

**Minneapolis Heritage Preservation Commission Meeting  
October 23, 2012, Room 317 City Hall**

**Date of Z&P Meeting: December 4, 2012**

**ITEM SUMMARY**

- Description**      Item #2, BZH #27416  
413-425 Main Street Southeast, St. Anthony Falls Historic District  
Kelly Doran with Doran Development LLC, submitted a Certificate of Appropriateness application to allow for a new apartment building at 413-425 Main Street Southeast, Phase II Mill & Main project, located within the St. Anthony Falls Historic District.
- Action**            The Heritage Preservation Commission adopted staff findings and approved the Certificate of Appropriateness for the new construction at 413-425 Main Street Southeast subject to the following conditions:
1. The Certificate of Appropriateness approval shall expire if it is not acted upon within two years of approval, unless extended by the Planning Director in writing prior to the two-year anniversary date of approvals;
  2. By ordinance, all approvals granted in the Certificate of Appropriateness shall remain in effect as long as all of the conditions and guarantees of such approvals are observed. Failure to comply with such conditions and guarantees shall constitute a violation of this Certificate of Appropriateness and may result in termination of the approval;
  3. All glass must be clear, non-tinted, non-reflective glass. One coat of Low-E glazing is permitted on the interior surface of the windows;
  4. The proposed “mill & main” wall sign is not approved;
  5. The height of the building shall be one story lower on Envelope 4.
- Roll Call Vote**    Aye:      Faucher, Hunter Weir, Larsen, Tableporter  
                          Nay:      Haecker, Lindberg, R. Mack  
                          Absent: Lackovic, L. Mack

**TRANSCRIPTION**

**Chair Larsen:** Alright, we will move to item number two, 413-25 Main Street SE, St. Anthony Falls Historic District. Mr. Hanauer. Oh, and I should note for the record that Commissioner Mack, Linda Mack, has an excused absence.

**Hanauer:** Chair and commissioners, as you know on September 11 the HPC unanimously voted to continue the Mill and Main project for two cycles to allow the applicant to revise their drawings and accommodate HPC feedback. In particular, there is three items, the increase in the height of variation of the building, to carry the red brick down on the portion that you can see on your monitors to the first floor; and then reduce the visibility of mechanical equipment on the exterior walls of Envelope 4, what we’ve been calling out as Envelope 4.

The applicant made exterior alterations in response to this feedback, and in addition in the back of the building you can see they replaced the metal panels with glass. We feel these modifications improve the overall appearance of the building and we appreciate the applicant’s work on this.

For my brief time here, I want to focus on the height variation and the wall sign. Those are the two items that we had conditions of approval for. CPED, as you saw, is recommending that the height of the building of this Envelope 4, right here, shall be reduced one story. The applicant did respond to the request of the commission to vary the height on the other side of the building. They added a 9-foot high canopy on top of the building and also continued the brick treatment on Envelope 3. Prior to that I believe it was metal panel on the top floor. So for that parapet, now you have that brick continued all the way to the top. This helps, and we realize the limitations of stick construction, not being able to have more than five stories on top of two stories of concrete. However, we feel that the building, Mill and Main Phase II, maintains the 7-story height and with that continue that 7-story height of living space for two city blocks. That this is not consistent with the St. Anthony Falls guidelines, the general guideline for height infill construction shall be visually compatible with historic structures within the sub-area with regards to height. So along Main Street you have a number of buildings that have varied heights and this, although we talked about it at the September 11 meeting, when you are up close, you may see those varied heights and treatments that they did to be sympathetic to the neighboring historic structures, but when you are viewing the complex from downtown or the Stone Arch bridge we feel that having two blocks at the same height will be a negative impact to the district. This is a view of the A Mill complex up close.

So what is the impact with the recommendation? It is currently a 190 feet of building. With the reduction of one floor you would be eliminating eight units at that location, but we feel that there is potential to perhaps add an addition on top of the portion with the parking garage. There is also more parking than is required by the zoning code. We believe that if this modification is made, that it will meet what we are looking for in that greater variation in height and better relation to the A Mill complex.

And finally, moving on to the sign proposal, Doran is proposing two signs. The blade sign, 38 square feet at the entrance, as well as a wall sign. Both on Envelope 3 and both illuminated. Staff is supportive of this projecting sign. It is the wall sign that we called out as something that staff is not recommending for. Maximum height for wall signs: 14 feet; the top of this sign is proposed for 85 feet. The size, 32 square feet is what the guidelines call out; the size is proposed to be 152 square feet. And then finally the sign dimension height for wall signs can have a maximum of two foot high sign; the sign is 7 feet in height. Staff does not want to set a precedent with approving a sign of this size and we are not aware of a sign of this size being approved since the 2003 guidelines were adopted by the HPC. We feel that the sign would draw attention away from one of the most iconic signs in the district and in the city, the Pillsbury's Best Flour, and also draw attention away from the nearby historic buildings.

Two addendum items that you received. One, a letter from Marcy Holmes, they are in support of the project including maintaining the proposed height, but they want to defer to you on the sign. That's the end of my presentation.

**Chair Larsen:** Mr. Hanauer, can you, just since we are looking at this sign just for reference, do you know what the height of the letters are on the Pillsbury's and/or the Best Flour for any kind of reference?

**Hanauer:** Chair Larsen, I will look to find that height. If you give me a little time I will check on that.

**Chair Larsen:** Alright, questions of staff? Ok, we might have some later, but that's it for now. So with that we will open up the Public Hearing. If the applicant wishes to step forward. Welcome back.

**Kelly Doran:** Thank you, nice to see you all again, Mr. Chair and members of the commission. I think that staff has done a very good job of summarizing the modifications of the plans we've made since the last time we were last in front of you. So I don't want to take a lot of time, your time, to review those. So I'm here if you have any questions regarding that particular issue. I think as Mr. Hanauer said in his presentation, I think that the focal point of our discussion really relates to the staff recommendation items 4 and 5, so I'd like to focus my discussion about those.

Item number 4 is, from our perspective, not really that controversial. That sign is really in response to comments that were made to us by this board or the planning commission, I don't remember which one it was, and then the joint meeting as to putting a sign on the building. We had conversations last meeting about the façade behind that sign as

to whether it should be metal or brick or whatever. So after reviewing it, we changed the façade to brick to extend it up. That façade is still applicable whether there is a sign there or not and we would not modify that sign if you chose to not approve the sign. We think the sign has value. Obviously we think the sign has merit or we wouldn't have put it on the building, but if you decide that was against your opinions or whatever you want to say, then we're not going to fight about the sign, ok.

As to the height of the building, we just have a different view of that particular issue and, although we respect the position that staff has taken, we looked at it in the context of the criteria that has been established in this area. And as staff has said in their report, the criteria that is germane for this discussion is the criteria that exists from 1980. And the staff has said in the report there is a general phraseology and then there is some specifics as it relates to this area. In the general regulations it provides for infill construction, and this is all in the staff report. I'm not sure what page it is, but it is all in the staff report. I'm actually reading from the guidelines themselves and it says "infill construction shall be visually compatible with historic structures within the sub-area with regard to" and staff used the word "height" and that's the language in the staff report. But the language is actually much more extensive than that. It says "within the sub-area with regard to sitting, height, proportions of façade, walls of continuity, rhythm or projections, directional emphasis, materials, nature of openings, texture of roof shapes, details, and colors." And then as you go through the various components of that design guideline and the different areas of the district that it covers, each of those areas has further clarity into what those design guidelines say. And if you go to the section, Section H under the left east bank milling area, it describes the area that this encompasses. And those nine, nine of those items are further defined as to the intent of that general regulation. And in the definition of that height ...

**Chair Larsen:** Can I get you to hold on one second ... just so we can follow along, which would be great. So, now we are all on the same page.

**Kelly Doran:** The relative language is also in the staff report under height, on page 8, 4B. Those are the general statements that I'm referring to, so if you don't have the whole guideline, that is what I'm referring to.

**Chair Larsen:** We all can have them in front of us, so if you could just ...

**Kelly Doran:** Do you want me to set it here down on the screen?

**Chair Larsen:** Sure, that would be great.

**Kelly Doran:** You will probably have to blow it up and zoom on 2 here, can you read it from your screens?

**Chair Larsen:** Yup.

**Kelly Doran:** So, in our view of this the language that is contained in this page further defines the general regulations as it relates to these nine issues and each section in the design criteria as it relates to another part has that same type of language. And in the height section it says in this particular area, that new buildings to be no higher than that of the existing silo mills in the area. And so I think our plan conforms to that general regulation. Now we can have, everyone is entitled to their opinion, and staff is entitled to their opinion, our opinion is we are in conformance with that and that's what we would like you to concur with. I think, Chair Larsen, with all due respect, you had an opinion it should be taller, and so we are all entitled to that opinion. The neighborhood group has also voiced their view in the neighborhood letter that was sent, that they concur with our view, that the buildings should be approved as they are presented here this evening and that they do not agree with staff's recommendation to reduce the height portion of the building. So we respectfully request that you eliminate condition number 5, I think it was, and that I will leave to your judgment the application of condition number 4. So with that, I'm here to answer any questions you may have.

**Chair Larsen:** Questions at this time? Nope, not at the moment. Thank you. Alright, is there anybody else that wishes to speak either for or against the application, please step forward at this time.

**Doug Carlson:** My name is Doug Carlson, I am president of the Marcy Holmes Neighbors Association and a resident of 424 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue SE, just a couple blocks from the subject development. You have our letter in front of you and we are in support of this project and have been working hard with the developer all along with their design with public engagement and the community. So we are supportive.

**Chair Larsen:** Ok, and that's your letter from June 25.

**Doug Carlson:** Oh no, there is a new, there's one that should have come within just the last few days.

**Chair Larsen:** Yup, got it right here, October 17<sup>th</sup>, thank you. Alright, is there anyone else that wishes to speak either for or against this application please step forward. Ok, we'll close the public hearing. Commissioners, discussion? Commissioner Hunter Weir.

**Hunter Weir:** I think I support the staff findings in reducing the envelope 4 to six stories. The issue for me has been from the beginning, and I think this goes back to Phase I, it isn't about the height, it is about the massing and what it looks like from across the river, that it is this big solid block. And I think there were a lot of us who had concerns about that. And actually cautioned that we were not likely to just say ok to another building that looked substantially the same, which I think this one, despite all the really nice work that has gone into it, there is that perspective that it is a big rectangular block as seen from across the river and seen from downtown. So I understand that we're not going to get a 27 story building with a big green footprint at the bottom, but I really think that some variation in height would be helpful here to address how it looks.

**Chair Larsen:** Commissioner Lindberg.

**Lindberg:** I appreciate the changes that have come before us from the last meeting. I think the variation in materials give it a nice layered effect so when you look at least at the renderings it looks like there is multiple layers. So I think that helps, as we look at the rendering as it would be across the river. I like how they addressed the mechanical grills, lowering them to floor. And then I'm not convinced, in my opinion, and it is just my opinion, that we really need to reduce the height because we are just kind of reducing it to reduce it. When you look at the renderings I think the white silos behind it give it some height and I think if you took that one floor down I don't know how much difference it really would make. It might make it look like a chipped tooth, I don't know. So, I guess I'm fine with not reducing envelope #4.

**Chair Larsen:** Commissioner Tableporter.

**Tableporter:** I tend to agree about the height issue in that I think there needs to be more variety there. And I think it is not just about the height but it is providing some kind of variety and proportion to the buildings that are being put up. And I know there was an attempt to do that with not just reducing the height as suggested, but also in putting up a canopy. From my opinion, I thought the canopy didn't really accomplish the objectives of providing enough differentiation between the two sets of buildings and keeping it in character with the area.

**Chair Larsen:** Commissioner Haecker.

**Haecker:** I guess I am a little on the fence. The, I mean there is some variant with the height that was introduced since the latest, or the last go around. Although I'm more going along with what Commissioner Lindberg said in terms of I'm not sure if removing one floor would do it. I think ultimately what we were looking for was a lot of variance, two to eight stories or something like that, and now we just basically have a seven story building, U shaped, and if one of them is six stories I'm not sure that's really going to do it. I don't think it will look like a missing tooth, but, I understand projecting what the economics might be, even though it is 8 apartments, it is probably a significant amount of money every year that, you know I guess we could put the apartments somewhere else or something but it is a long block and I think they've, there is sort of the economics that drive it and then there is what everybody wants to see. And they've addressed that with the different materials and the cut backs and there is a variance in heights so I think they are getting there. I'm not sure it is exactly what I would have liked to have seen ultimately, but it is hitting most of the pistons so I'm kind of in favor of not removing the 7<sup>th</sup> floor. And I'm

glad you wanted to strike #4 because I don't, I just don't like that sign very much only because even though it is a lot smaller and a lot shorter or far away from the Pillsbury one, it is, I think it would detract from it a little bit, especially the way it was being thought of in terms of lighting it. So those are my comments for now.

**Chair Larsen:** Commissioner Mack.

**R. Mack:** I think each of us has some individual opinions as to what does or does not seem appropriate visually from across the river or even on the street. But I think we have to do our evaluation based on the guidelines in the book. I don't think we can arbitrarily start coming up with things that aren't in the guidelines to use for our evaluation and I don't see any place in here, in the guidelines, that says we have to have height variation.

**Chair Larsen:** Rhythm and projections ...

**R. Mack:** That's not projections.

**Chair Larsen:** Which could be vertical projections.

**R. Mack:** Projections are back and forth.

**Chair Larsen:** You are saying if they had a, would you suggest then if they were presenting a proposal that was no higher than the silo mills that was one long block of, I guess how many stories would that be, probably 12 ...

**R. Mack:** I wouldn't like it but it would meet the guidelines.

**Chair Larsen:** So, the nice thing is they are also guidelines. So, they are not rules. And so these are used to guide us in the decision process, guide developers as well, and so I think, to say that it is not true, and we have done, we have made decisions based on using these as guidelines. So if you are saying that they are the letter of the law, they are not. So I would caution you to say that that's the reason you are choosing ...

**R. Mack:** I haven't said which way I'm going to vote, have I?

**Chair Larsen:** I know, I know.

**R. Mack:** And I understand the guidelines, I wrote the Secretary of the Interior's guidelines, so I understand that they are just that.

**Chair Larsen:** Ok, did you have more? Alright, anyone else? Ok, well, we need to make an action so, Commissioner Hunter Weir.

**Hunter Weir:** Just to get the ball rolling, I move that we adopt staff recommendations striking condition number 4 but retaining all others. Oh wait, I'm sorry, strike what I said about striking number 4. That we adopt staff recommendations as written.

**Larsen:** Ok, alright, so we have a motion, is there a second to the motion?

**Faucher:** Second.

**Chair Larsen:** Ok, alright, so we have a motion to approve staff findings and adopt the Certificate of Appropriateness for new construction with the five conditions as presented. Is there discussion on the motion? Alright, I think we've said this, so we'll call the roll.