

**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, 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 overall district. If grant requests exceed the available funding, the program criteria for front façades includes preference for façades that have not received funding in previous rounds. Attachment 2 provides an overview of the intent and process for the façade grant program, and Attachment 3 outlines the scoring criteria.

The program is designed to operate with two application cycles. The first cycle is typically in the summer and if there are funds remaining 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.

**GRANT APPLICATION RECEIVED:**

The City solicited applications for this the first round of FY 2021/22 funding in September 2021. One eligible grant request was received for one property. A project summary, location map, and project design illustrations are attached. **All funding from prior years was committed to projects in FY 2020/21, therefore the available funding for this first round of FY 2021/22 is \$50,000. The total requested grant funding is \$16,000.**

<u>Address</u>	<u>Business or Building Name</u>	<u>Amount Requested</u>	<u>Total Project</u>
317 Main Street	PhotoSynthesis	\$16,000	\$52,500
		<b>\$16,000</b>	<b>\$52,500</b>

### 317 Main Street

This application is for a two-story building at 317 Main Street. The applicant proposes work mostly at the ground level. The most significant visual impact will be to remove the non-compliant vertical plywood covering the transom window openings and restore the windows with new, replacement glass and restoration of the remaining original, lead-glass window above the door to the stairway (east end). Most of the original, leaded-glass transoms were removed when the plywood was installed. Other improvements (not all of which are eligible for matching funding) include restoring the canopy, replacing the existing doors with ones more historically appropriate, replacing the plywood kickplates with brick, replacing the display windows, tuckpointing of the brick, and new signage (Attachment 4).

The interior of the storefront has a drop ceiling that prevents light from coming in through the transom windows, as intended. The applicant is therefore proposing to install frosted glass to mask the drop ceiling.

The property is owned by Dijon21 Properties LLC (Lisa Hovis). Ms. Hovis owns and operates PhotoSynthesis. The second floor is residential. The building was constructed in 1921 and likely has its original façade (notwithstanding the plywood addition). The modifications to the façade were likely made in the 1970s or 1980s. The building is a contributing structure to the National Register Ames Main Street Historic District.

The total estimated cost for 317 Main Street is \$52,500, including design work. Of that amount, \$33,150 is estimated to be grant-eligible work (including design). **The project is eligible for a maximum funding of \$15,000 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>
Uncover & Restore Lead Glass	\$ 1,600	\$ 1,600
Uncover & Install New Transom Windows	7,000	9,000
Tuckpoint Brick	2,000	10,000
Canopy Restoration	700	1,900
Install Historically Appropriate Doors	14,000	14,000
Other Work	6,850	15,000
Design Work	\$ 1,000	\$ 1,000
<b>Total Project Cost</b>	<b>\$ 33,150</b>	<b>\$ 52,500</b>

**ALTERNATIVES:**

1. Approve a Downtown Façade Improvement Grant for 317 Main Street for up to \$16,000 of the \$33,150 in estimated eligible costs for removal of noncompliant elements, transom restoration, and other façade improvements.
2. Approve a grant award for a lesser amount.
3. Do not approve a façade grant award.

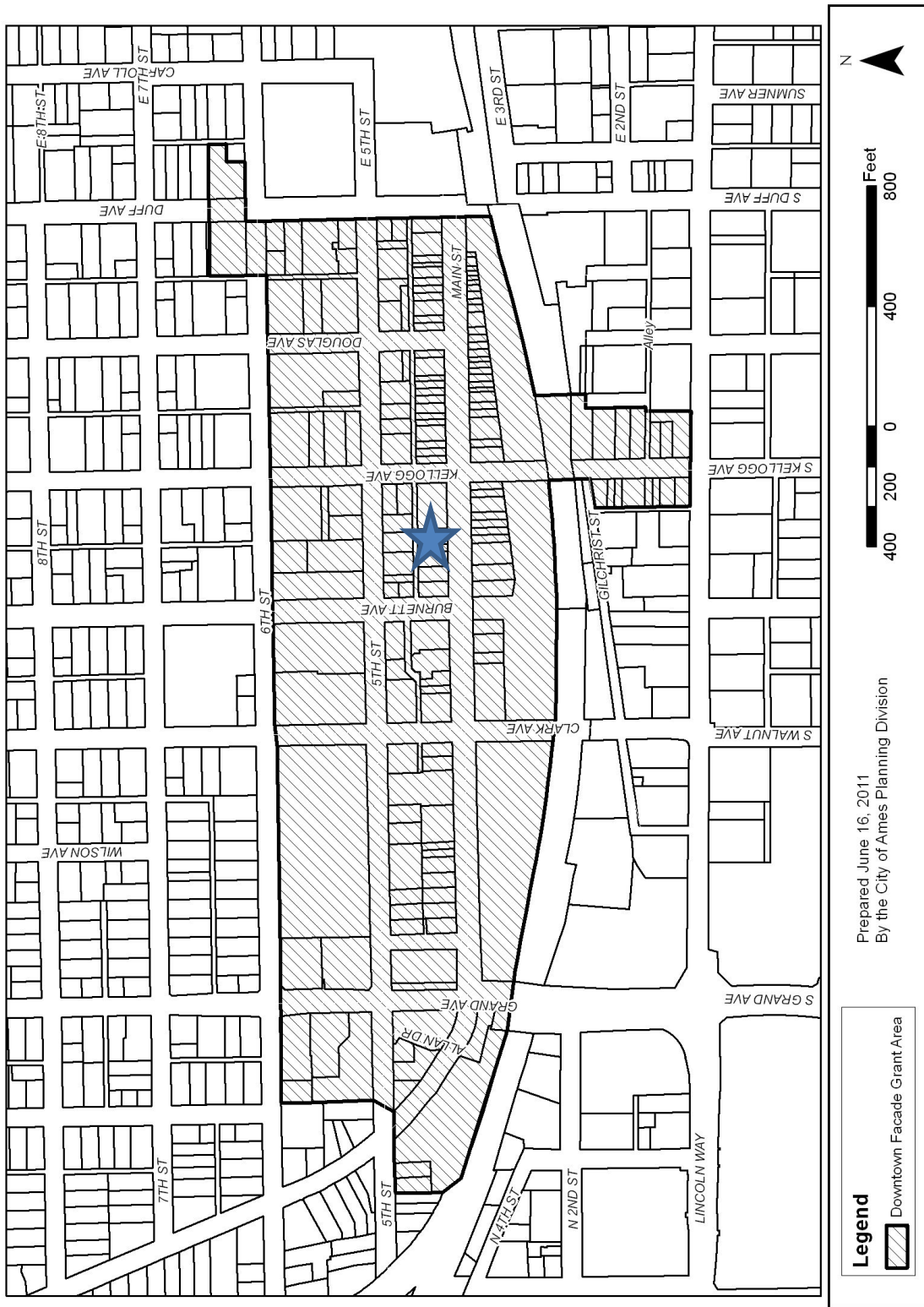
**CITY MANAGER'S RECOMMENDED ACTION:**

This round of grant application solicitation resulted in one request involving one building in the amount of \$16,000. The building is located at 317 Main Street. City staff has determined that the proposed Downtown Façade Improvement project for the building at 317 Main Street complies with the design requirements of the program.

**Therefore, it is the recommendation of the City Manager that the City Council approve Alternative #1, as described above.**

# Downtown Facade Grant Area

## Attachment 1: Eligibility Map



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

## 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

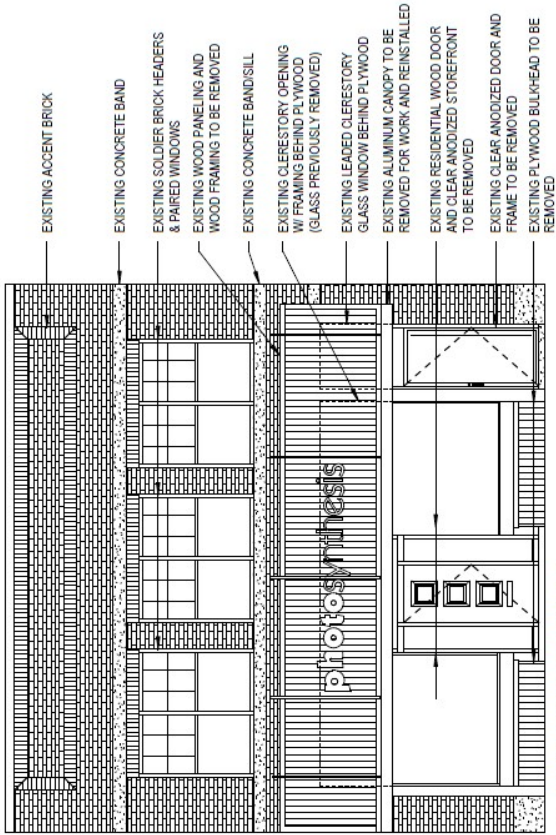
### **HISTORIC DESIGN**

**Maximum Score 20 Points**

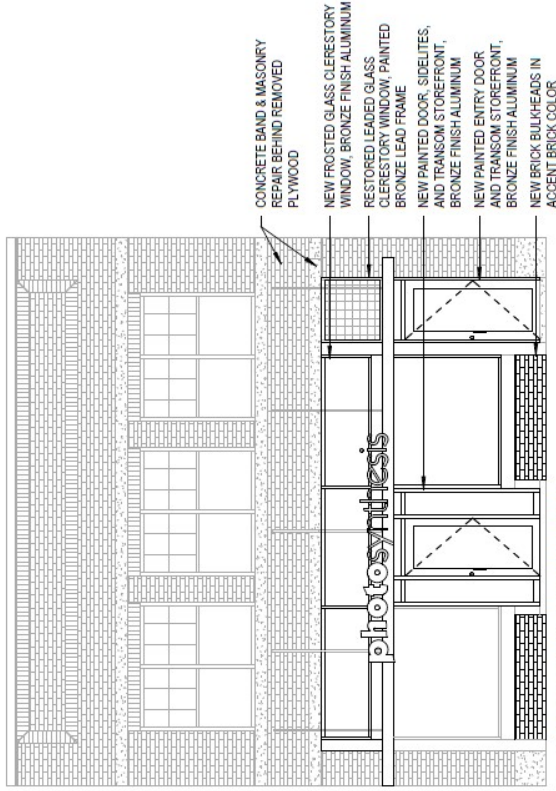
- Project includes historically appropriate materials and restoration techniques
- Project goes beyond basic rehabilitation and re-establishes a more historically accurate appearance than other projects

**Attachment 4: 317 Main Street**

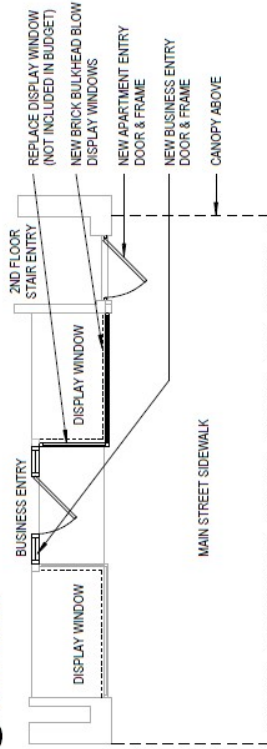




1 EXISTING ELEVATION  
SCALE: 3/16" = 1'-0"



2 PROPOSED ELEVATION  
SCALE: 3/16" = 1'-0"



3 PROPOSED PLAN  
SCALE: 3/16" = 1'-0"

Existing & Proposed Façade for 317 Main Street