

Lawrence Preservation Alliance

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November 19, 2007

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*EMERITUS*MARCI FRANCISCO
*EMERITUS***City Commissioners:**

We appreciate your careful deliberation of the Oread Inn proposal. We wish to summarize what we feel are the relevant points expressed at the public hearing on this matter on November 13.

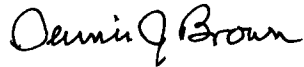
- The Lawrence Historic Resources Commission, which you have entrusted to evaluate proposals for the state that affect registered properties or their immediate environs, has ruled by a 7-0 vote that the Oread Inn project as designed will damage and encroach upon the Hancock Historic District.
- The Lawrence Preservation Alliance, having studied the proposal, sought advice from architects, preservation professionals and planning professionals and followed the process through two HRC meetings and the Planning Commission meeting, has determined by a 10-0-1 vote that the HRC has made the correct decision. The executive director of the Kansas Preservation Alliance has also written a letter expressing strong concern with this proposal.
- The Historic Resources Administrator of the City of Lawrence has concluded that there are feasible and prudent alternatives to the proposed project and that all planning to minimize harm to the environs of the listed properties has not been undertaken.
- The Historic Resources Administrator, HRC and LPA all agree that the hotel project can be redesigned to meet the goals and objectives of the applicant while meeting the intent of the applicable standards and guidelines and protecting the context of these significant cultural resources.
- The applicant has refused a direct offer from HRC to work with staff and the Architectural Review Committee (ARC, a subcommittee of the HRC) to analyze the overall space needs of the project and reduce the size of the new structure. It is a frequent occurrence at the HRC level for applicants to work with the ARC to adjust their designs in ways to both meet their space needs and minimize harm to historic resources.
- The sticking point in this debate is not hotel spaces, but upper floor condominium spaces. Thus all or most of the positive reasons given by the applicant for this hotel project are not applicable to the concerns expressed by those you entrust to protect historic properties.
- Extended stay or condominium uses could be housed in the rehabilitated Oread Apartments, which the applicant owns caddy-cornered from the hotel site, or at 1142 Indiana, an historic house slated for demolition solely because it is in the way of the proposed development.
- The applicant, in his refusal to work with staff and ARC, and in his request that you rule there are no feasible and prudent alternatives, is in essence asking you to set a precedent, certainly for himself but also for others, that

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the historic review process can be subverted, particularly for large commercial projects.

Conclusion: Because of both the enormity of this project and the glaring ramifications regarding precedence, we feel that you should insist that the developer accurately address all specific numbers regarding alternatives, and that you cannot rule there are no feasible and prudent alternatives if he refuses to first work with staff and the ARC to explore design adjustments and why they will or will not work.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Dennis J. Brown".

Dennis J. Brown

Cc: David Corliss
Lynne Zollner
Kansas Historic Preservation Office
Kansas Preservation Alliance