

NOTE: Permit must be lifted in the Zoning Office, 4th Floor, Allentown City Hall,
435 Hamilton Street, Allentown, PA.

BEFORE THE ZONING HEARING BOARD OF THE CITY OF ALLENTOWN
ALLENTOWN, PENNSYLVANIA

IN RE: APPEAL OF CITY CENTER
INVESTMENT CORP.

Appeal #A-68651

DECISION OF THE ZONING HEARING BOARD

Findings of Fact

1. This is the Special Exception Application of City Center Investment Corp. to demolish existing buildings at 736-740 and 742-744 Hamilton Street, Allentown, PA (hereafter referred to as "Subject Premises").

2. A public hearing was held on Monday, September 11, 2017. Applicant was present with counsel. No objectors were present. Two interested persons not objectors were present.

3. Subject Premises is located in a Central Business (B-2), Historic Building Demolition Overlay (HBDO), Hamilton Street Overlay (HSO) and Traditional Neighborhood Development Overlay (TNDO) District.

4. A portion of Subject Premises, specifically 736-740 Hamilton Street, is a four story building presently occupied on the first floor by a retail business and on a small portion of one of the

upper floors but is largely unoccupied and has been so for over ten years.

5. The first floor facade of 736-740 Hamilton Street has been repeatedly modified over the years with the result being it is inconsistent with and unrepresentative of the second through fourth floor facade of that premises.

6. The other portion of Subject Premises, specifically 742-744 Hamilton Street is a four story building which is in irreparable interior decay and has been unoccupied for decades.

7. The present owner of Subject Premises acquired Subject Premises in two purchases, one in 2011 and the other in 2013 and originally had hoped to be able to remodel, repair and repurpose Subject Premises.

8. The entirety of Subject Premises was built with multiple interior columns which design is no longer preferred and interferes with currently popular work place design and atmosphere.

9. The testimony established that it would be extremely difficult and expensive to attempt to preserve and incorporate the facades of Subject Premises into a new structure.

10. In addition, to renovate and reuse Subject Premises would be unfeasible from a cost and construction perspective.

11. Applicant proposes to construct an approximately 24 story

office and retail structure with approximately 450,000 square feet of floor space.

12. Subject Premises, as it exists, contains only 44,000 square feet of floor space.

13. The proposed new building with its various expected occupants would employ about 2,000 workers (not including construction workers). Presently, Subject Premises tenants employ 5-6 workers.

14. Real estate taxes expected to be generated by the proposed new building would be approximately 1.8 million dollars per year whereas Subject Premises at present, generates approximately \$137,000.00 per year.

15. The economic multiplier effect would be substantial as a result of the expected increase in worker population.

16. Applicant's intent is to design the ground floor facade to be compatible with and sensitive to historic facades in the neighborhood.

17. Applicant has complied with the provisions of Section 1314.03.D.6 as to HARB involvement.

18. Applicant offered and the Board accepted into evidence Exhibits "A" through "I".

DECISION

The Board is of the opinion that the Application should be approved.

Based on the testimony and exhibits the Board concludes that (a) the existing building cannot feasibly and reasonably be reused and that such situation is not the result of intentional neglect by the owner; (b) that denial of the demolition would result in unreasonable economic hardship to the owner, and hardship was not self created; (c) the demolition is necessary to allow a project to occur that will have substantial public benefit or benefit to the surrounding neighborhood that would greatly outweigh the loss of any historic building; (d) the design of the new building on the site would be a net positive addition to the street scape and character of the block and would be an improvement over the building that currently exists.

Applicant has agreed to the mitigation efforts recited in paragraph 3 of the HARB document (Exhibit H) except as to incorporating the existing facade and portion of the building at 736-740 into the new building and except as to an in-depth survey of Hamilton Street buildings from American Parkway to 12th Street. Instead, however, Applicant is willing to contribute financially to such a study.

ORDER

Based on the foregoing, the testimony and exhibits, the Board approves the requested demolition conditioned upon the Applicant complying with the testimony, exhibits and agreed to portions of the HARB comments.

BY THE BOARD:

Date: September 18, 2017

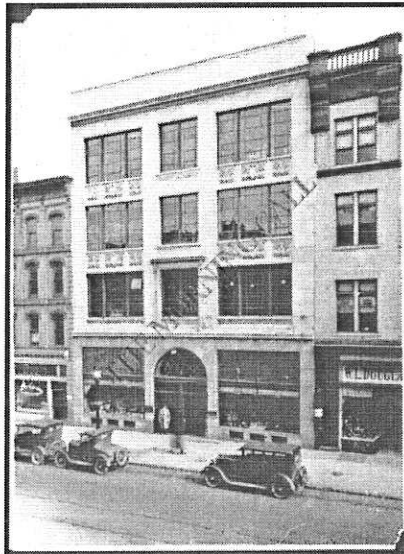
**ALLENTOWN HISTORICAL ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW BOARD (HARB)
HISTORIC BUILDING DEMOLITION OVERLAY REVIEW and
COMMENTS ON HISTORICAL SIGNIFIGANCE for**

**Demolition of 736-740, 742-744 Hamilton St.
Zoning Application #**

Building description, period, style, defining features:

The two properties proposed for demolition are connected, Building A is located at 736-740 Hamilton St., and Building B is at its west/left, at 742-744 Hamilton St. Both are slated for demolition and thus shall be discussed as a single project.

- Building A was constructed in 1925 (noted on Sanborn maps- steel beam construction with 12" brick curtain walls, concrete floors and roof) and is 4 stories, 3 bays, with a flat roof with parapet and cornice. The 2-4th floors each have a series of casements windows with transoms (not original), 5-3-5 arrangement, with decorative spandrels below the 4th and 3rd floor sets. The first floor has a modified store front with marble cladding below stucco finish; the entrance is at the east/left with modified aluminum storefront system. The structure is a decorative Commercial Style building. (The building was constructed by M.S. Young and Co. a highly regarded hardware company. Edward Young was involved with many other developments (Allentown State Hospital, originally the State Homeopathic Hospital) and many local businesses, banks, and colleges.



Historic photo of 736-740 Hamilton

- Building B was probably constructed shortly after A (as of 1932 map, still was two separate units); it also is of the Commercial style, though less decorative and more industrial in character. It is 4 stories, 4 bays (on front) with flat roof and large bracketed copper cornice on the north and west facades with unique oversized copper corbels. The 2nd-4th floors have paired, double hung, 1/1 windows with transoms above. On the west, the windows have been modified to fixed units of varying design. All windows have stone or cast stone sills and lintels. The first floor has a modified storefront with two separate retail spaces, one with a corner entrance. There is a separate side storefront along 8th St. with projecting bracketed cornice.



Context

These substantial buildings are located at the intersection of 8th and Hamilton. All four corners have historic buildings on them. The buildings are 4 stories on the south corners and 5 stories on the north corners. The buildings on the north corners are highly ornate and on the northeast corner the last historic building on the block from 7th to 8th. The south side of Hamilton between 7th and 8th, however is historically intact. Going west on the south, half the block is historically intact; on the north there are four historic buildings before the PPL plaza building.

Summary

The current buildings are representative of historic commercial buildings along Hamilton St., which are steadily disappearing. Their loss will have an adverse effect on the character of the streetscape and intersection which retains historic buildings on all 4 corners. This new demolition/construction proposal appears to be an extension of the proposed construction along Eight and Walnut Streets that went through the 106 review process in 2014-2015.

Plans for the new building should be made available to the HARB and how it relates to the plans that were related to the first round of demolition in the area. It appears that the new building will have a distinctly different style for its first 3 or 4 floors in an attempt to address the scale of the existing and new building along Hamilton St. A glass tower of approximately 20 additional floors sits on the more traditional pedestal set back from Hamilton St about 30'. The design of the first 3 stories includes 1960's design elements similar to those seen at the Lincoln Center with its tall, narrow, arches. If the idea is to nod to a historic style, perhaps saving the existing facades could be considered. In particular, the façade of 736-740 could be quite interesting to work with and build around. If it is determined that the merits of the new building outweigh the importance of retaining these historic buildings, all architecturally significant details (inside and outside) should be salvaged and used in the new building or donated to the Preservation League for reuse on other buildings in the city or elsewhere in the Lehigh Valley.

No written statements were submitted indicating whether working with the existing buildings would be possible.

HARB ACTION

The Allentown Historical Architectural Review Board met at their regular meeting on August 7, 2017, and the HARB recommended to the Zoning Board that the demolition of 736-740, 742-744 Hamilton St will have an adverse affect on the character of the surrounding buildings:

1. The proposal to demolish the two large 4 story buildings and construct a multi-story office building – Tower 5 - at 736-742 W Hamilton was presented by Robert DiLorenzo and Jane Heft of City Center.

2. Because of the historical and architectural significance of the existing buildings, the HARB recommended against their demolition.
3. If another controlling authority were to approve the demolition, the HARB recommended the following mitigation efforts:
 - a. Salvage of historic features of the building and a study to see if the façade and a portion of the building at 736-740 Hamilton St. with its tall floor to floor dimensions could be incorporated into the new building project.
 - b. Inclusion of the HARB in the design process of the new building at the 100% Schematic Design Phase. This would involve a presentation to the HARB and an opportunity for the HARB to comment and make recommendations. Those recommendations and comments would not be binding but would be taken under consideration.
 - c. Recordation of the existing buildings paid for by the developer. Recordation should meet modified HABS (Historic American Building Survey) standards. The interiors and exteriors of the buildings would be photographed, and measured floor plans and elevations produced. The drawings and photographs would be digital. In addition to printed copies, digital files would be provided. (It is recommended that printed copies be stored at the Library or Lehigh County Historical Society and made available for future research)
 - d. An in-depth survey of Hamilton Street buildings older than 50 years from American Parkway to 12th Street. The survey would include photographs of each building (exterior), the completion of a modified historic resource survey card for each, and an evaluation or list of the most important historic buildings in the surveyed area. The cost to do the survey is estimated to be in the range of \$30,000-\$50,000.

Kimmerly, David

From: Robert Dilorenzo <rdilorenzo@citycenterallentown.com>
Sent: Friday, September 22, 2017 11:00 AM
To: Andrayko, Frederick; Kimmerly, David
Cc: Dennis McCarthy; Gene Marino; Jonathan Strauss
Subject: 736-744 Hamilton ZHB Decision Survey Contribution

Hi Fred and David,

As you are aware I am working on complying with the ZHB mitigation requests per the HARB recommendations for 736-744 Hamilton. Mitigation Effort "D" in the HARB Review letter asks for a cash contribution to support a survey of buildings older than 50yrs between American Parkway and 12th Street. In the HARB letter it says the survey will cost in the range of \$30-50K. During the ZHB meeting JB said that we would be willing to make a contribution toward the survey of \$25K. How would you like us to go about making this contribution and identifying that we have satisfied the mitigation effort per the ZHB decision?

Thank you,

Robert



Robert DiLorenzo

Project Manager, City Center Allentown

p: 610.674.4503 m: 610.504.7060

a: 645 W. Hamilton St., Suite 600, Allentown PA 18101

w: citycenterallentown.com

e: robertd@citycenterlehighvalley.com

BECOME A CITY CENTER INSIDER

