



THOMAS MOORE ARCHITECTS

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CITY OF LONGMONT MASTER BOARD OF APPEALS

DEVELOPMENT SERVICES CENTER
385 Kimbark Street
Longmont, Colorado 80501

Re: Variance Application for Windows at Property Line – 464 Main Street (old Miller Music building)

Dear Board Members:

On behalf of the new owners of 464 Main Street, we want to thank you for your time to consider this variance request to the 2015 Uniform Building Code requirements that disallow any replaced or restored window openings on the north and east property line walls at this address.

This building is uniquely sited in downtown Longmont next to the historic St. Stephens Church building at the corner of 5th Avenue and Main Street. Between the Church and 464 Main Street is an open plaza that occupies a single lot. The lot and plaza are owned by the Longmont Downtown Development Authority and has been developed as a pedestrian plaza with seating, public art, a fountain, and landscaping. It is important to this variance application that the LDDA has no intention of redeveloping this plaza site for any other use. This plaza provides a “public way” adjacent to 464 Main that makes windows on the north elevation both desirable and safe, as this open area provides adequate space for fire protection when combined with Main Street and the public alley that abut each end of the plaza and building.

The existing structure at 464 Main has had 12 second story windows on the north elevation from its original construction. Additionally, it appears that up to three openings in the brick masonry existed at an earlier timeframe on the ground floor level. The new owners of this unique building are seeking to replace all the upper level windows on the north and east elevations to permit the installation of code-compliant egress windows that will allow this upper level floor to be remodeled into three apartment dwelling units. The windows are needed to provide adequate daylight, safe egress at sleeping spaces, and a quality of living space that enhances the downtown Longmont offering for apartment dwellings.

The ground floor of this building is being remodeled into a new retail store affiliated with the Ace Hardware Store and will feature gourmet kitchen/cooking products, a small hardware section, and women’s accessories. The proposed new windows will allow daylight into the length of this new store and provide views into and from the interior retail space to the pedestrian plaza.

The current International Building Code (2015) does not allow any windows, protected or otherwise, in a property line wall. Earlier building codes (2009 and prior) did permit protected windows in property line walls. We are seeking a variance to Table 705.8* which disallows any property line window openings. The upgrades to this building will include a commercially rated, automatic fire sprinkler system for all floor levels. This, combined with the separation distance to the adjacent church structure (28’ for a small portion and 34’-5” for most of the historic building) greatly reduces the fire danger between these structures. The actual percentage of openings on the north side of 464 Main is approximately 7%, significantly under the 15% that would be allowed if the property line distance was greater than 3’ but less than 5’. The alley facing building elevation is 10% open.

*TABLE 705.8 Maximum Area Of Exterior Wall Openings Based On Fire Separation Distance And Degree Of Opening Protection: For fire separation distance of 0’ to less than 3’, no openings are permitted. For fire separation distance of 3’ to less than 5’, 15% of the wall area is permitted to be open if the building is protected by an automatic sprinkler system.

This variance request is being made because we believe that the likelihood of the adjacent lot being redeveloped as a commercial building is highly unlikely. In discussing this with the Director of the LDDA, we feel confident that, barring a catastrophic fire that would destroy the historic St. Stephen's Church, the plaza that the LDDA owns and maintains provides an important amenity at this site for the community and the Downtown. It is understood by the applicant that if any event precipitated the sale or development of the adjacent lot by the LDDA or others, this variance request does not create an encumbrance on that adjacent parcel. Future development of the LDDA's lot would necessitate the Owner's of 464 Main to remodel for uses that may eliminate the openings sought by this variance request.

We are pleased to be seeking this variance that will allow an under-used building to regain an important presence as a retail space, bringing shoppers and employees to the Downtown and also provide three apartment residences for those seeking to live in the heart of Downtown Longmont.

Thank you for your consideration of this variance request.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Thomas Moore". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Thomas Moore, RA