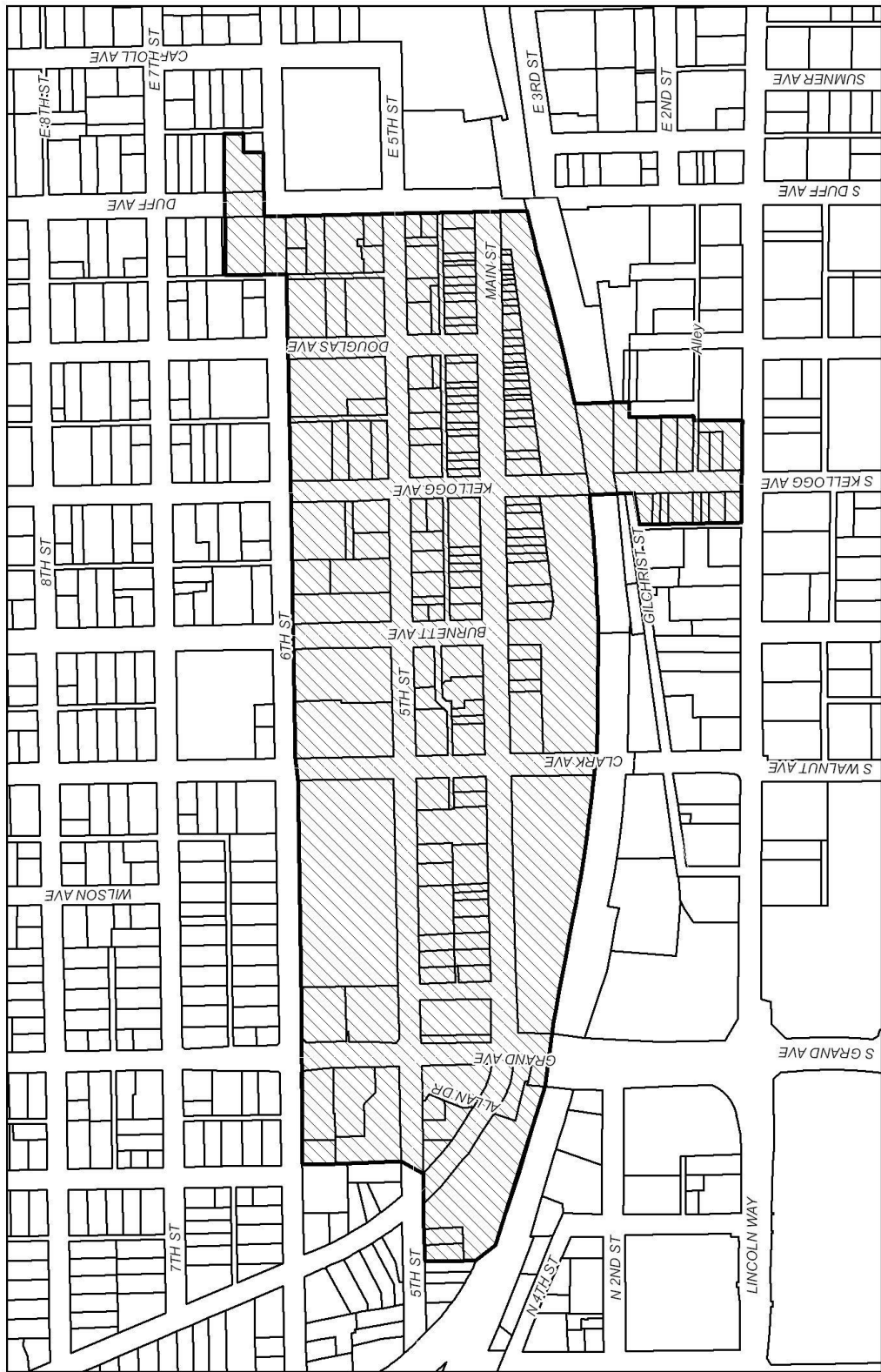
The Sheldon Munn request for 7 grants is unprecedented for the program, which rarely has had two grants awarded to a project at one time. Typically a request for multiple grants would be considered over multiple application periods to allow for a variety of property owners and facades to receive funding for improvements. Staff believes this project is unique due to its size and its prominent corner location to potentially justify a more substantial investment than prior projects. The closest example to this request is the Council's awards of three grants over two years for the facades of The Spice, La Toca, and the Tom Evans Plaza that are all part of one building.

Staff is not aware of any other pending or active façade grant interests that were not submitted in April for the FY15/16 grant review. **With no other pending interest, Staff supports awarding all budget funds at this time by combining the FY14/15 second round funding with FY15/16 first round funding; \$72,423 will be available for matching grants funds at this time.**

Therefore, it is the recommendation of the City Manager that the City Council approve Alternative #1, thereby approving Downtown Façade Improvement Grants for both projects listed above, awarding 100 6<sup>th</sup> Street a grant in the amount of \$16,000 and awarding up to four grants for 301-311 Main Street in the amount of \$56,423 for the total amount of remaining budgeted funds for the façade grant program FY15/16.

# Downtown Facade Grant Area

## Attachment 1



Prepared June 16, 2011  
By the City of Ames Planning Division

**Legend**

-  Downtown Facade Grant Area

## Attachment 2 - Downtown Façade Grant Review

### *Requirements for all Façade Grants*

- The building must be located downtown within boundaries established by City Council.
- The ground floor must be Office Uses or Trade Uses as defined by the Ames zoning ordinance.
- The façade design must comply with Downtown Design Guidelines.
- Improvements to historic facades shall include replacing non-compliant elements with compliant elements.
- Residential structures and buildings owned by the government, churches and other religious institutions are not eligible.
- No façade grant shall exceed \$15,000.

### *Program Logistics*

The following process for review of applications for façade grants provides time to inform all potential applicants of the opportunity, to work with applicants, applicants to prepare submittals and for staff to review applications and report to City Council. Two grant periods will be planned for each fiscal year.

#### First Grant Period

For this first grant period, preference for grant awards will be given to:

- facades that have not received any previous grant funding
- front facades

#### Action Steps:

- Staff will inform all property and business owners of grant availability, process, and deadlines.
- Staff will work with applicants to define the project, ensure that it meets the guidelines, and assure that it is feasible and can be completed within the time frame.
- Applications will be accepted in May and June.
- Staff will review and score applications and report to City Council in July or August for awarding grants.
- Projects may then start in the fall and be potentially completed before the holiday shopping season.

#### Second Grant Period

If the entire budget is not committed in the first grant period in each year, a second grant period will begin in October for projects to be implemented the following spring. While facades on Main Street and facades for which no previous grants have been awarded will still receive first preference in this second grant period, all downtown grant requests will be considered and potentially approved if funds remain after all first-preference proposals are awarded.

#### Conditions of Grant Approval

- Grant projects must be completed within one year from award of grant.
- Any required building code and/or safety improvements to a structure must be completed before grant work proceeds or before grant funds are paid.

**100 6<sup>th</sup> Street**  
Existing Building



**Proposed Elevation**



**100 6<sup>th</sup> Street**  
**Project Cost Estimate**

Benjamin Design Collaborative, P.C.

401 Clark Avenue, Suite 200

Ames, Iowa 50010

515-232-0888

Fax 515-232-0882



**Friedrich Façade Renovation**

06.30.15

Friedrich Iowa Realty  
 100 6th Street

**Recap of Divisions**

Division 1 - General Requirements		4,671
Division 2 - Site Work		12,790
Division 3 - Concrete		3,940
Division 4 - Masonry		25,800
Division 5 - Metal		1,000
Division 6 - Carpentry		300
Division 7 - Thermal & Moisture Protection		4,003
Division 8 - Doors & Windows		7,540
Division 9 - Finishes		2,450
Division 10 - Specialties		7,500
		<hr/> 69,993
 Division 16 - Electrical		 2,400
		<hr/> 2,400
 Contractor's Markup	15%	 360
		<hr/> 2,760
 <b>Total Cost of Project</b>		 72,753
Estimate Contingency	7%	5,093
		<hr/> 77,846

*Cost Estimate Values based on the 2012 R.S. Means Construction Cost Data, updated annually*



**Sheldon Munn**  
Existing Building



**Sheldon Munn**  
1918 and 1938 Building



# Sheldon Munn Proposed Building



## SOUTH ELEVATION

SCALE: 1/16" = 1'-0"



## EAST ELEVATION

SCALE: 1/16" = 1'-0"

**Sheldon Munn**  
Project Cost Estimate

Benjamin Design Collaborative, P.C.  
401 Clark Avenue, Suite 200  
Ames, Iowa 50010  
515-232-0888  
Fax 515-232-0882



**Sheldon Munn Façade Grant Renovations**

May 7, 2015

301 Main, LLC.  
Ames, IA

**Preliminary Estimate - Recap of Storefronts**

**All Storefronts**

Bay 6 - Nature's Touch	93,390
Bay 5 - Shield Comics	134,232
Bay 4 - House of Hair	89,949
Bay 3 - Barbershop	82,845
Bay E - Main South Entrance	80,255
Bay 2 - Hair Professionals	124,179
Bay 1A - Younique - South Face	86,987
Bay 1B - Younique - East Face	77,360
Bay E2 - East Entrance	47,021
Bay 7 - Firehouse Books	75,957
<b>Total Construction Cost of Project</b>	<hr/> 892,176