

**CITY OF MINNEAPOLIS
HERITAGE PRESERVATION COMMISSION STAFF REPORT**

FILE NAME: DeLaSalle High School Athletic Facility

DATE OF APPLICATION: February 16, 2007

APPLICANT: DeLaSalle High School c/o Michael O'Keefe

DATE OF HEARING: March 20, 2007

EXPIRATION OF APPEAL PERIOD: March 30, 2007

HPC SITE/DISTRICT: St. Anthony Falls Historic District; Nicollet Island Sub-District

CATEGORY: Contributing

CLASSIFICATION: Certificate of Appropriateness

STAFF INVESTIGATION AND REPORT: Carol Ahlgren

DATE: March 12, 2007

A. SITE DESCRIPTION AND BACKGROUND:

The proposed DeLaSalle High School Athletic Field Project is located within the Nicollet Island Sub-District of the St. Anthony Falls Historic District, which is a designated National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) Historic District, a state of Minnesota historic district, and is locally designated as a historic preservation district by the Minneapolis Heritage Preservation Commission (HPC). The St. Anthony Falls Historic District, and Nicollet Island are also within the boundaries of the National Park Service's Mississippi National River Recreation Area (MNRRA).

An Historic Resource Survey of the project area prepared by Landscape Research LLC (October 2005) indicated that Nicollet Island was characterized by several phases of development since it was platted in 1866. The completion of both railroad and vehicular bridges by the 1870's resulted in the industrial and residential development of the Island. Large, high-style single family houses were located along Grove Street which extends east-west across the Island. These houses were constructed by the Island's early developers, including William Eastman. In addition to the large scale single family residences, three limestone faced row houses, were located on Eastman Avenue and on Grove Street.

A Certificate of Appropriateness for the construction of a regulation size football field and associated lights, seating, and press box for DeLaSalle High School was denied by the Heritage Preservation Commission (HPC) on August 8, 2006. The HPC decision was appealed; on September 22, 2006, DeLaSalle High school received City Council approval for the project, located on Nicollet Island, which is a Sub-District of the St. Anthony Falls Historic District. The athletic field will be oriented north- south between the existing high school building and railroad right of way and will necessitate the vacation and removal of a portion of Grove Street which is part of the Island's original 1866 plat. An Environmental Assessment Worksheet was prepared for the original application. The EAW recommended archeological mitigation prior to and during the proposed new construction.

City Council approval of the appeal was contingent upon the following conditions: The field would have a grass surface; and the applicant would seek an alternative to the proposed mast lighting which was determined to represent an adverse effect on the District. The present application represents a request by the applicant for an Amendment to the Certificate of Appropriateness for a modification of the original design. The Modified Design is substantially different from the original proposal: it calls for additional excavation to sink the field and thereby reduce its visual impact; and construction of three

separate one story associated buildings: press box, ticket concessions/ and restrooms. The present application is therefore subject to the same review and public hearing process as a Certificate of Appropriateness.

By 1900, when the DeLaSalle High School located on the island, Grove Street was beginning to change demographically. The large single family homes remained on Grove Street, including 2 Eastman family homes located in the proposed project area. According to the Landscape research LLC report (October, 2005) by 1930 the W. W. Eastman house had burned down and the other was rental. The school expanded during these years, and in the early 1940's, the Eastman Flat buildings and the stone stable of the former WW. Eastman house were demolished for DeLaSalle athletic facilities. Today, the central portion of Grove Street which will be vacated and removed for the new football field is flanked by open space consisting of playing fields and tennis courts. Other than the Street itself, no known remaining historic resources are located on the site. The Grove Street flats, the last remaining limestone row house on the Island, is located adjacent to the project area west of the proposed athletic field at the intersection of Grove Street and Island Avenue.

To date however, archeological investigations have not been undertaken on the site or in the project area. Archeological consultants, the Two Pines Resource Group, were contracted by the applicant to provide a Literature Search for Archaeological Potential in the project area. The report, completed in October 2005 concluded that the project had a "high potential" for both contact and precontact archeological resources. The consultants especially noted the potential for archeological resources associated with the 19th century houses historically located in the area, that represented a cross-section of occupations and family relationships associated with the early business community of Minneapolis in the late 19th century. Archeological investigation in the project area it was further noted, could provide information about the development of the Island the daily lives of the inhabitants not addressed in the documentary record (October, 2005). A comprehensive plan for excavation, archeology, mitigation, and interpretation needs to be developed prior to any construction at the site.

B. PROPOSED CHANGES:

The applicant is applying for a Certificate of Appropriateness for the following work:

Construction of a regulation size football field and associated support facilities for shared use by DeLaSalle High School and the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board (MPRB). The field will also provide one regulation size soccer field and three junior soccer fields, superimposed upon the football field, and seating for up to 750 spectators.

The Modified Design is intended to reduce the visual impact of the athletic facility by lowering the field an additional 2 feet below grade from the Approved Design for a total of 5 feet below grade and siting a press box and bleacher seating on a wide, low 6' 11 inch earthen berm. Rather than a brick press box with bleacher seating measuring 29 feet in height, the Modified Design will feature a press box 13' 4" in height located on the berm, reducing the building height from existing grade to the top of the building by 8 feet 7 ". The one story press box building will still be located perpendicular to the demolished Grove Street alignment. Additional new construction calls for a brick one story restroom concessionaire structure which will measure 108 feet by 20 feet and 10 feet in height and will be attached to the rear or southern façade of the existing High School building. A ticket booth/storage facility will also be a brick one story building and will measure 20 by 42 feet and will be 10 feet in height. All of the new construction will feature steel trellises that will extend horizontally from the rooflines either eight or four feet in length.

The major differences between the approved and Modified Designs consists of the elevation of the field, configuration of the stands, and design of the seating, press box, ticket booth/storage and concessionaire/restroom facility. The differences were summarized by the applicant as follows:

Field elevation: The Modified Design, eliminates 300 feet of existing wood retaining walls, and exposes the existing limestone retaining wall along East Island Avenue.

Building height: Instead of a 29 foot press box/stadium building, the Modified Design features a 13 ‘4” brick one story building on top of a 6’ 11” berm. The one story brick flat roofed building represents a reduction in massing, height, and visual impact from the Approved Design.

Bleacher seating: The Modified Design replaces the Approved Design of a press box/ bleacher structure that measures 118 feet in length and 29 feet in height with a 46 foot press box that will be the only element visible above the berm. Bleacher seating will still accommodate up to 750 spectators, but the Modified Design calls for seating to be located along the berm.

Parking: the existing unpaved parking area east of the proposed project area will not be resurfaced as originally proposed; no new parking will be added.

Ticket booth: The Approved Design called for storage space beneath the bleacher structure with a portable ticket booth north of the high school. The Modified Design calls for permanent combination ticket booth/ storage building that will be located in the southeastern part of the project area and will measure 840 square feet. It will consist of a one story, brick building with a flat roof.

Concessionaire/restroom.: The Approved Design included restrooms, concessions and storage below the bleachers of the proposed 30 foot building; the Modified Design calls for a one story 1,404 square foot brick addition to the existing high school building at the west, or rear façade.

Grove Street Alignment: The Modified Design still requires the vacation and demolition of the central portion of Grove Street, a contributing resource to the St. Anthony Falls Historic District. The Modified Design attempts to mitigate this adverse effect by including windows on the east and west facades of the building that will align with the center of Grove Street. Limestone pylons will be used as historic markers to provide information about the demolished Street.

Lighting: A condition of the City Council approval of the applicants appeal concerned seeking alternatives to the proposed lighting. The original design called for four, 70 foot tall mast lighting poles, with 10 light fixtures per pole. The applicant explored possibility of retractable poles. The applicant’s lighting consultant concluded that the original proposed lighting will provide the best available means of lighting with the lowest impact on the surrounding area.

Sound: The Modified Design represents lower and wider seating area than the Approved Design; the sound system was modified accordingly.

Archeological Resources: The Modified Design calls for more extensive excavation than the Approved Design; the existing mitigation plan was determined by the applicant and their archeological consultants; this conclusion, however, was not necessarily in concurrence with other interested parties.

Field Surface: The Reciprocal Use Agreement between DeLaSalle High School and the MPRB gives MPRB the right to recommend and approve the field surface. The Approved Design called for an artificial surface; the current application asks that the final selection be made by the MPRB in consultation with the Community Planning and Economic Development staff.

C. APPLICABLE REGULATION, POLICIES, AND GUIDELINES:

ST. ANTHONY FALLS HISTORIC DISTRICT GUIDELINES

Minneapolis Heritage Preservation Commission

(June 1980; an addition to "District Guidelines for Utilization" (adopted April 18, 1978))

Preamble

The St. Anthony Falls Historic District is a varied area that includes structures of historical significance (e.g. mills), some that are architecturally distinguished (e.g. Our Lady of Lourdes), buildings that contribute to the historicity of the district (e.g. Salisbury Mattress Co., now Main Place), some non-contributive buildings (e.g. Post Office Parking Ramp), and also a great deal of open space. Traditional, uniform regulations are not adequate because of this variety. Instead, the HPC has divided the district into sub-areas that contain structures with common features and that share common concerns.

Purpose

The purpose of the Heritage Preservation Commission in following these regulations for permit review is to provide architectural control and maintenance of the St. Anthony Falls Historic District by promulgating regulations governing construction and rehabilitation for the preservation, protection and perpetuation of the St. Anthony Falls Historic District designated by the State of Minnesota.

These regulations apply to any and all new construction and rehabilitation of existing buildings and structures within the St. Anthony Falls Historic District.

They furthermore are intended to:

- 1) preserve the memory of past events
- 2) encourage sympathetic new development
- 3) encourage and enable access to the river
- 4) foster along the riverfront and adjacent areas a viable community geared to the pedestrian.

General Regulations

Infill construction shall be visually compatible with historic structures within the sub-area with regard to siting, height, proportions of facade, walls of continuity, rhythm of projections, directional emphasis, materials, nature of openings, texture, roof shapes, details, and color.

The Heritage Preservation Commission shall review all permit requests according to the standards established in the regulations. Variances to these regulations will be granted only in cases where an applicant clearly demonstrates that an alternative design is a superior and compatible solution.

D. Nicollet Island (Masonry)

This area extends from Grove Street to the south end of Nicollet Island. It also extends north of Grove Street to approximately 150' north of the railroad tracks.

1. Siting: New buildings shall be constructed with principal elevations facing the street. Buildings moved onto Grove Street shall be in line with the Grove Street Flats.
2. Height: New buildings shall be one-to-two stories high, so that significant views are preserved. Overall building height not including chimneys shall be between 20 and 40 feet.
3. Rhythm of Projections: Projections, if provided, shall be limited to the lower 1-1/2 stories and the central portion or major subdivisions of the building.
4. Directional Emphasis: The existing buildings have no strong directional emphasis. Therefore, new buildings also shall have no strong emphasis.
5. Materials: New buildings shall be constructed of brick or limestone.

6. Nature of Openings: Openings should appear in a constant and repeated pattern across the principal facades. Window openings should be approximately 2 times as high as they are wide. Windows and doors should be set toward the front of the openings.
7. Roof Shapes: New roofs should be flat or nearly flat. Mansard roofs similar to the Grove Street Flats should be considered on a case-by-case basis.
8. Details: There are no special requirements.
9. Color: Primary surfaces of new buildings should be buff or grey. Trim should be subdued earth tones or flat black.

E. The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation

U.S. Department of the Interior National Park Service, 1990

District/Neighborhood

Recommended:

-Repairing features of the building, streetscape, or landscape by reinforcing the historic materials. Repair will also generally include the replacement in kind - or with a compatible substitute material - of those extensively deteriorated or missing parts of features when there are surviving prototypes such as porch balustrades, paving materials, or streetlight standards.

New Additions to Historic Buildings

Recommended:

-Constructing a new addition so that there is the least possible loss of historic materials and so that character-defining features are not obscured, damaged, or destroyed.

-Locating the attached exterior addition at the rear or on an inconspicuous side of a historic building; and limiting its size and scale in relationship to the historic building.

-Considering the attached exterior addition both in terms of the new use and the appearance of other buildings in the historic district or neighborhood. Design for the new work may be contemporary or may reference design motifs from the historic building. In either case, it should always be clearly differentiated from the historic building and be compatible in terms of mass, materials, relationship of solids to voids, and color.

Building Site

Recommended:

-Identifying, retaining, and preserving buildings and their features as well as features of the site that are important in defining its overall historic character. Site features can include driveways, walkways, lighting, fencing, signs, benches, fountains, wells, terraces, canal systems, plants and trees, berms, and drainage or irrigation ditches; and archeological features that are important in defining the history of the site.

-Minimizing disturbance of terrain around buildings or elsewhere on the site, thus reducing the possibility of destroying unknown archeological materials.

-Planning and carrying out any necessary investigation using professional archeologists and modern archeological methods when preservation in place is not feasible.

Not Recommended:

-Introducing heavy machinery or equipment into areas where their presence may disturb archeological materials.

-Introducing a new landscape feature or plant material that is visually incompatible with the site or that destroys site patterns or vistas.

-Introducing new construction onto the building site which is visually incompatible in terms of size, scale, design, materials, color and texture or which destroys historic relationships on the site.

District/Neighborhood

Recommended:

-Identifying, retaining, and preserving buildings, and streetscape, and landscape features which are important in defining the overall historic character of the district or neighborhood. Such features can include streets, alleys, paving, walkways, street lights, signs, benches, parks and gardens, and trees.

Not Recommended:

-Removing or radically changing those features of the district or neighborhood which are important in defining the overall historic character so that, as a result, the character is diminished.

-Removing a historic building, building feature, or landscape or streetscape feature that is important in defining the overall historic character of the district or the neighborhood.

F. FINDINGS:

1. The DeLaSalle High School Athletic Field Modified Design is located within the Nicollet Island sub-District of the St. Anthony Falls Historic District which is listed on the National Register of Historic Places, is a state of Minnesota designated district, and is locally designated.
2. DeLaSalle High School is applying for an Amendment to their original Certificate of Appropriateness. The original Certificate of Appropriateness was denied by the HPC but was approved on appeal by the Minneapolis City Council. As with the initial C of A, the Modified Design still requires the vacation and removal of approximately one block of Grove Street which dates from the Island's 1866 plat.
3. Grove Street is considered to be a contributing resource to the District; the demolition of this resource will be mitigated in the proposed design by the installation of limestone interpretive markers and by the installation of brick pavers at the historic intersections.
4. The Modified Design changes the originally proposed 29 foot tall press box, storage, bleacher seating structure to three one story brick structures that may have less of a visual impact on the District.
5. The Press Box building, and ticket /storage building in the Modified Design meet the District guidelines for new construction: they are one story, brick, and flat roofed.

6. The Press Box building does not meet the District guidelines in that it is not aligned with the street, but is perpendicular to, and will be constructed on top of Grove Street.
7. The Modified Design does not provide information regarding the location, height, color, and visual impact of the two required goalposts.
8. The Modified Design provided information about materials, function, structure, and visual impact of the proposed 30 foot tall net that will extend along the northern edge of the football field near the railroad right of way. This feature will be used only during games.
9. The Modified Design provides information about the batting cage to be located at the southeastern edge of the proposed field; it will measure 12 by 60 feet and will not be a permanent feature.
10. The Modified Design provides information about the potential visual impact of the proposed discus pad and cage to be located at the northeast edge of the project area. The 20 foot square concrete slab will include six (6) 14 foot aluminum pools which are removable.
11. Both the Modified Design and the Approved Design called for the location of the scoreboard mounted on the north façade of the DeLaSalle main high school building.
12. The Modified Design will remove the non-historic wood timber retaining wall on the east side of East island Avenue, exposing existing limestone retaining wall.
13. The Approved Design called for a 4 foot wide pedestrian path at the northwest and southeastern perimeters of the athletic field. The Modified Design calls for an expanded width to 6 feet.
14. As a condition of City Council approval, the applicants were asked to seek alternatives to proposed lighting. The Modified Design still calls for four, permanent 70 foot tall mast lighting poles with 10 light fixtures per pole. The lighting will still constitute an adverse affect to the District.
15. The Modified Design calls for final field surface material (grass or artificial) to be determined by the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board in consultation with the Community Planning and Economic Development staff. This consultation should consider available options, the most appropriate for the District and must consider preservation of surrounding resources and containment or other mitigation for potential archeology on site and in project area.
16. The Modified Design will destroy the historic alignment of Grove Street which is a contributing resource to the District. The removal of this historic corridor will lessen the overall integrity of the District, since it represents the removal of a portion of the Island's original 1866 plat which retains its location and association.
17. The historic alignment of Grove Street will be indicated by the placement of limestone markers, and installation of brick paving to mark its historic intersections; supplemental printed material could be developed for additional interpretation of the resource. Steps will be located from the bleachers to the berm along the historic alignment of Grove Street, and will provide views of the new field and of the alignment of the demolished street.

18. The Modified Design calls for “sinking” the football/athletic field an additional two feet lower than the original Approved Design, and the creation of a 6 foot, 11 inch tall berm on the west side of the field that will be used for the bleacher seating. As indicated by archeological consultants hired by the applicant, excavation of the field and construction of the berm will greatly increase the likelihood of disturbing previously unidentified archeological resources.
19. The Project Area has been identified as having high potential for pre-contact, contact, and historical archeological sites.
20. The Modified Design did not fully address a phased plan for the excavation, recovery, and final dispensation of potential resources and artifacts in the project area.
21. The Modified Design did not address an interpretive plan for the public dissemination of information about recovered artifacts and archeological data in the project area.

G. STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

That the Heritage Preservation Commission **adopt** the staff findings and **approve** an Amendment to the Certificate of Appropriateness for the following reasons:

- 1) Archeological testing and phased plan for excavation, recovery, and dispensation of resources and artifacts will be developed and approved by the Heritage Preservation Commission prior to the issuance of construction permits.
- 2) Applicant will develop an interpretive plan for the public dissemination of recovered artifacts and data which should be developed and approved by the Heritage Preservation Commission prior to the submission of final architectural and engineering drawings.
- 3) All signage for the athletic field and associated new facilities is subject to review and approval by Community Planning and Economic Development staff.
- 4) All final plans, elevations and drawings are subject to review and approval by CPED-Preservation staff.

Attachments:

- A. Application for Amendment to Certificate of Appropriateness, February 16, 2007
- B. Heritage Preservation Commission minutes, August 8, 2006
- C. Drawings/Specifications for Ball safety system; scoreboard, football net
- D. Compilation of Expert Opinions, submitted by Friends of the Riverfront, March 8, 2007
- E. National Trust for Historic Preservation; news release, January 10, 2007; Minneapolis Star-Tribune letter from President Richard Moe, February 23, 2007
- F. Letter from Robert Roscoe, March 8, 2007
- G. Submission from Lisa Hondros 3/19/2007
- H. Submission from Christina Morris 3/20/2007