



Department of Planning, Housing, & Community Development

Mayor, Richard C. David

Acting Director, Jennifer M. Taylor

Date: 18 February 2014
To: Commission on Architecture & Urban Design Members
Subject: **172-178 State Street – Rehab**
Tax ID: 160.33-2-13; 160.33-2-14
Case: CAUD 2014-02
Copies: T. Costello; G. Gorton; file

A. Review Requested

On 24 January 2014, George Gorton, the property owner, submitted an application for design review for the properties located at 172-178 State Street. The property is located within the State and Henry Street Local and National Register Historic District; all exterior modification must be reviewed and approved by the Commission on Architecture and Urban Design (CAUD).

B. Proposal

The Applicant has proposed to convert the four-story structure at 178 State Street to a fraternity/sorority rooming house. As part of the project, the Applicant proposes a number of exterior modifications, including: a new storefront with new windows and doors; new windows in existing openings on the east and west façades and new window openings on the southern façade; and repairs/in-fill of existing brick work on the one-story section (172-176 State Street). The project also includes the construction of a four-story, enclosed stair tower connecting the roof of 172-176 State Street to the upper floors of 178 State Street. The enclosure is proposed for the northeast corner of 172-176 State Street, connecting with the south façade of 178 State Street.

C. Property History and Condition

172-176 State Street

Year of Construction

Between 1899-1910

Land Use

Automotive (original); Industrial (recent)

Significance

The building is a single-story brick and concrete industrial building, with a steeped cornice. The building is representative of late-19th and early-20th century industrial garage construction. It is notable as being the home of the Binghamton Motor Car Company for many years. More recently, it has been used for electroplating.

178 State Street

Year of Construction

Between 1885-1891

Land Use

Office/warehouse (original); Industrial (recent)

Significance

The building is a four-story commercial row building. The building has a mix of window opening styles, including flat topped (2nd story), narrow arched (3rd story), and rounded (4th story). The storefront has been completed boarded up.

D. Staff Findings

There are very few concerns with the majority of the proposed rehab. The proposed windows will match the existing openings, and the proposed new openings are on a side façade, which is considered acceptable under the Binghamton Historic Design Guidelines and the Secretary of the Interior Standards.

The proposed storefront is simple, but includes the installation of transom windows, which is historically appropriate. The storefronts on this section of State Street were usually relatively plain and simple. The storefront does not include an bulkheads below the windows. It would have been common to have bulkheads below storefront windows; however, there are examples on the street of buildings without bulkheads. The Commission should consider this element in their review of the case.

The primary area of concern is the proposed tower addition to 172-176 State Street, which would connect to upper floors of 178 State Street. Because of the proposed residential use for 178 State Street, the Applicant is required to provide a second means of egress. It has been determined that there is not sufficient room between the rear of the building and the property line to place any means of egress to the rear. The Applicant's designer has stated that it would not be feasible to install stairs on the interior of the building; no documentation of this has been provided to date. The proposed tower would be constructed of cement block, with a brick facing on the exterior.

E. Photographs



172-176 State Street



178 State Street



Rear of 178 State Street



Rear of 172-176 State Street