

**COUNCIL ACTION FORM**

**SUBJECT:**           **AWARD OF DOWNTOWN FAÇADE 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. 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. 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 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 façades for properties that have already received a grant.

There was one application approved in the first round during the fall of FY 2020/21. The current applications under review were solicited in late spring and are considered second round applications for FY 2020/21. Solicitation for applications with FY 2021/22 money will occur in the fall of 2021.

**GRANT APPLICATIONS RECEIVED:**

The City solicited applications for this round in June 2021 and received four eligible grant requests for four properties. Project summaries, a location map, and project design illustrations are attached. **The total requested grant funding is \$62,000. Available funding for this second round of FY 2020/21 is \$53,001.**

<b><u>Address</u></b>	<b><u>Business or Building Name</u></b>	<b><u>Amount Requested</u></b>	<b><u>Total Project</u></b>
108 Main Street	Vacant (Formerly Cyclone Barber)	\$15,000	\$ 33,469
209 & 211 Main Street	209: Heroic Hair	\$15,000	
	211: Heroic Ink	\$15,000	
	Design Fees	\$ 1,000	\$ 110,500
301 Main Street	Sheldon-Munn (Kellogg Avenue)	\$15,000	
	Design Fees	\$ 1,000	\$ 51,000
		<b>\$62,000</b>	<b>\$194,969</b>

**108 Main Street**

This is a grant request for a single-story façade at 108 Main Street, which most recently housed Cyclone Barber. This building is the easternmost in a series of seven shallow buildings at the east end of Main Street. Several of these buildings have already been awarded façade grants (110, 116, and 122). The applicant is proposing to continue with the unified design proposed for 122, completed in 2013. The façades for 110 and 116 were completed to the same design in 2020.

The subject property, 108 Main Street, is the end of a series of buildings, numbered 108-122, which were constructed around 1908 in a unified design that repeated identical storefronts across each commercial space. The railyard for the Chicago & North Western Railroad originally came up to the rear of the buildings on the south side of Main Street, creating the shallow depth (108 is an average of 30 feet deep; 122 is an average of 42 feet deep). The buildings are each 16 feet wide (110 is two storefronts wide).

LCM Properties, LLC owns the buildings at 108 Main Street, along with 110, 116, and 122 Main Street. The façades on those buildings have already been awarded grants; that work has all been completed. **In 2013, when the grant for 122 Main Street was considered, a unified façade design for these buildings was proposed. The current request intends to continue that design. The façade will maintain the entrance in the same location and will have display windows in the same location, though larger in height than what exists. The applicant has stated that the entrance to 108 will remain recessed, which staff supports.** (Attachment 4)

The series of buildings is included within the bounds of the National Register Ames Main Street Historic District. The buildings are contributing to the district.

The total estimated cost for 108 Main Street is \$33,469.60. It is eligible for the maximum grant of \$15,000. The design work has already been completed and is no longer eligible. At the time of reimbursement, the applicant will need to provide cost breakdowns to ensure only eligible activities are funded with the façade grant. Staff notes that project must conform to building code recessed entry and accessibility requirements as has been required for the previous façade grant approvals.

WORK	COST ESTIMATES
Removal of existing façade	\$33,469
Construction of new façade with brick, glass, stucco, etc.	
Associated work	
Total Project Cost	\$33,469

### **209 & 211 Main Street**

This application is for the two-story buildings at 209 and 211 Main Street. The applicant proposes to create a new unified façade on the ground level with a single entrance including a vestibule at the property line (the second story of the historic façade remains unaltered). The vestibule would lead into each existing storefront. The storefronts currently contain a hair and nail salon (Heroic Hair at 209) and a tattoo parlor (Heroic Ink at 211). The applicant also proposes to restore the window openings on the second story of 211. **This project is eligible for two grants as there are two separate buildings, although they will share a common entrance.**

These two properties are owned by Beaver Team 5 Holdings LLC-CTR and are presently occupied by a hair and nail salon (Heroic Hair at 209) and a tattoo parlor (Heroic Ink at 211). The buildings were constructed separately: 211 was built in 1888 and records are unclear as to when 209 was constructed. At some point during the period of significance for Main Street (1920-1950), the façades of the two buildings were combined and unified. Historic photographs indicate that the two buildings operated separately after the new façade. By 1971, the ground-level façade had been combined into one storefront. Later, the storefronts were separated and housed a check-cashing business and a boutique. Both buildings are contributing structures to the National Register Ames Main Street Historic District.

The applicant is proposing a new, unified façade at the ground level. The proposed façade will mirror the rhythm and spacing of the second story windows. The ground-level storefront windows will be below the second story windows and the new entrance will be placed between the windows (Attachment 5). The second story of 211 has had its windows reduced in size. The applicant proposes to restore the windows to their original size. All second story windows will be replaced to match one another in size and style.

The total estimated cost for 209 & 211 Main Street is \$110,500, including design work. Of that amount, \$83,000 is estimated to be grant-eligible work (including design). **Since the project contains two buildings, it is eligible for a maximum funding of \$30,000 (\$15,000 per façade) plus \$1,000 for design work.** 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>ELIGIBLE COST ESTIMATES</b>	<b>TOTAL COST ESTIMATES</b>
<i>209</i>		
Ground-Level Storefront	\$30,250	
	\$30,250	\$46,250
<i>211</i>		
Second-Story Windows	\$9,000	
Ground-Level Storefront	\$41,750	
	\$50,750	\$62,250
Design Work	\$2,000	\$2,000
<b>Total Project Cost</b>	<b>\$83,000</b>	<b>\$110,500</b>

### **301 Main Street**

This application is for a replacement canopy and sign for the Sheldon-Munn apartment building at 301 Main Street. The new canopy would replace the existing one on the Kellogg Avenue façade with a historically appropriate design emulating the art deco canopy found in photographs from the period of significance for the Historic District. A new sign would be added to the canopy as well.

Note that canopies can be an eligible item for a grant, but signage and lettering is viewed as a temporary improvement and not eligible for a grant. Staff has discussed with the applicant that only the canopy structure itself is potentially eligible for grant funding. As noted in the introduction to the report, in kind replacement items are not typically an eligible item on their own. This project is a replacement canopy as the storefront work was previously completed with grants awarded in 2015.

This property is owned by 301 Main LLC. Built originally as the Sheldon-Munn Hotel in 1917, an addition was constructed on the west side in 1926. The hotel was later converted to apartments. The building was awarded multiple façade grants in 2015 to restore the ground-floor retail spaces.

The intent of the canopy project is to mimic the art deco style seen in historic photographs (Attachment 6). This art deco canopy, and another on Main Street, replaced the original more formal canopies in the late 1920s or 1930s. The City’s design guidelines for canopies require canopies to be metal compared to awnings that are fabric. The applicant has not indicated detailed materials to ensure this design intent will be met as depicted and conform to guideline definitions. **To approve this grant, Council would need to determine if it is consistent the Design Guideline for “restoring documented canopy treatments.”**

The storefront north of the entrance to the apartment lobby was recently converted to a cocktail lounge called Noir. Prior to the façade grants in 2015, this space was occupied by Firehouse Books. The proposed canopy intends to incorporate a sign for Noir. The owners of the Sheldon-Munn and Noir anticipate expanding to the basement, which can be accessed from the current apartment entrance on Kellogg Avenue.

The Sheldon-Munn is within the bounds of the National Register Ames Main Street Historic District and is a contributing structure. The total estimated cost for 301 Main Street is \$51,000. This cost includes the sign that is not an eligible cost. The project would be eligible for the maximum funding of \$15,000 plus \$1,000 in design work. At the time of reimbursement, the applicant will need to provide cost breakdowns to ensure only eligible activities are funded with the façade grant, which is a maximum of 50% of eligible costs.

<b>WORK</b>	<b>COST ESTIMATES</b>
Historically Inspired Canopy	\$50,000
Design Work	\$1,000
Total Project Cost	\$51,000

**ALTERNATIVES:**

1. Approve Downtown Façade Improvement Grants totaling up to \$53,001 for:
  - a. 108 Main Street in the amount of estimated eligible costs up to \$15,000 for a façade to match the existing façades already approved for the series of buildings.
  - b. 209 & 211 Main Street in the amount of estimated eligible costs up to \$31,000 for window replacement and a new, unified façade on the ground level.
  - c. 301 Main Street in the amount of estimated eligible costs up to \$7,001 for a replacement canopy on Kellogg Avenue, subject to staff review and approval of materials for a metal canopy meeting the design guidelines and historic intent.
  
2. Approve Downtown Façade Improvement Grants totaling up to \$46,000 for:
  - a. 108 Main Street in the amount of estimated eligible costs up to \$15,000 for a façade to match the existing façades already approved for the series of buildings.
  - b. 209 & 211 Main Street in the amount of estimated eligible costs up to \$31,000 for window replacement and a new, unified façade on the ground level.
  
3. Approve grant awards in some other combination of amounts.
  
4. Do not approve façade grant awards.

**CITY MANAGER'S RECOMMENDED ACTION:**

The fiscal year 2020-21 permitted two rounds of grant solicitations: one in the fall and one in spring. One application was submitted in fall 2020. The current round resulted in four requests involving four buildings for a total of four grants in the amount of \$62,000. All the buildings front on Main Street, though one grant is proposed for use on Kellogg Avenue.

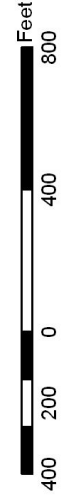
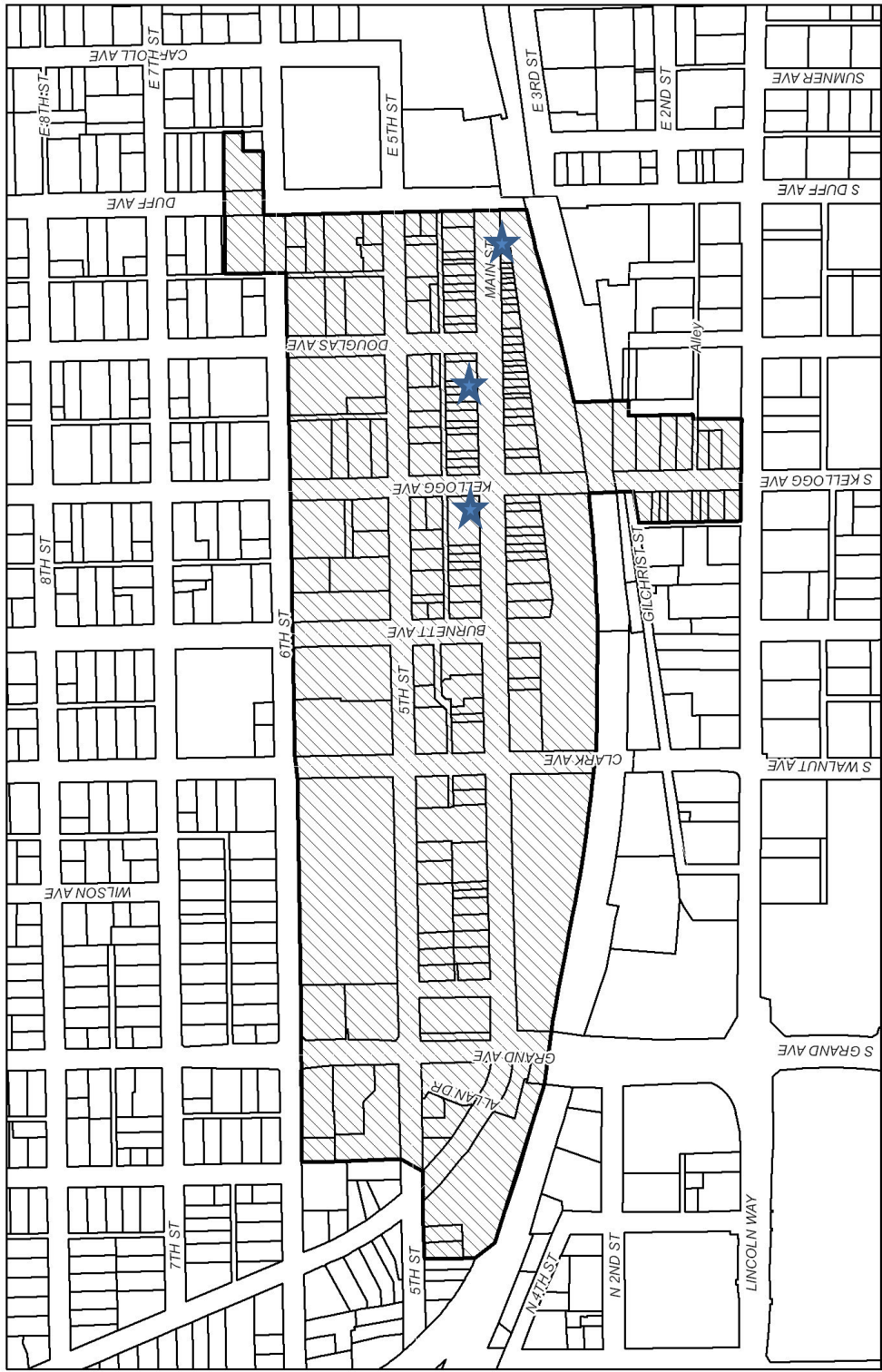
The total requested funding exceeds available funding. Staff finds the two Main Street façade projects to be compliant with the design guidelines, visually significant, and priorities due to their Main Street locations. These projects are of the highest priority and warrant full funding as requested.

The third project for the replacement canopy has minimal visual significance as a canopy because of the existing canopy it replaces. However, the proposed sign is clearly more striking, but not an eligible project. Replacement-in-kind of a feature is not on its own a typical eligible activity. However, as a second round of applications for a second request related to a previously approved façade grant, City Council could award the remaining funds (\$7,001) if the Council finds the project consistent with the Design Guidelines of restoring documented canopy treatments and that the canopy replacement is visually significant.

**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



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 façades 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:

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

#### 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 façades on Main Street and façades 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 façade
- Improvements apply to more than one 25-foot wide bay on one façade
- 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 FAÇADES (such as Café Diem):

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

#### OTHER FAÇADES (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

**Attachment 4: 108 Main Street**



Historic Photograph of Subject Property (108 Main Street is the storefront on the left)

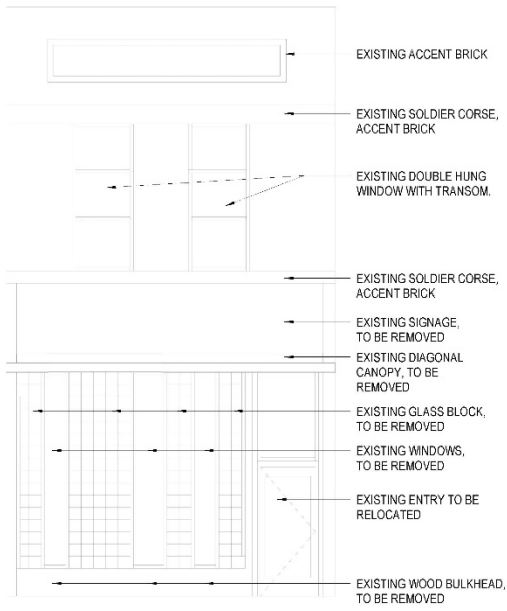


Proposed Final Façade (108 Main Street is the storeront on the left)

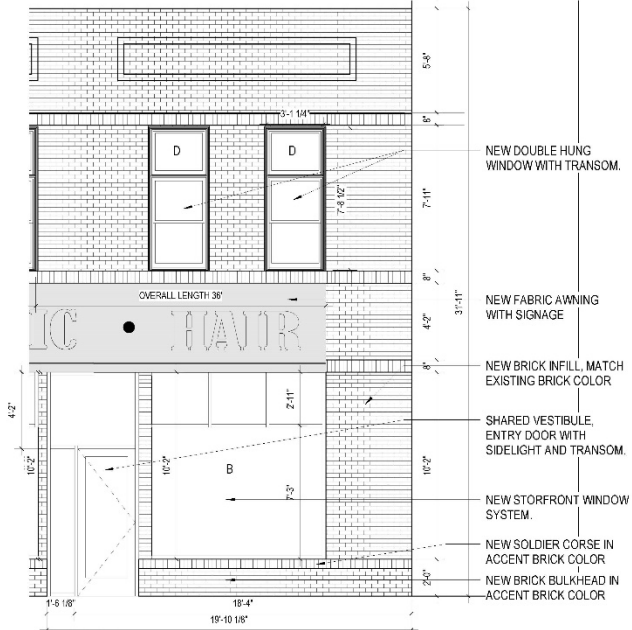
**Attachment 5: 209 & 211 Main Street**







209 MAIN ST.  
**1** EXISTING ELEVATION  
 SCALE: 1/4" = 1'-0"



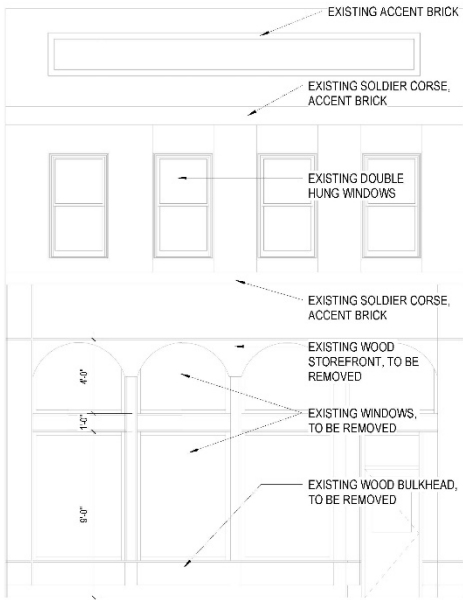
209 MAIN ST.  
**2** PROPOSED ELEVATION  
 SCALE: 1/4" = 1'-0"



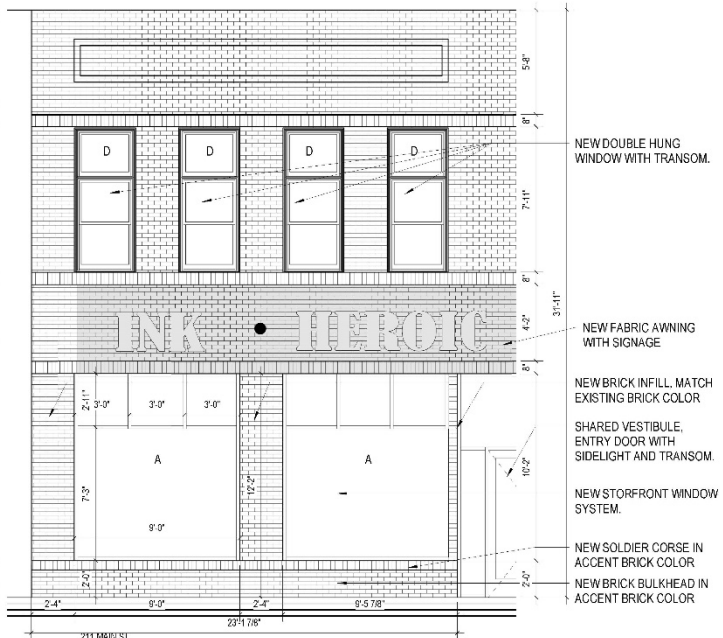
FACADE IMPROVEMENTS

HEROIC HAIR  
 SCHEMATIC DESIGN  
 JUNE 2, 2021

Façades for 209 (above) & 211 (below) Main Street



211 MAIN ST.  
**1** EXISTING ELEVATION.  
 SCALE: 1/4" = 1'-0"

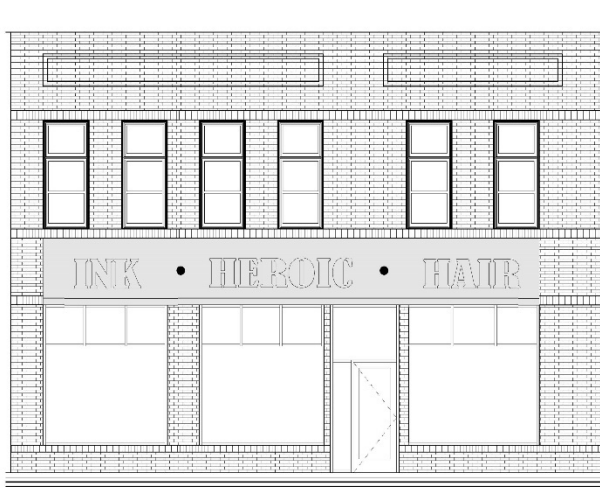


211 MAIN ST.  
**2** PROPOSED ELEVATION  
 SCALE: 1/4" = 1'-0"



FACADE IMPROVEMENTS

HEROIC INK  
 SCHEMATIC DESIGN  
 JUNE 2, 2021



① 209 & 211 MAIN ST.  
 PROPOSED COMBINED ELEVATION  
 SCALE: 3/16" = 1'-0"



② 209 & 211 MAIN ST.  
 PROPOSED 3D PERSPECTIVE  
 SCALE:



MICHAEL S. GRUBB  
 131 MAIN STREET  
 ANDOVER, MASSACHUSETTS  
 978-233-4541

FACADE IMPROVEMENTS

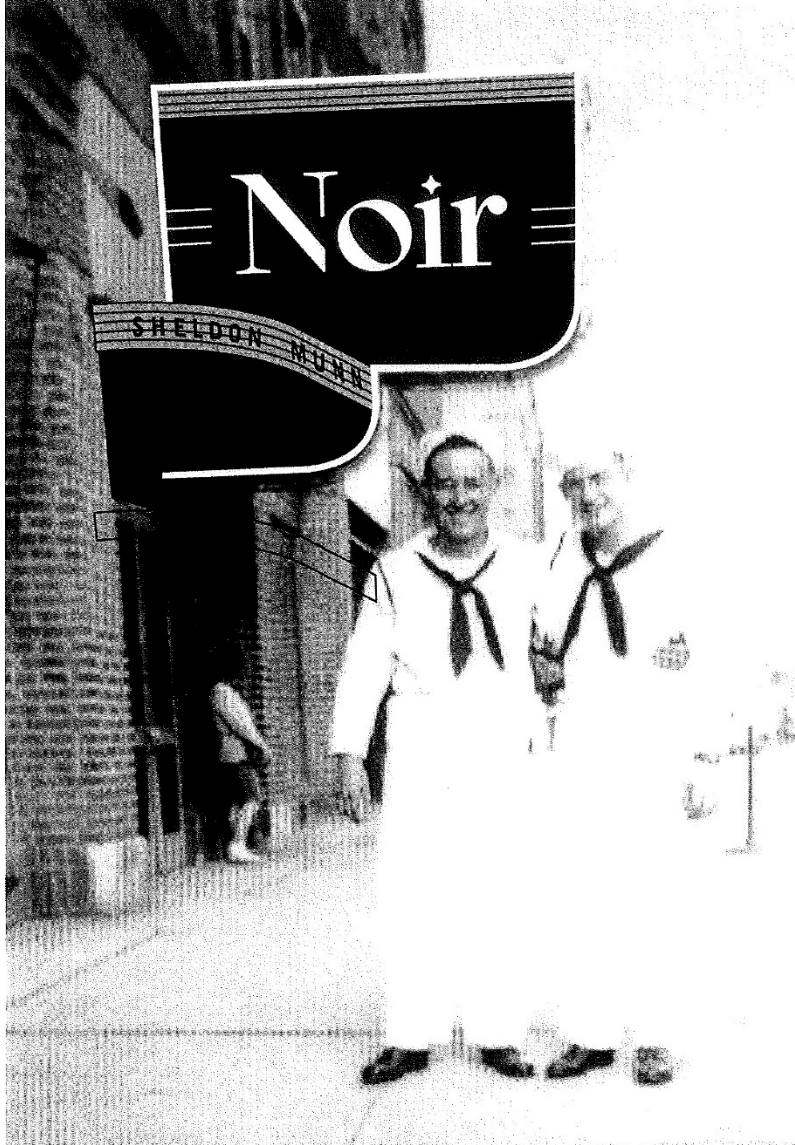
HEROIC INK & HAIR  
 SCHEMATIC DESIGN  
 JUNE 2, 2021

Proposed Final Façade

**Attachment 6: 301 Main Street**



Historic Photograph of Sign on Main Street Side



Sign as Proposed for Kellogg Avenue