

**COUNCIL ACTION FORM**

**SUBJECT:**           **AWARD OF DOWNTOWN FACADE GRANTS**

**BACKGROUND:**

The Downtown Façade Grant Program was introduced in 2000 to facilitate private improvements to downtown retail and other commercial storefronts. The City Council annually budgets \$50,000 as matching funds for eligible projects. This program is available to property owners within the area generally described as from 6<sup>th</sup> Street to the railroad tracks, from Duff Avenue to Northwestern Avenue, and along Kellogg Avenue to Lincoln Way (Attachment 1).

The program allows for up to \$15,000 of dollar-for-dollar matching funds per front façade and up to \$1,000 for additional architectural services. The program requires compliance with specified Design Guidelines that can be found on the Planning Division website at this [link](#). The program requirements include a prerequisite of a ground floor use of office or retail trade. Additionally, grant eligibility includes a requirement for proposed improvements to retain the historic façade or for the removal of non-compliant elements consistent with the guidelines or pursue eligibility under the other façade guidelines. **The program does not allow for maintenance activities or replacement of compliant elements with new in-kind elements as eligible activities on their own. Proposed improvements are intended to have a significant positive visual impact on the building and the district overall.** If grant requests exceed the available funding, the program criteria include preferences for façades that have not received previous funding, for front façades. Attachment 2 provides an overview of the intent and process for the façade grant program.

The program is designed to operate with two application cycles. The first cycle is typically in the summer and if there are remaining funds after awards are granted in the first round, then a second application round occurs in the winter. The summer grant round is intended to provide funding for new projects with one grant per building. The second round is intended to fund new projects and potentially second facades for properties that have already received a grant. There were no applications during the previous summer round. The current applications were solicited in the winter and are considered second round applications.

**GRANT APPLICATIONS RECEIVED:**

The City solicited applications for this round in January 2020 and received requests involving three properties. **The total requested grant funding is \$61,000. With the rollover of unused funds from the prior year for grants that were awarded but not used, there is a total of \$82,000 available for award at this time.** Two projects from

FY18/19 did not proceed with their improvement plans. These two projects are 210 Main Street (The Frame Shop) and 212 Main Street (London Underground). Each was awarded \$16,000 dollars in May of 2019. The 210 Main Street location chose not to move forward with the project after receiving a notice to proceed, while 212 Main Street did not complete the notice to proceed process and has not responded to staff inquiries on their interest to proceed with a project.

The first round of applications contains three grant requests for two properties that have common ownership but are separate buildings and properties. The 330 5<sup>th</sup> Street location last housed an electronics store and was originally a gas station and service station. The 412 Burnett Avenue location most recently housed a pet shop and was originally constructed for automobile repair. The building on the corner, 330 5<sup>th</sup> Street, is eligible for two grants in a second-round application cycle, one for each front façade as it is a corner property.

The second grant application is for the two-story property at 404 and 406 Main Street. The application proposes to remove the closed in windows that appear as shutters on the second story and replace them with new glazing that mimics the pattern of the original sash windows. The applicant intends to develop the properties as a unified structure, although it is designed as two separated tenant spaces.

Project summaries, a location map, and project design illustrations are attached.

<u>Address</u>	<u>Business or Building Name</u>	<u>Amount Requested</u>	<u>Total Project</u>
330 5 <sup>th</sup> Street &	Vacant	\$30,000	
412 Burnett Avenue	Vacant (recently pet shop)	\$15,000	
	Design Fees	\$ 1,000	\$152,830
404 & 406 Main Street	Dahlberg Photography(ground floor)	\$15,000	\$ 37,000
		<b>\$61,000</b>	<b>\$189,830</b>

### **330 5<sup>th</sup> Street (corner building) & 412 Burnett Avenue**

Jerry Nelson owns the buildings at 330 5<sup>th</sup> Street and 412 Burnett Avenue. Both are currently vacant. Ames Sanborn Maps show that the buildings were constructed between 1926 and 1947 as a filling station and auto service business (330 5<sup>th</sup> Street) and an auto repair shop (412 Burnett Avenue). County records show that both structures were built in 1927. These structures were built in a plain style for automobile service and maintenance. Both buildings are considered contributing properties to the Ames Main Street Historic District – National Register of Historic Places. Although they are contributing resources, the building themselves do not fit the traditional commercial design of the storefront façades on Main Street.

The owner intends to renovate the building and is seeking a grant to replace windows, install new windows, place windows in original garage door openings, add canopies, and install additional façade elements. This grant-eligible work will be done in conjunction with other cosmetic changes, painting of the brick, a new cornice, and brick façade maintenance. **The proposed improvements are requested in consideration of the properties as an “Other Façade” as described within the City’s [Downtown Design Guidelines](#), rather than applying the “historic façade” guidelines.** The total estimated cost for 330 5<sup>th</sup> Street and 412 Burnett Avenue is \$152,830. The project would be eligible for the maximum funding of \$46,000, which consists of \$15,000 for work on the three façades and \$1,000 in design fees. The applicant will need to provide cost breakdowns to ensure only eligible activities are funded with the façade grant.

Classifying the proposed project is important in order to apply the appropriate guidelines and determine eligibility for a façade grant. The Other Facade guidelines are described as those buildings that do not fit the historic façade category and are located on the edges of the Downtown. These guidelines focus on having compatible, but contemporary, architectural treatments that are of higher quality than basic zoning standards. Historic façade guidelines are reflective of the historic building character of Downtown with a goal of reinforcing that character by focusing on traditional brick treatments and window and door openings. The two sets of guidelines differ in specific design approaches and expectations within the facade program. The applicant prefers a more contemporary design look compared to that of the historic façade guidelines.

Staff reviewed the project in consideration of the applicant’s interests and that the building is a contributing historic property. The proposal is consistent with the Other Façade guidelines and staff worked with the applicant to support elements that are keeping with historic treatments such as removing noncompliant elements, using existing openings, and retaining the brick façade materials. The contemporary features include painting of the brick, use of the cornice, use of a paneling system at corners, metal canopies, and enlarged original openings. Staff recommends retention of brick façade materials overall for its original historic character, represented as Alternative 1. The applicant desires to add limestone cladding to the building in addition to the other features described above, represented as Alternative 2. Both designs are included as exhibits with this report.

Although more exterior work is proposed on the façade, the work noted in the table below, staff believes, is eligible for the façade grant as they are removing non-compliant items and replacing with compliant items or are installing a compliant element where none now exists. Other proposed features, such as the architectural elements at the building corners that will also obscure brickwork, are in keeping with the “Other Façade” guidelines for modulation. **If the façade grant request is approved, the applicant will need to secure encroachment permits for the canopies and potentially for the proposed modulation and cladding that could extend into the right-of-way prior to approval of a notice to proceed. Canopies are routinely approved as encroachments permits and encouraged in Downtown. Encroachments for building materials or entrances are unusual and may or may not be a significant**

**encroachment. Staff does not have construction level design information to review for an encroachment at this time.**

<b>WORK-Alternative #1 (City Staff's Recommendation)</b>	<b>COST ESTIMATES</b>
New Aluminum Windows (668 sq. ft. x 70)	\$46,830
New Aluminum Entrances (3 x 5000)	\$15,000
Canopies	\$10,000
Selective Demo, Dump Fees & Required Pedestrian Protection	\$12,500
Raised Architectural Elements	\$40,000
Eligible Construction Sub-Total	\$124,330
New Concrete at Patio	\$1,500
Prep & Paint Brick	\$7,000
Construction of Cornices	\$6,000
Construction Sub-Total	\$138,830
Professional Fees	\$14,000
<b>Total Project Cost</b>	<b>\$152,830</b>

**\*Alternative #2 (The applicant's preferred alternative) would include the additional cost of limestone cladding at the applicant's expense estimated at \$10,180.**

**404 & 406 Main Street**

This property is owned by Justin Dahlberg and is presently occupied by Dahlberg Portraits and a branch of Northwestern Mutual. Based on Ames Sanborn Maps, this building was constructed between 1911 and 1920. The applicant has submitted a picture dated 1914, though the Ames Public Library dates the same photograph from 1915. The building originally served as a garage, with an entrance in the center of the building. The structure has a partial second floor that extends back roughly a third of the length of the building. Although the ground floor façade has been altered significantly from its original appearance, the property is a contributor to the Historic District.

**The applicant is proposing to restore the windows on the second story to their original appearance with a 3 over 2 configuration.** The window openings are currently filled with shutters. Other than the shutters, the second story's façade appears intact. The work will also involve general repair to the façade near the windows, including to the windowsills, some of which are deteriorating.

The applicant has stated that the second story space is currently not usable. The applicant intends to illuminate the windows from within using a plain backdrop. The applicant has indicated a desire to restore the second story to usable space in the future, though no timeline was given. Rehabilitation of the windows would be the first step in creating usable second story space. The removal of the noncompliant shutters of a filled in window is an eligible activity for a façade grant.

The total estimated cost for 404 & 406 Main Street is \$37,500. The project would be eligible for the maximum funding of \$15,000. The applicant is not requesting reimbursement of design fees. At the time of reimbursement, the applicant will need to provide cost breakdowns to ensure only eligible activities are funded with the façade grant.

<b>WORK</b>	<b>COST ESTIMATES</b>
Windows (including removal of shutters, the purchase and installation of new windows, repairs to the windowsills, and a manlift)	\$23,270
Associated masonry repair related to windows	\$14,230
<b>Total Project Cost</b>	<b>\$37,500</b>

**ALTERNATIVES:**

1. The City Council can approve Downtown Façade Improvement Grants totaling up to \$61,000 for:
  - a. 330 5<sup>th</sup> Street & 412 Burnett Avenue in the amount of the estimated eligible costs up to \$46,000 for three eligible facades, without the additional limestone cladding, as depicted in Alternative #1. Note that prior to issuing a notice to proceed the applicant would need to secure an encroachment permit.
  - b. 404 & 406 Main Street in the amount of estimated eligible costs up to \$15,000 for window replacement.
  
2. The City Council can approve Downtown Façade Improvement Grants totaling up to \$61,000 for:
  - a. 330 5<sup>th</sup> Street & 412 Burnett Avenue in the amount of the estimated eligible costs up to \$46,000 for three eligible facades, with the limestone cladding (the Applicant's preferred alternative), as depicted in Alternative #2. If Council does choose this option, staff recommends that at least 50% of the façade (excluding windows and doors) must be the existing clay brick, in accordance with the "Other Façade" guidelines for materials. Note that prior to issuing a notice to proceed the applicant would need to secure an encroachment permit.
  - b. 404 & 406 Main Street in the amount of estimated eligible costs up to \$15,000.
  
3. The City Council can determine that some or all of the proposed grant requests are not compliant with Downtown Façade Improvement Grants program goals and objectives or are not visually significant and make different grant awards.
  
4. The City Council can refer this request to staff or the applicants for additional information.

**CITY MANAGER'S RECOMMENDED ACTION:**

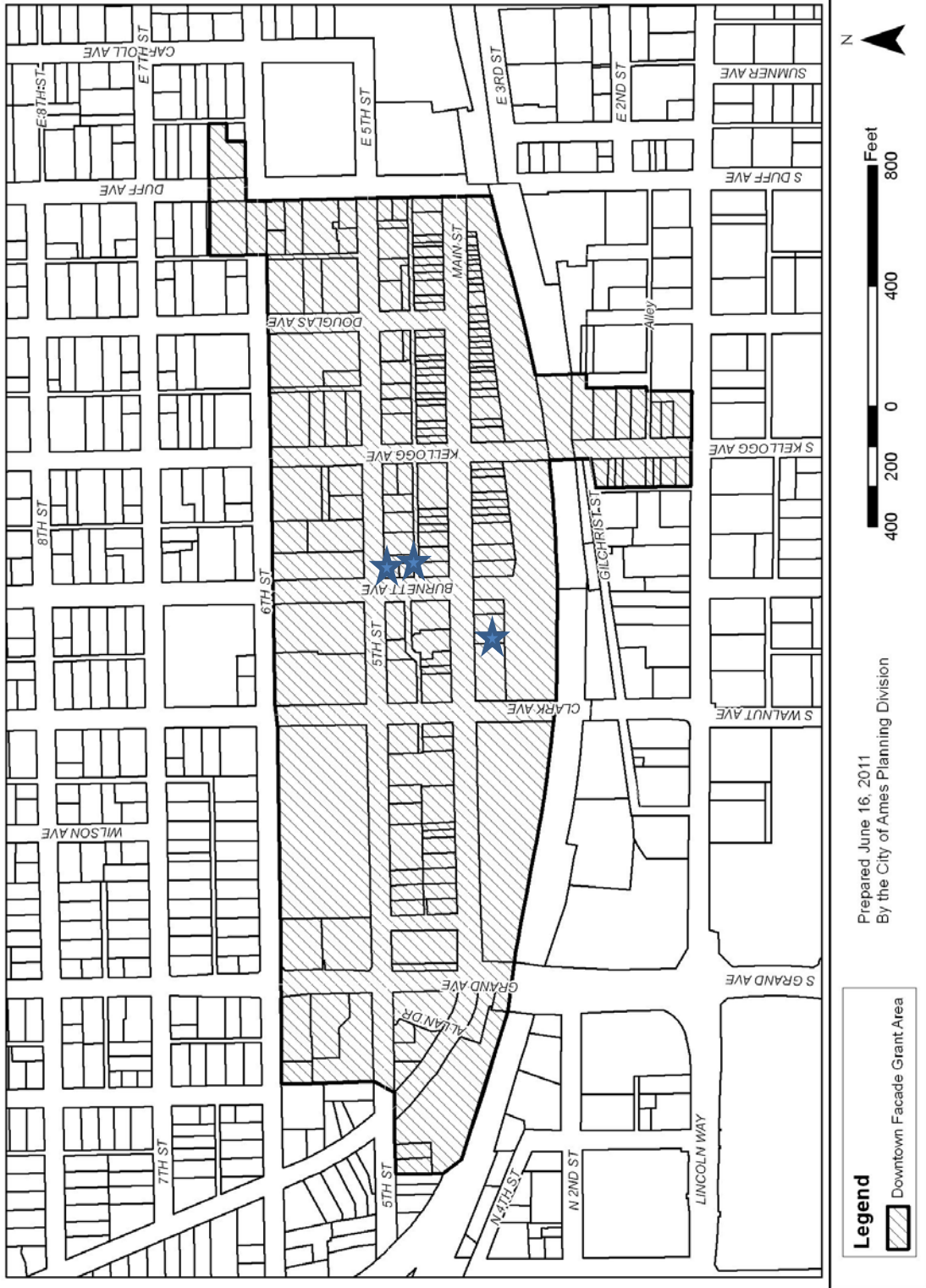
The fiscal year 2019-20 permitted two rounds of grant solicitations: one in the summer and one in winter. There were no applications submitted in the summer of 2019. The current round resulted in two requests involving 3 buildings for a total of four grants in the amount of \$61,000. One of the applications is for a building on Main Street and the other is for buildings located at the corner of Burnett Avenue and 5<sup>th</sup> Street. There is \$82,000 available for these requests.

City staff has determined that the proposed Downtown Façade Improvement projects for the buildings at 330 5<sup>th</sup> Street, 412 Burnett Avenue, and 404 & 406 Main Street all comply with the design requirements of the program. **Staff finds the that retaining the original brick material creates the greatest degree of consistency with the guidelines compared to adding additional cladding.** The Façade Program funding has enough funds to match the requested amounts.

**Therefore, it is the recommendation of the City Manager that the City Council approve Alternative #1, thereby approving Downtown Façade Improvement Grants for the four façade grants as noted above.**

# Attachment 1: Eligibility Map

## 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.



## Attachment 3: Scoring Criteria

For each category, the following criteria shall be used to award points:

### **VISUAL IMPACT**

**Maximum Score 30 Points**

- Improvements apply to more than one story on one facade
- Improvements apply to more than one 25-foot wide bay on one facade
- Improvements will create more visual significance because:
  - key, highly visual elements of the building are being improved
  - the building is prominently visible due to its location (E.g., it serves as a focal point from a street, is at a prominent intersection, or is larger than other buildings around it)

### **FINANCIAL IMPACT**

**Maximum Score 30 Points**

- Matching funds exceed the minimum dollar-for-dollar match
- The project includes improvements being made to
  - ensure public safety,
  - establish or preserve the building's structural integrity
  - resist water and moisture penetration
  - correct other serious safety issues
- The façade project is part of a larger project that improves other exterior or interior parts of the building
- The project helps to make use of space that has been unoccupied or used only for storage

### **EXTENT OF IMPROVEMENTS**

**Maximum Score 20 Points**

The number points granted in this category shall be based upon the number of elements from the Downtown Design Guidelines being improved. More improved elements deserve more points.

HISTORIC FACADES (such as Café Diem):

- Display windows
- Transoms
- Masonry (includes removing cover-up)
- Upper floor windows
- Parapet and cornices
- Awnings and canopies
- Entrance
- Kickplate

OTHER FACADES: (such as Wheatsfield)

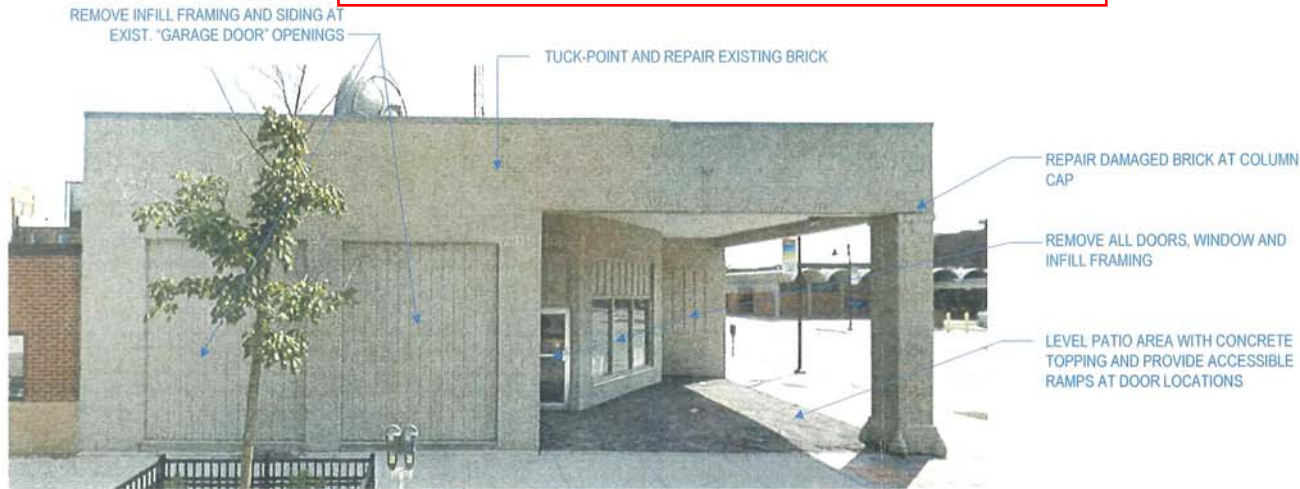
- Quality materials
- Façade modulation
- Fenestration
- Roof
- Awnings
- Building entrances

### **HISTORIC DESIGN**

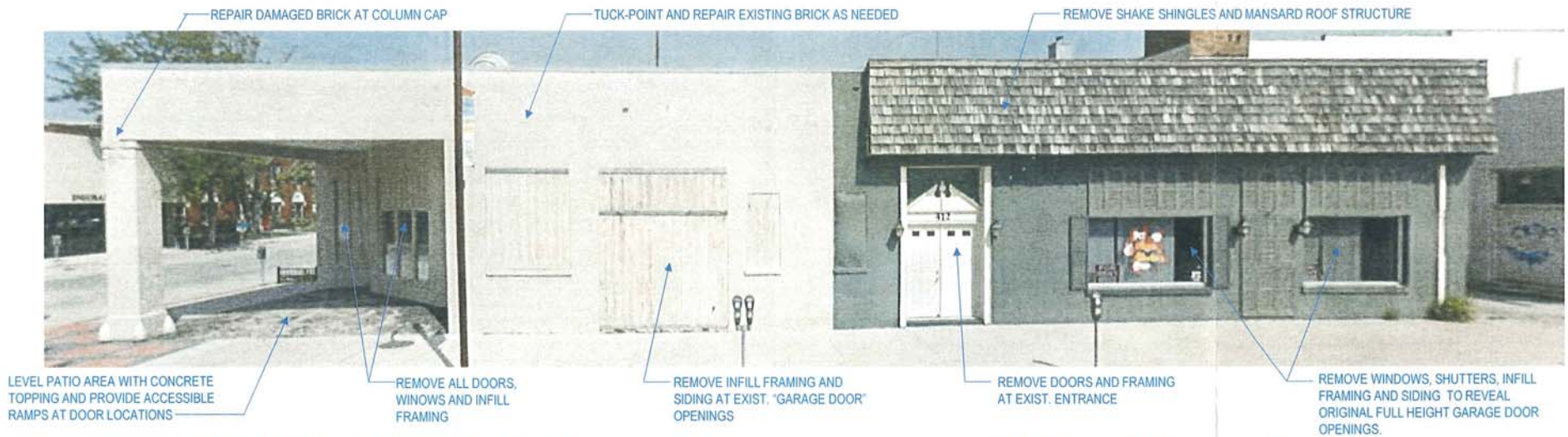
**Maximum Score 20 Points**

- Project includes historically appropriate materials and restoration techniques
- Project goes beyond basic rehabilitation and re-establishes a more historically accurate appearance than other projects

Existing Conditions



**330 5<sup>th</sup> Street Façade No. 1**



**330 5<sup>th</sup> Street Façade No. 2**

**412 Burnett Avenue Façade**

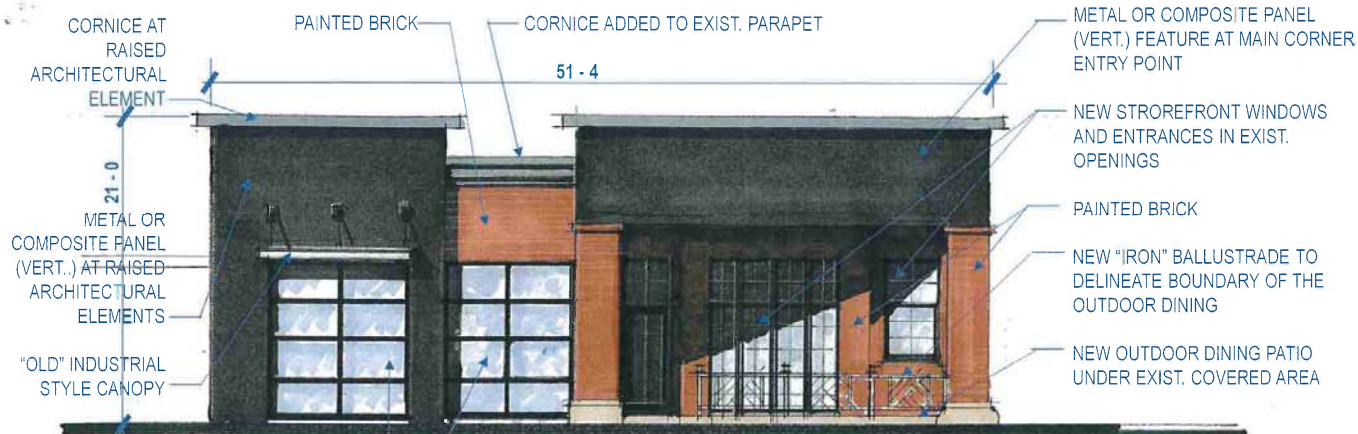
Prepared 19 Feb 2020

330 5<sup>TH</sup> ST. & 412 BURNETT AVE. - AMES, IOWA

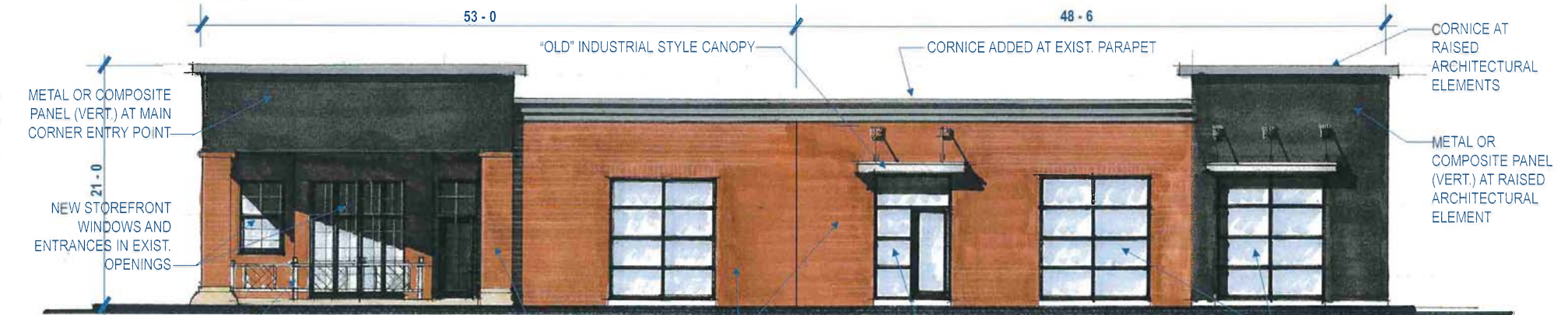
City of Ames - Downtown Façade Grant Application



**Alternative 1**



**330 5<sup>TH</sup> Street Bldg. (Façade No. 1)**



**330 5<sup>TH</sup> Street Bldg. (Façade No. 2)**

**412 Burnett St. (Façade No. 3)**

330 5<sup>TH</sup> ST. & 412 BURNETT AVE. - AMES, IOWA - REVISED ELEVATION DRAWING

**AMENDMENT TO FAÇADE GRANT APPLICATION DATED 2/20/2020**



Alternative 2-

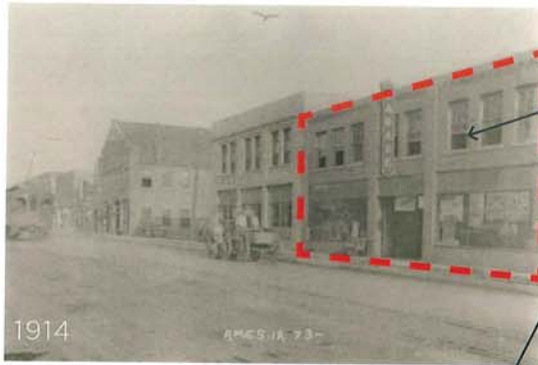


# 404-406 MAIN STREET FACADE STUDY

RECEIVED

FEB 21 2020

CITY OF AMES IA  
DEPT. OF PLANNING AND HOUSING



## ORIGINAL FACADE

Historic photographs illustrate the original storefront with three-over-two windows in the upper level.



## EXISTING FACADE

Remove existing infill, framing, and deteriorating shutters in the original window openings. Replace with windows emulating the original window design.

Restore concrete masonry window sill to ensure the new window's longevity, provide additional public safety, and eliminate water intrusion.



WINDOW OPENING  
4'4" W x 6'3" T Typ.



PROPOSED FACADE (DAYTIME)

New windows are designed with three-over-two mutons to match historic windows.



The restoration of the upper level of 404-406 Main Street would add richness to a large, 60 foot-wide, building on the 400 block of Historic Main Street. Beginning in the summer of 2019, new owners chose to invest in 404-406 with a refresh and remodel of the building and its finishes. The renovation of this building adds excitement and a classic, yet current, feeling to the 400 block of Main Street. This would be the first step toward reintroducing occupiable space in the front, upper level of the building. Interior lighting will be added after the window restoration project is complete to create ambiance for the building and Main Street during evening hours.