

# Fontius to get 76 energy-efficient windows

## Custom-made solution settles 'green' dispute

By John Rebchook

Wednesday, January 16, 2008

In the end, it was an open-and-shut case that pleased both the developer and historic preservationists.

Developer Evan Makovsky will spend almost \$1 million to replace 76 windows with energy-efficient ones in the historic Fontius building along the 16th Street Mall.

But far beyond windows, the issue goes to the heart of a growing debate over whether "green" renovations and historic preservation are at odds with each other.

"This is an important public debate," Makovsky said.

In September, the Landmark Preservation Commission required Makovsky to restore the windows in the 85-year-old building along the mall and Welton Street, and one window on an alley.

Makovsky is renovating the building, which has historic landmark status but has been widely regarded as one of downtown Denver's biggest eyesores for almost 25 years.

He had filed an economic hardship with the commission because of its requirement that the window replacements must look the same as the current windows.

Makovsky said that without new energy-efficient windows in the building he could have lost his unidentified anchor tenant.

Instead, the commission Tuesday afternoon unanimously accepted an "alternate" solution.

Now, Makovsky will have custom-made windows that are about 10 feet 8 inches tall and 9 feet wide and pivot like the originals.

The new windows will use the existing hardware.

They are energy-efficient, but at \$956,000, they are about 60 percent more expensive than replacing them with windows similar to those in the building, which would cost \$592,000.

During the hearing, Makovsky said that "seemingly totally opposite points of views" can be reconciled.

He said "historic preservation and conservation" can co-exist.

Steve Turner, director of Preservation Services for Historic Denver, said that at first he was skeptical a solution could be reached, but now he is "absolutely sold" on the result.

Everett Shigeta, preservation architect for the city, called the commission's decision "unique and important. A significant historic building in downtown Denver will be restored, Greenprint Denver will be served, (and) the (Landmark

Commission) will demonstrate its willingness to be understanding and flexible in its deliberation. And we will all benefit from having this beautiful terra-cotta structure occupied again."

Brian Klipp, whose namesake architectural firm is handling the design for Fontius, said he has received calls from a number of developers facing a situation similar to Makovsky's.

"This is such an important public policy matter," Klipp said

Last week, Tami Door, president of the Downtown Denver Partnership, said that both historic preservation and sustainability are worthy goals but at times can conflict with each other.

She noted that preserving a historic building instead of tearing it down and replacing it with a new structure saves valuable resources.

"This case demonstrates the need for further collaboration between the preservation and sustainability communities," Door said Tuesday.

*rebhookj@RockyMountainNews.com or 303-954-5207*

© Rocky Mountain News