

**TO:** The Honorable Mayor and City Council Members

**FROM:** Michael C. Van Milligen, City Manager

**SUBJECT:** Approval of an Ordinance to Remove the Area Bounded by 7th Street, 8th Street, Bluff Street, and Locust Street from the Conservation District

**DATE:** November 17, 2022

Planning Services Manager Wally Wernimont has provided a thorough review of the request by Cottingham & Butler to deconstruct the building at 781 Locust Street to build a childcare facility to service Cottingham & Butler employees and possibly other Dubuque employers with a potential capacity of 182 children. This request was denied by the City of Dubuque Historic Preservation Commission.

Childcare is a need in our community and has been identified in City Council Goals & Priorities, the Equitable Poverty Prevention Plan, Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing, Imagine Dubuque Comprehensive Plan and the Downtown Dubuque Master Plan. Cottingham & Butler has received a \$3 million state grant to support their efforts to create additional childcare slots in downtown Dubuque.

The historical significance of 781 Locust Street is questionable, the existing building is not conducive to a modern child care facility, and this location is in close proximity to the three buildings that house hundreds of Cottingham & Butler employees.

The City of Dubuque conducts in-depth Architectural/Historic Survey/Evaluations to help identify properties that are architecturally and/or historically significant. In 2003, historic preservation consultant Jim Jacobsen of History Pays! was contracted to conduct an in-depth Architectural/Historic Survey/Evaluation of the commercial and industrial downtown area. The report traces the physical development of the commercial downtown over its history and identifies the influences which drove development. The subject city block is located in this survey area. The survey identified that three (3) of the buildings in this block are not Architecturally or Historically Significant and was undetermined on the building at 781 Locust Street.

Address	Building	Survey DOE
701 Locust Street	Dubuque Museum of Art	No
781 Locust Street	Knights of Columbus	?
338 W. 8 <sup>th</sup> Street	Former A T & T	No
346 W. 8 <sup>th</sup> Street	Former Radio Dubuque	No

The structure is most clearly evaluated in the 2006 ISIF form #31-02006 by consultant Jim Jacobsen. The form outlines the history, condition, and integrity of the building in detail, but not to the degree where a formal determination of eligibility is made. The consultant marks all four criteria as “More Research Recommended.”

Because that information is not fully researched, the consultant therefore is not able to make a determination of eligibility and marks the structure as “Non-Eligible.” The consultant says, *“The problem however, is that of integrity. The façade has suffered the complete removal and replacement of its front basement windows, the replacement of the original ground floor window sets, and the infilling of a majority of the second floor façade windows. All of the side and rear wall windows have also been infilled with brick but it is the façade alterations which are the most troubling.” “The building would certainly contribute to a district had there been a district to contribute to, but this consultant has to shy away from finding individual eligibility given the extensive façade alterations.”*

*“The integrity matter renders perhaps mute the possibility for additional research on this building.”*

You will see in the material from Wally the State of Iowa Historic Preservation Office has a differing opinion about the building at 781 Locust Street.

At the same time Cottingham & Butler is wanting to deconstruct the building the Dubuque Museum of Art has recently completed their 2022-2026 strategic plan which calls for them to, “build the new community spaces that host, welcome, and connect the community at a dramatic new scale.” In fact, in 2016 they purchased two buildings on 8<sup>th</sup> Street to allow for future facility expansion. The Dubuque Museum of Art is Iowa’s oldest cultural institution established in 1874, and it is located in the Dubuque Cultural Corridor as designated by the State of Iowa.

The Dubuque Museum of Art currently owns the other three buildings on the block bounded by 7<sup>th</sup> street, 8<sup>th</sup> street, Bluff Street, and Locust Street. The Art Museum plans include an intent to make this area a Dubuque Museum of Art Campus.

Cottingham & Butler is a tremendous corporate citizen and major supporter of historic preservation as they have done three massive historic preservation projects in downtown Dubuque at the Security Building (800 Main Street), the Town Clock Building (823-25 Main Street) and the Roshek Building (700 Locust Street).

I respectfully recommend that the Mayor and City Council support these two significant investments that will support workforce development, support businesses investing in downtown Dubuque and lead to major investments in the Dubuque Cultural Corridor by the Dubuque Museum of Art and Cottingham & Butler by approving the ordinance removing from the Conservation District the block bounded by 7<sup>th</sup> Street, 8<sup>th</sup> Street, Bluff Street, and Locust Street.

  
Michael C. Van Milligen

MCVM:sv

Attachment

cc: Crenna Brumwell, City Attorney  
Cori Burbach, Assistant City Manager  
Wally Wernimont, Planning Services Manager