

# City of Minneapolis Heritage Preservation Application

*La Rive Condominiums, 110 Bank Street, Minneapolis, MN*

## **STATEMENT OF PROPOSED USE AND DESCRIPTION**

The La Rive Condominium Cooling Tower project screens a new cooling tower proposed at grade between the property line and the north side of the building.

La Rive Condominiums, located at 110 Bank Street in Minneapolis, are part of the 1980's Riverplace development which includes the Pinnacle tower located at 20 Second Street NE, Minneapolis. La Rive Condominiums are part of the Nicollet Island/East Bank Neighborhood Group, the St. Anthony Falls Historic District, and the Hennepin and Central Character District.

The building is considered a non-contributing property in its historic districts due its more recent construction that does not fit within the district's period of significance. As a non-contributing property the design team looked to Chapter 9 New Infill Building Guidelines of the St. Anthony Fall Historic District Design Guidelines and the Secretary of the Interior Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties as a framework for compatibility within the district.

The intent of this project is to separate heating and cooling generation which occurs in plants located within Sentinal Property from La Rive Condominiums. This is due to a change in agreement between Sentinal and La Rive Condominiums. According to the agreement, Sentinal will no longer provide heating and cooling to La Rive as of end of year 2014.

## **ALTERNATIVES EXPLORED:**

Since summer of 2010, La Rive has been engaged in analyzing possible alternatives for an energy plant capable of providing heating/cooling for the 118-unit condominium. Professionals consulted include Trak International and Michaud-Cooley regarding engineering issues, BKV and Miller Dunwiddie regarding architectural issues, McGough, Cy-Con, and CPMI regarding construction issues. Survey and legal work was also required to verify property lines and tie-ins to the Riverplace complex.

Given the land footprint of the existing building, the most difficult issue is the cooling tower size required. More than a dozen options were considered, including:

1. The top of the tower - Certificate of Appropriateness previously reviewed and approved by the HPC on June 4, 2013. Projected risks for this option were determined by the Owner to be too high and the Design Team was asked to look for another option.
2. Geothermal- Insufficient land available.
3. Outside Supplier- Best possible option, NRG Energy, has not yet crossed river in the downtown area.
4. Lower Level Roof Options at La Rive – Options for placement conflicted with and interfered with views from balconies and interior living space of existing condominium units.

5. Off-Site Across Road/Riverplace Garage Entrance- Although favored by engineers and architects, the legal issues with City of Minneapolis and Riverplace management were considered too difficult to overcome.

La Rive is still considering the option to attempt to modernize the existing plant and gain a new contract with Sentinal Property. Given the 12/31/2014 contract-end and expected 18-month cycle needed for design/construction, La Rive required an alternative that does not reduce quality of life in the condominium or neighborhood as well as does not reduce property values. This application describes the only feasible alternative proposed to date.

**STATEMENT OF APPROPRIATENESS – ALTERATIONS TO A PROPERTY WITHIN A HISTORIC DISTRICT**

- 1) The alterations to La Rive are compatible with the St. Anthony Falls Historic District guidelines and protect the significance of the surrounding district. Access to light and air of surrounding properties is respected, and key views are maintained. As noted above, many locations for new heating and cooling equipment were considered, including at the top of the building, and on various La Rive rooftops, before settling on the current location. This location was not previously assessed due to proximity to the main entry of La Rive. Given the higher risk liability of the rooftop location, residents are in agreement that this location would be acceptable. This proposed location strikes a good balance between equipment efficiency, constructability, and risk management.
- 2) The primary consideration for compatibility within the historic district lies in the ability to minimize the visual impact of the building equipment as seen from the public way. The cooling tower is pulled as far back from the public way, and as far away from neighbors, as the property lines will allow. Due to the compact area of property, proximity to the neighbors, and La Rive's own property owners, the cooling tower will be as compact as it can be and still serve 118 units. Piping connections to the building are expected to go directly from the unit into La Rive's parking structure. In addition to locating the unit away from the public way, the unit will also be screened using vegetation both deciduous and coniferous. The plantings will meet and/or exceed City requirements for screening.
- 3) The cooling tower location follows the guidelines of the St. Anthony Falls Historic District related to building equipment. It will not be injurious to the significance and integrity of the District or nearby Our Lady of Lourdes Church. While the guidelines specifically outline the visual requirements for maintaining the character of the district, La Rive felt it was important to also consider the acoustical impact of the cooling tower on the surrounding properties. The cooling tower type was selected for many reasons, including the ability to control the acoustics of the unit. The air intake and discharge will each be equipped with a sound attenuator. Both sound attenuators will be designed so that noise levels will meet the City's requirements for a nighttime noise limit of 50dba and a daytime noise limit of 60dba. For reference, normal conversation is around 60-70dba.

Date: December 16, 2013  
Project: La Rive Cooling Tower  
RE: **Ground Level Tower Visual Screening**  
To: Janelle Widmeier – City of Minneapolis CPED  
From: Paul G. May, AIA

We appreciate the preliminary comments we have received from you and the rest of the Planning Staff regarding the screening of the proposed ground level cooling tower described in the November 20<sup>th</sup> application. We understand the comments to be primarily visual, in order to blend the unit into the existing 27 story brick building. The design, construction and ownership teams have reviewed and explored additional options to screen the tower. These options have included the staff suggestion for creating a brick wall enclosure, as well as additional landscape options, and additional options to revise the metal enclosure attached to the mechanical unit.

The consensus is to continue to propose the stand alone mechanical unit with additional visual screening options that can be attached to the unit, without constructing an additional brick enclosure. The key criteria that have led us to continuing this strategy are:

- 1) Constructing an additional enclosure will increase the physical size of the cooling tower system (cooling tower + free air requirement + cooling tower enclosure). This will require the mechanical unit to be moved closer to the residential tower and negatively impact the views from more units.
- 2) The larger cooling tower enclosure will further reduce the size of the La Rive entry turn around, impacting the ease for residents, visitors, and life safety vehicles to maneuver in this space.
- 3) The larger cooler enclosure will potentially increase the cooling tower sound reflectivity and resonance for the residents.
- 4) The enclosure will require a side yard variance, adding to the complexity and timeline of the City approval process. This will further impact an already tight construction and implementation schedule for this essential infrastructure for the La Rive building.
- 5) The major concern of neighbors has been sound, as visual impact has been minimized through the current planning efforts.
- 6) There are options that are available to further screen the stand alone cooling tower, outlined below.

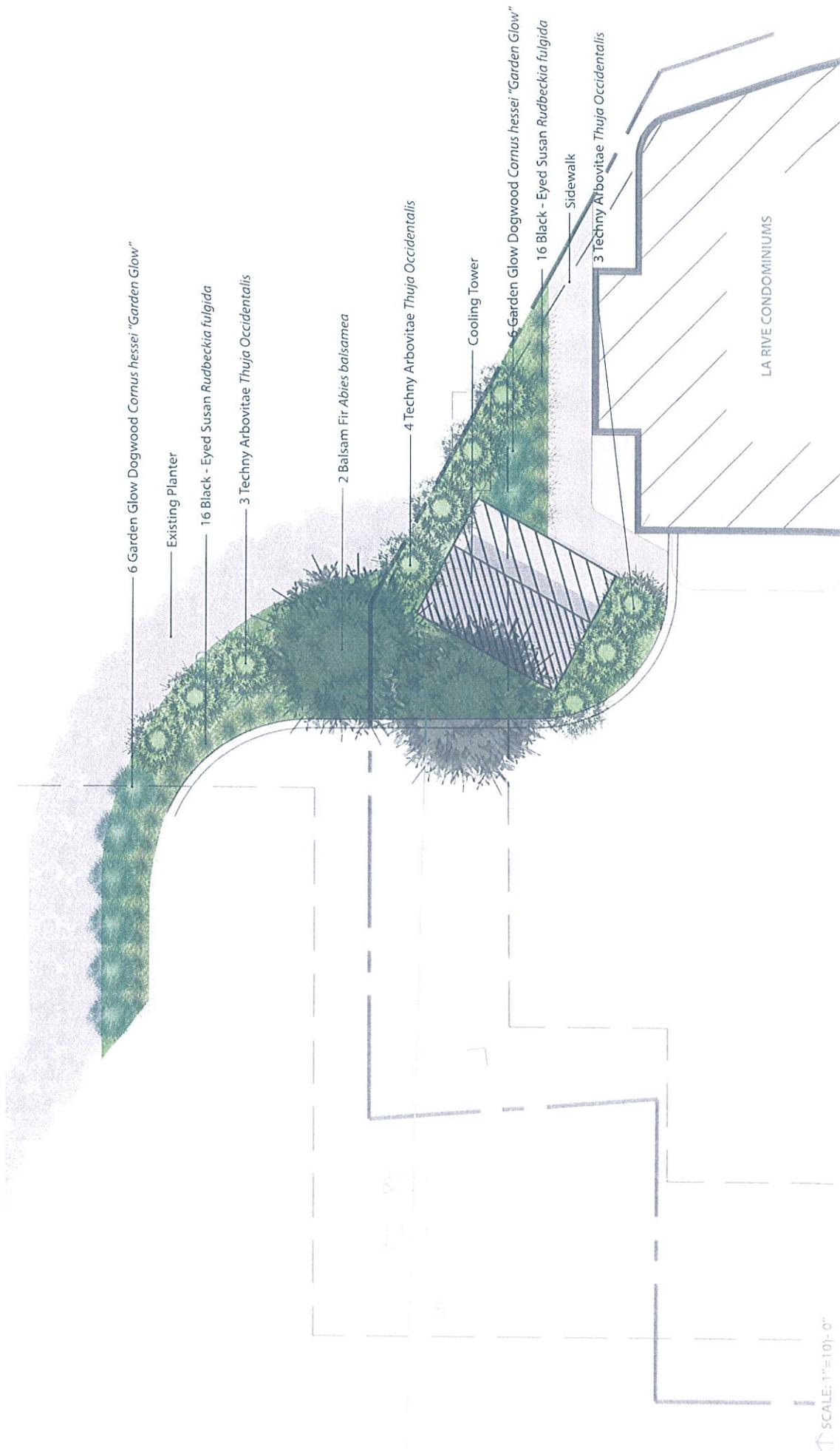
Our approach to additional screening of the cooling tower unit will include:

- 1) The “hush kit” being included with this unit by AEC creates an enclosure that can permit a variety of finish options. This enclosure is similar to that at the North Star Lofts.
- 2) Options include attaching a brick veneer to the enclosure, which is illustrated on the attached drawings. This comes the closest to the CPED staff recommendation of building a brick

enclosure without the complexities of that construction noted above. Other options that could also be considered include a copper finish that matches the La Rive entry metal.

Copy to: Dale Herron, Steve Terman, Chuck Liddy, Jean Turck, File





SCALE: 1" = 10'-0"

**LA RIVE CONDOMINIUMS** COOLING TOWER

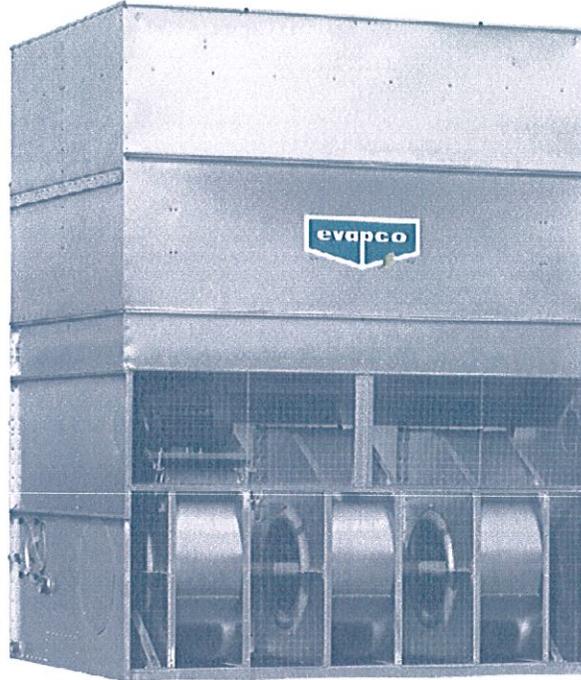
LANDSCAPE PLAN

DAMON **FARBER** ASSOCIATES

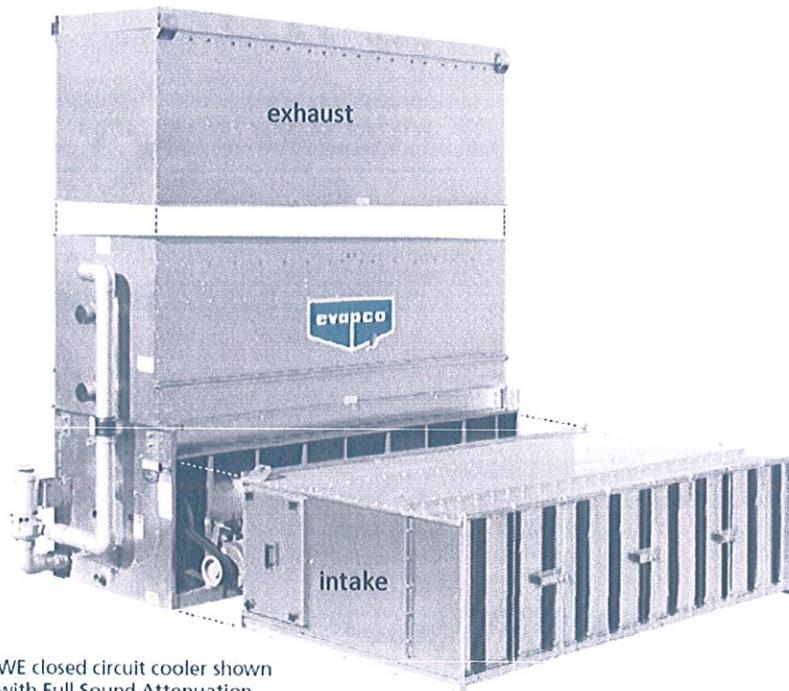
# City of Minneapolis HPC Certificate of Appropriateness

La Rive Condominiums, 110 Bank Street, Minneapolis, MN

## PHOTOS OF THE COOLING TOWER



Cooling tower from air intake side from manufacturer. Actual unit will vary.



LSWE closed circuit cooler shown with Full Sound Attenuation

† Mark owned by the Cooling Technology Institute

Cooling tower attenuators at the air intake and exhaust from manufacturer. Actual units will vary.

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## PHOTOS OF THE PROPERTY AND EXISTING STRUCTURES



View of the main building entrance from the street.



View toward the proposed cooling tower location from the sidewalk near the street entrance.



View of the cooling tower location.



View inside the cooling tower location toward the street.



View inside the cooling tower location from the neighbors' street.



View inside the cooling tower location toward the neighbors.



View of the cooling tower from the plaza **before**.



View of the cooling tower from the plaza **after**.