

## Ames Main Street Cultural District receives \$75,000 to preserve historic building

The Main Street Cultural District (MSCD) in Ames was awarded a \$75,000 Challenge Grant through the Iowa Economic Development Authority and Main Street Iowa during a ceremony in Des Moines Wednesday, November 29. The grant will be used to repair structural damage to the façade of 212 Main Street, and to renovate the vacant second floor into an apartment.



“Stabilizing, repairing, and improving the aesthetics of this building will ‘reset the clock’ of the aging façade,” said Jess Clyde, owner of 212 Main. “The goal is to ensure it will be seen as a valuable asset and historic resource of the district for many decades to come.”

The upper floor has been vacant for multiple decades and is unusable in its current state. But the bigger issue is the steel lintel beam across the storefront that is rotating outward due to a one-inch crack that has developed in the east party wall of the adjacent property.

“The crack is in a state of ‘progressive failure’ meaning it has not stabilized and will continue to widen unless corrective action is taken,” said Art Baumgartner, Haila Architecture Structure Planning.

While that repair is being done, the face brick across much of the top front façade, which has spalled due to 135 years of freeze-thaw cycles, will also receive repair and tuck-pointing.

“We need to save this building,” said Cindy Hicks, Executive Director of the MSCD. “This building calls attention to the earlier architecture existing in downtown before the extensive facelifts on many building between 1915 and the 1950’s and is the only original façade left on our historic Main Street.”

The building, built in 1882, has retained elements of its original Victorian appearance and includes original two-over-two double hung windows with stone sills. Baumgartner says the sills are beyond repair and will require replacement with new limestone or cast stone. Clyde and Baumgartner plan to work closely with the State Historic Preservation Office to ensure all of the work done meets historic preservation standards. The property, currently home to London Underground, a British style pub, has housed many different types of businesses over the years. Its early uses include a bakery, a cobbler, a tailoring shop, and a jewelry store.

212 Main Street Facade Study



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The \$305,000 project to restore and preserve the façade and create an upper-floor living space also supports a current Main Street Cultural District priority. “The number one strategic objective coming out of last year’s planning session was to increase available housing in downtown Ames,” said Paul Livingston, MSCD 2017 Board President. “Although incremental, this project advances that goal by creating a two-bedroom upper floor loft in a formerly vacant space.”

Ames is one of 14 Main Street communities to share in nearly a million dollars made available by the IEDA for Challenge Grants this year. This is the fifth time in six years the MSCD has received this grant, bringing a total of \$328,000 to preserve buildings in our historic downtown.

“Each project must provide at least a dollar-for-dollar cash-match for each of the grants,” said Main Street Iowa State Coordinator Michael Wagler. “These projects will have a significant economic impact within each district and they will have a direct impact on each community’s downtown revitalization efforts.”

Clyde says the work should be complete by the fall of 2018. It will include window restoration/replacement, and complete replacement of the first level storefront. The 1,430 square-foot space of the upper level will be completely gutted and remodeled into a two-bedroom, two-bathroom apartment. The design features a large master suite bedroom and luxury bath, spacious modern kitchen, dining, and living areas, and a second bedroom which doubles as a personal office.

All interior spaces will receive natural daylight through the north and south windows, as well as an interior skylight which will be added where one previously existed. The renovated space will also include a new residential sprinkler system to provide a safer living environment for the renters.

***The Main Street Cultural District*** was established on January 1, 2004. Its mission is to advance and promote downtown as the destination district in the heart of our community. To keep updated on MSCD happenings, become a fan of the Main Street Cultural District on Facebook, bookmark [www.AmesDowntown.org](http://www.AmesDowntown.org), or contact our office at 515-233-3472. MSCD is an affiliate organization of the Ames Chamber of Commerce.