



**Request for City Council Committee Action
From the Department of Community Planning & Economic Development**

Date: October 27, 2005

To: Council Member Gary Schiff, Zoning and Planning Committee

Prepared by: Amy Lucas, Senior Planner, Phone 612-673-2422

Presenter in Committee: Amy Lucas

Approved by: Barbara Sporlein, Director, Planning _____

Subject: Referral from October 11, 2005 Heritage Preservation Commission hearing

RECOMMENDATION: To adopt staff findings and approve the landmark designation of the Sears, Roebuck and Company Mail-Order Warehouse and Retail Store at 2843 Elliot Avenue.

Previous Directives: N/A

Financial Impact (Check those that apply)

No financial impact - or - Action is within current department budget.

Community Impact

Ward: 8

Neighborhood Notification: Central Neighborhood Improvement Association, Midtown Phillips, Powderhorn Park Neighborhood Association, Phillips West Neighborhood

City Goals: Consistent

Comprehensive Plan: Consistent

Background/Supporting Information:

The attached report summarizes the actions taken at the City Planning Commission hearing held on September 19, 2005 and the Heritage Preservation Commission hearing held on October 11, 2005. The findings and recommendations are respectfully submitted for the consideration of your Committee.

MINNEAPOLIS CITY PLANNING DEPARTMENT REPORT

HERITAGE PRESERVATION DESIGNATION

DATE OF HPC REVIEW: October 11, 2005

ADDRESS OF PROPERTY: 2843 Elliot Avenue, Sears, Roebuck and Company Mail-Order Warehouse and Retail Store (related addresses include: 2929 Chicago Avenue, 2901 Elliot Avenue, 900-930 East Lake Street)

STAFF CONTACT AND PHONE: Amy Lucas, 612-673-2422

PROPERTY OWNER: Midtown Exchange Hotel, LLC; Midtown Exchange Apartments Limited Partnership; Chicago Lofts LLC

CONTACT PERSON AND PHONE: Charlene Roise, Hess Roise Consultants,
612-338-1987

WARD: 8 **NEIGHBORHOOD ORGANIZATION:** Central Neighborhood Improvement Association, Midtown Phillips, Powderhorn Park Neighborhood Association, Phillips West Neighborhood

BACKGROUND:

The designation study for the Sears, Roebuck and Company Mail-Order Warehouse and Retail Store was completed in 1994. At that time, the item was not forwarded to City Council. The State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) was sent a copy of the proposed designation pursuant to the requirements of state law and section 599.250 of the city's Heritage Preservation Regulations. The SHPO found the property met the local designation criteria; said comments are attached in a letter dated August 3, 1995. On July 29, 2005 the property was placed on the National Register of Historic Places. On August 12, 2005, the property owner submitted an application requesting heritage designation of the property. At the public meeting of August 23, 2005, the Heritage Preservation Commission reviewed the nomination request and directed the planning director to commence the designation process. In addition, the proposed designation was submitted to the City Planning Commission (CPC) for its review and comment, pursuant to section 599.260 of the Heritage Preservation Regulations. The CPC was asked to consider the relationship of the proposed designation to the city's comprehensive plan, the effect of the proposed designation on the surrounding area, and the consistency of the proposed designation with applicable development plans or objectives. On September 19, 2005 the CPC adopted the findings and recommendations included in the Planning Department staff report. A copy of the staff report dated September 19, 2005 is attached.

AUTHORITY FOR REVIEW:

Chapter 599 of the Minneapolis Code of Ordinances, Heritage Preservation Regulations, authorizes the HPC to hold a public hearing to consider proposed designations and to make findings and recommendations to the Zoning and Planning Committee of the City Council with respect to proposed designations as follows:

599.270. Designation hearing. Following completion of the designation study the commission shall hold a public hearing to consider the proposed designation, as provided in section 599.170. Any person having a legal or equitable interest in a nominated property shall be allowed reasonable opportunity to give testimony or present evidence concerning the proposed designation.

599.280. Commission recommendation. Following the public hearing, the commission shall make findings with respect to the proposed designation and shall submit the same together with its recommendation to the zoning and planning committee of the city council. In making its findings and recommendation, the commission shall consider the designation criteria contained in section 599.210, the information contained in the designation study, the state historic preservation officer's comments, the city planning commission's comments, the planning director's report and all testimony and evidence received at the public hearing relating to the designation.

DESIGNATION CRITERIA:

Section 599.210 of the Heritage Preservation Regulations establishes criteria to be considered in determining whether a property is worthy of designation as a landmark or historic district because of its historical, cultural, architectural, archaeological or engineering significance. To be eligible for designation, a property must meet at least one of the following designation criteria:

- (1) The property is associated with significant events or with periods that exemplify broad patterns of cultural, political, economic or social history.
- (2) The property is associated with the lives of significant persons or groups.
- (3) The property contains or is associated with distinctive elements of city identity.
- (4) The property embodies the distinctive characteristics of an architectural or engineering type or style, or method of construction.
- (5) The property exemplifies a landscape design or development pattern distinguished by innovation, rarity, uniqueness or quality of design or detail.
- (6) The property exemplifies works of master builders, engineers, designers, artists, craftsmen or architects.
- (7) The property has yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

FINDINGS

1. Consistency with designation criteria:

The designation study for the Sears, Roebuck and Company Mail-Order Warehouse and Retail Store indicates consistency with the designation criteria and finds that the property meets designation criteria (1) and (4) as follows:

- (1) *The property is associated with significant events or with periods that exemplify broad patterns of cultural, political, economic or social history.*

The building represents a relatively early phase in the development of a company that became a major retailer in the United States. The Sears building represents both the mail order business on which the company was founded, and also the retail store which began to dominate the business soon after the construction of the Minneapolis structure. The Sears tower on Lake Street provided a commanding presence that not only created a focus for retail activity, but acted as a dominant landmark visible throughout south Minneapolis. The move of Sears to an outlying area, rather than the downtown business district was a precursor to the suburban malls that would begin to dominate retailing three decades later.

- (4) *The property embodies the distinctive characteristics of an architectural or engineering type or style, or method of construction.*

The Sears building is also significant because it represents a well-conserved example of the industrial designs of George Nimmons and Company. Nimmons was prominent among architects for his concept of industrial design and its impact on employees, and he wrote widely of his applications in leading architectural magazines.

2. Consistency with the comprehensive plan:

The proposed designation promotes preservation of an historic resource and supports the following goal and policies of *The Minneapolis Plan*:

Goal 6. *Preserve, enhance and create a sustainable natural and historic environment citywide.*

Policy 1.7. *Minneapolis will recognize and celebrate its history.*

Policy 9.2. *Minneapolis will continue to preserve the natural ecology and the historical features that define its unique identity in the region.*

Policy 9.4. *Minneapolis will promote preservation as a tool for economic development and community revitalization.*

3. Effect on the surrounding area:

The proposed designation will preserve a unique local landmark. The designation will not negatively affect the surrounding area.

4. Consistency with applicable development objectives:

No small area plans for this area of Minneapolis have been adopted by the City Council. However, the Lake Street Midtown Greenway Corridor Framework Plan was approved by the City Planning Commission in 1999. The designation is consistent with the plan which promotes the rehabilitation and reuse of the Sears building as a mixed-use center. Between April of 2004 and July of 2005, the City approved multiple land use applications for the

redevelopment of this site. These applications included the rehabilitation of the historic portions of the Sears building.

5. Required comments:

The City Planning Commission and the State Historic Preservation Office have commented favorably on the designation.

RECOMMENDATION OF THE CITY PLANNING DEPARTMENT:

Planning Staff recommends that the Heritage Preservation Commission **adopt** the above findings and submit the same together with a recommendation to **approve** the landmark designation of the Sears, Roebuck and Company Mail-Order Warehouse and Retail Store to the Zoning and Planning Committee of the City Council.

RECOMMENDATION OF THE HERITAGE PRESERVATION COMMISSION:

At the public hearing of October 11, 2005, the HPC moved to **adopt** staff findings and forwarded the recommendation to **approve** landmark designation of the Sears, Roebuck and Company Mail-Order Warehouse and Retail Store to the Zoning and Planning Committee of the City Council.

Attachments:

1. Nomination Form, August 12, 2005
2. Sears, Roebuck and Company Mail-Order Warehouse and Retail Store designation study, July 1994.
3. State Historic Preservation Officer comments, August 3, 1995.
4. Planning Department report to the City Planning Commission, September 19, 2005.