



Request for City Council Committee Action from the Department of Community Planning & Economic Development – Planning Division

Date: June 4, 2009

To: Council Member Gary Schiff, Chair, Zoning and Planning Committee
Members of the Committee

Referral to: Zoning and Planning Committee

Subject: Mark Freund, the property owner of 1013 and 1019 University Avenue SE, is appealing the decision made by the Heritage Preservation Commission (HPC) denying a Certificate of Appropriateness application that would allow for the demolition of the Pi Beta Phi Sorority House at 1019 University Avenue SE, a contributing structure to the Greek Letter Chapter House Historic District (BZH 25781).

Recommendation: The HPC at their April 14 meeting adopted the staff recommendation and denied the Certificate of Appropriateness application to allow for the demolition of the Pi Beta Phi Sorority House at 1019 University Avenue SE, a contributing structure to the Greek Letter Chapter House Historic District. The vote was 6-2.

Previous Directives: N/A

Prepared or Submitted by: Aaron Hanauer, Senior Planner, 612-673-2494

Approved by: Jack Byers, Planning Supervisor, 612-673-2634

Presenters in Committee: Aaron Hanauer, Senior Planner

Financial Impact (Check those that apply)

- No financial impact (If checked, go directly to Background/Supporting Information).
- Action requires an appropriation increase to the _____ Capital Budget or _____ Operating Budget.
- Action provides increased revenue for appropriation increase.
- Action requires use of contingency or reserves.
- Business Plan: _____ Action is within the plan. _____ Action requires a change to plan.
- Other financial impact (Explain):
- Request provided to department's finance contact when provided to the Committee Coordinator.

Community Impact (use any categories that apply)

Ward: 3

Neighborhood Notification: The Marcy Holmes Neighborhood Association was notified of this application by letter, mailed on May 18, 2009

City Goals: See staff report.

Comprehensive Plan: See staff report.

Zoning Code: See staff report.

Living Wage/Job Linkage: Not applicable.

Other: Not applicable.

Background/Supporting Information Attached:

Mark Freund, the property owner of 1013 and 1019 University Avenue SE, is appealing the decision made by the Heritage Preservation Commission at their April 14 meeting (HPC) denying a Certificate of Appropriateness application to allow for the demolition of the house at 1019 University Avenue SE, a contributing structure to the Greek Letter Chapter House Historic District. The applicant submitted their appeal application with reason for appeal on April 23, 2009 (see Appendix A: appeal application).

Supporting Material

Appendix A: Appeal Application

Appendix B: Heritage Preservation Commission Hearing Testimony and Actions

Appendix C: Staff Report and Staff Report Appendices A-E

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

FILE NAME: 1019 University Avenue S.E. (BZH 25781)

APPLICANT: Crowe Construction Management (651) 203-1166 on behalf of property owner, Mark Freund

DATE OF APPLICATION: March 11, 2009

PUBLICATION DATE: April 7, 2009

DATE OF HEARING: April 14, 2009

APPEAL PERIOD EXPIRATION: April 24, 2009

STAFF INVESTIGATION AND REPORT: Aaron Hanauer, Senior Planner

REQUEST: Certificate of Appropriateness for Proposed Demolition

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The property owner, Mark Freund, has submitted plans to construct a new 24-unit building at 1013 and 1019 University Avenue S.E. As part of this project, the applicant has submitted a Certificate of Appropriateness application for the demolition of 1019 University Avenue S.E. Based on the review, staff is recommending that the Heritage Preservation Commission deny the Certificate of Appropriateness application.

A. SITE DESCRIPTION AND BACKGROUND

District/Area Information of Subject Property	
Historic District	University of Minnesota Greek Letter Chapter House Historic District
District Significance	Architecture and social significance
Neighborhood	Marcy Holmes
Date of Local Designation	2003
Date of National Designation	N/A
Period of Significance	1907-1936
Property Information	
Address	1019 University Avenue S.E.
Historic Name	Pi Beta Phi Sorority House
Classification	- Contributing - Eligible for individual landmark designation
Construction Date	1916
Original Builder/Contractor	Carlsted Brothers
Original Architect	Ethel Bartholomew and Marion Alice Parker
Architectural Style	Prairie-School
Historical Use	Chapter House
Current Use	Boarding House

B. DESCRIPTION

B1. District

The University of Minnesota Greek Letter Chapter House District consists of 33 properties and two parts: Fraternity Row and Off the Row. The district was designated based on local criterion 1 and 4.

Criteria 1: The property is associated with significant events or with periods that exemplify broad patterns of cultural, political, economic or social history.

Criteria 4: The property embodies the distinctive characteristics of an architectural or engineering type or style, or method of construction.

Fraternity Row is made up of 19 fraternity chapter houses that are located between 1515 University and 1901 University Avenue S.E. that were built between 1907 and 1930 (see Appendix C3.5). There are three noncontributing properties within *Fraternity Row*.

Off the Row consists of 11 non-contiguous fraternities and sororities dating from 1911-1936; 10 of these properties are located west of *Fraternity Row* (see Appendix C3.5). The Pi Beta Sorority House is part of the *Off the Row* portion of the historic district.

B2. 1019 University Avenue S.E.

The structure at 1019 University Avenue S.E. is stucco, two-stories, and rests on a concrete foundation. The low-pitched hip roof has asphalt shingles, wide eaves, and a prominent stucco-clad chimney at the roof peak (Appendix B20 and B21). The front elevation contains a projecting bay with eight single-pane casement windows and fixed transoms. The west elevation entry is under an Elmslie-inspired sawnwood arched hood wood ornament with short returns (see Appendix B20 and C7-C8). At the second story, seven windows are placed directly under the soffit of the wide eaves (Appendix C1 and C3).

The properties that are adjacent to Pi Beta Sorority House are modest residential structures that were built prior to the construction of the Pi Beta Sorority House (see appendix B41, C11, and C12)

The Pi Beta Sorority at 1019 University Avenue S.E. is an important Minneapolis building with at least five honors or distinctions:

1. It is contributing structure to the Greek Letter Chapter House District which is designated for its social significance (Criteria 1) and architecture (Criteria 4);
2. It is eligible for individual designation based on its social significance and architecture. It is also potentially eligible for individually designation with its association with a master architect.
3. The Pi Beta Sorority House, built in 1916, is one of the earliest examples of a chapter house built by a sorority at the University of Minnesota (see Appendix C22 and C23);
4. The Pi Beta Sorority House is a well-conserved and rare example of a Prairie-School Greek chapter house;
5. The Pi Beta Sorority House exemplifies the architectural work of Marion Alice Parker and Ethel Bartholomew. Ms. Parker and Ms. Bartholomew were two of the first women architects to practice in Minnesota and the Pi Beta Sorority House is the earliest known property extant that Ms. Parker is the accredited architect. The City of Minneapolis does not have another designated property by either of these women.

C. PROPOSED WORK

The Applicant submitted plans to tear down the residential structures at 1013 and 1019 University Avenue, join the lots, and construct a new 24-unit building on these properties (see Appendix B40-B50).

D. NECESSITY OF DEMOLITION

The Minneapolis Code of Ordinances, Title 23, Heritage Preservation, Chapter 599 Heritage Preservation Regulations states that before approving the demolition of a property within a historic district, the commission shall make findings that the demolition is necessary to correct an unsafe or dangerous condition on the property, or that there are no reasonable alternatives to the demolition. In determining whether reasonable alternatives exist, the commission shall consider, but not be limited to the significance of the property, the integrity of the property and the economic value or usefulness of the existing structure, including its current use, costs of renovation and feasible alternative uses. The commission may delay a final decision for a reasonable period of time to allow parties interested in preserving the historic resource a reasonable opportunity to act to protect it.

D1. Unsafe or Dangerous Condition:

The demolition is not necessary to correct an unsafe or dangerous condition on the property. The applicant has not claimed that the subject property is unsafe or in a dangerous condition nor provided a structural analysis (see Appendix B).

D2a. Reasonable Alternatives to Demolition (Applicant):

The applicant does not state that demolition is the only option for 1019 University Avenue S.E. Mr. Freund, however, does state that the building is functionally obsolete due in large part to the small bedroom sizes (see Attachment B7, B11, and B17). Furthermore, the applicant has submitted an estimate from Crowe Construction that indicates the cost to gut and rehab the structure will exceed \$435,000 (Attachment B27). However, for this estimate, the applicant does not provide plan details (see Appendix B).

D2a. Reasonable Alternatives to Demolition (CPED):

CPED believes that reasonable alternatives to demolition exist for the Pi Beta Sorority House at 1019 University Avenue S.E, which is zoned R5/multiple-family district.

One option would be to renovate and/or restore the property in its current configuration. The property owner has provided reasons why he feels this will not work (see Appendix B7 and B8).

A second option would be to complete an interior remodel that returns the interior to a chapter house or co-housing configuration with shared living spaces on the first floor. In 1972, the sorority house was converted into a 13-room unlicensed hotel that likely turned the first floor shared space into individual bedrooms (source: building permit index card). The Pi Beta Sorority House, when originally constructed, had a reception hall, living room, and formal dining room on the first floor and hosted gatherings with more than 40 plus guests (see Appendix C10-C12). A remodeling project could bring back these formal gathering areas for a chapter house or co-housing living arrangement.

A third option would be to complete an interior remodel that either increases the size of the rooms or creates separate housing units.

CPED believes at least one of these options could be explored as potentially viable and will allow for the Pi Beta Sorority House to be retained. Staff provided the applicant a list of financial, technical, research, design, and energy efficiency resources last November, however, the applicant

has not responded to how or why an interior remodeling project would not work for this property (see Appendix C20-21).

D2b. Significance:

The Pi Beta Sorority is a contributing structure to the Greek Letter Chapter House District. It was designated in 2003 for its social significance and architectural integrity (Criteria 1 and 4). The Pi Beta Sorority House is also potentially eligible for individual designation. The Greek Letter Chapter House Designation Study points out the following specific reasons of importance of the Pi Beta Sorority House (see Appendix C1 and C2):

- Built in 1916, it is one of the earliest examples of a chapter house built by a sorority at the University of Minnesota;
- It is the only Prairie School-inspired chapter house in Minneapolis;
- It was designed by pioneering female architects Marion Alice Parker and Ethel Bartholomew.

Marion Alice Parker was one of the first women architects to practice in Minnesota and one of the few women in the United States practicing progressive architecture in the early part of the 20th century (see Appendix C2).

Ethel Bartholomew was considered one of the finest women architects in the early part of the 20th century and was given particular praise for her contributions to the kitchen (see Appendix C9).

CPED believes that the Pi Beta Sorority House is the only property in Minneapolis that is designated which Marion Alice Parker is accredited as being the architect. The applicant has provided a list of 13 properties in Minneapolis that he believes Marion Alice Parker was either the draftsman or architect (see Appendix B25-B26). When staff analyzed the list, the only other property in which Ms. Parker is the accredited architect is 4933 Oliver Avenue South. This property was her personal residence and built in 1921, five years after the subject property.

D2c. Integrity:

The City of Minneapolis and the National Register recognize a property's integrity through seven aspects or qualities: location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association (see Appendix E1).

The property owner has provided his analysis of the integrity. Mr. Freund believes the property possesses only one aspect of integrity: location (see Appendix B8-B9).

The 2003 Greek Letter Chapter House Designation Study states that 1019 University Avenue's historic integrity is good (see Appendix C2).

CPED believes that the property requires some maintenance work, however, it retains all seven aspects/qualities of integrity based on the City of Minneapolis Heritage Preservation ordinance and the National Register evaluation (see attachment E). The following is a staff analysis of the property's integrity.

Location: The property's retains its integrity of location. Location is the place where the historic property was constructed. The property was built at this location in 1916.

Design: The property retains its Prairie-School design integrity. Design is the composition of elements that constitute the form, plan, space, structure, and style of the property. There are at least

five building features that can be generalized in the Prairie-School architectural style (Source: A Field Guide to American Houses, Virginia and Lee McAlester, 1984). Table 1 below lists the five building features that help define the Prairie School architectural style, and the features present at 1019 University Avenue S.E (note: shading of feature indicates it is present at 1019 University Avenue S.E.).

Table 1: Prairie-Style Architecture Design Elements at 1013 University Avenue S.E.

Identifying features of Prairie-Style	1013 University Avenue S.E.
Low-pitched roof, usually hipped	Low-pitched hipped roof
Widely overhanging eaves	Widely overhanging eaves
Two stories	Two stories
One-story wings or porches	None
Eaves, cornices, and façade detailing emphasizing horizontal lines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Contrasting horizontal wood trim on façade - Broad, flat horizontal chimney with dark coping at the top - Small horizontal transoms over the first floor windows - horizontal row of casement windows having detailed vertical detailing is present

In addition, the Elmslie-inspired sawnwood arched hood wood ornament with short returns that is above the main entrance on the west elevation reinforces the architectural design (see Appendix B20, and C7-C8)

Setting: The property retains its integrity of setting. Setting is the physical environment of a historic property that illustrates the character of the place. The block of University Avenue, which Pi Beta Sorority House is located, contains the six structures that were built prior to 1917 (see Appendix C11). In addition, Florence Court, which was developed in the 1880's and is a local landmark, is located just to the south of the subject property. Furthermore, the designated chapter houses that are not part of *Fraternity Row* are characterized as being unpretentious houses that fit in with their neighboring surroundings, which is the case with the Pi Beta Sorority House.

Materials: The building possess integrity of materials. The applicant provides images that show that window sashes have been replaced (see Appendix B31-B38). However, most of the exterior character-defining features of the Prairie-School architectural style are present. These include: the stucco exterior, horizontal chimney, façade original window openings, Contrasting horizontal wood trim on the front elevation, the broad, flat horizontal chimney with dark coping at the top, and the Elmslie-inspired sawnwood arched hood wood ornament above the west entrance. In addition, it is likely the property retains most if not all of the façade window sashes.

Workmanship: This building retains integrity of workmanship. Workmanship is the physical evidence of the crafts of a particular culture or people during a period of history. The Prairie-School architectural style was most prevalent from 1900-1920 (Source: McAlester). The subject property, though in need of some maintenance work, possesses the exterior characteristics that define this architectural style.

Feeling: The building's integrity of feeling remains. Feeling is the quality that a historic property has in evoking the aesthetics or historical sense of a past period of time. The structure is able to express the historical significance as a chapter house. The Pi Beta Sorority House is part of the group of chapter houses known as *Off the Row*. The *Off the Row* chapter houses are known for

being unpretentious houses that fit in with their neighboring residential surroundings which is the case with the Pi Beta Sorority House (see Appendix C16). In addition, the subject property continues to serve as a good example of the Prairie-School architectural style.

Association: The property's integrity of association remains. Association is the direct link between a property and the event or person/group for which the property is significant. The structure, which was built originally as a sorority, has had few alterations to the façade. The structure in its current location is well suited to continue to provide student housing for a chapter house or other students.

D2d. Economic Value or Usefulness of the Existing Structure:

The subject property is zoned R5 and is 6,720 square feet in area. The City of Minneapolis records indicate that the property has rights as 16-room boarding house.

Hennepin County Assessor records indicate the value of the estimated market value as of January 2, 2008 is \$486,100. The land was estimated at \$148,300 and the building was estimated at \$337,800. Mark Freund, the property owner, purchased the property in December 1999 for \$484,300.

The applicant submitted an estimate from Crowe Construction that indicates the cost to gut and rehab the structure will exceed \$435,000 (Attachment B27). However, the applicant does not provide details of this plan nor a proforma that shows the rehabilitation is not feasible (see Appendix B).

The Pi Beta Sorority House does have economic value and usefulness in its current function. The property has not been proven to be structurally deficient and can continue to provide housing for a chapter house, other university students or non-students.

E. COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

The following City of Minneapolis Comprehensive Plan policies do not support the proposed demolition of 1019 University Avenue S.E.

Policy 1.7: "Minneapolis will recognize and celebrate its history." This policy is supported by the following implementation step "encourage new developments to retain historic structures, incorporating them into new development rather than demolishing them."

Policy 4.14: "Minneapolis will maintain the quality and unique character of the city's housing stock, thus maintaining the character of the vast majority of residential blocks in the city." This policy is supported by the following implementation step "encourage adaptive re-use, retrofit and renovation projects that make the city's housing stock competitive on the regional market."

F. PUBLIC COMMENTS

CPED notified property owners within 350 feet of the Certificate of Appropriateness applications on March 27, 2009. The applicant submitted two letters from the Marcy Holmes Neighborhood Association (see Appendix B15-16). The Marcy Holmes Neighborhood also submitted one letter to CPED (see Appendix D1). The most recent letter from the Marcy Holmes Neighborhood dated February 25, 2009 states, "The MNHA board and land use committee support the demolition provided the HPC agrees that the destruction of the historical properties in this case in the only appropriate measure (see Appendix B11)."

G. FINDINGS

District Background:

1. The Greek Letter Chapter House Historic District is a locally designated based on Criteria 1: Association with significant events or with periods that exemplify broad patterns of cultural, political, economic or social history, and Criteria 4: Embodiment of the distinctive characteristics of an architectural or engineering type or style, or method of construction.
2. The district's period of significance is 1907-1936.
3. The University of Minnesota Greek Letter Chapter House District consists of 33 properties and two parts: *Fraternity Row* and *Off the Row*. *Off the Row* consists of 11 non-contiguous fraternities and sororities dating from 1911-1936; 10 of these properties are located west of *Fraternity Row*. The Pi Beta Sorority House is part of the *Off the Row* portion of the historic district.

Proposed Work:

4. The Applicant submitted plans to tear down the residential structures at 1013 and 1019 University Avenue, join the lots, and construct a new 24-unit building on these properties.

Unsafe or Dangerous Condition:

5. The applicant has not demonstrated that demolition is required to correct an unsafe or dangerous condition on the property.

Reasonable Alternatives to Demolition

6. The applicant has not demonstrated that demolition is the only feasible alternative.
7. The applicant states that no reasonable alternatives to the destruction of 1019 University Avenue S.E. exist because the property is functionally obsolete due to the current room sizes. If true, the applicant hasn't demonstrated that other alternatives have been explored in depth.
8. CPED believes that reasonable alternatives to demolition exist for the Pi Beta Sorority House.

Significance

9. The Pi Beta Sorority is a contributing structure to the Greek Letter Chapter House District. It was designated in 2003 for its social and architectural significance (Criteria 1 and 4).
10. The Pi Beta Sorority House is potentially eligible for individual designation based on its social significance, architecture, and possible association with a master architect;
11. The Pi Beta Phi Sorority House was built in 1916 in the Prairie-School architectural style.
12. The Pi Beta Sorority House is significant as one of the earliest examples of a chapter house built by a sorority at the University of Minnesota.
13. The Pi Beta Sorority House is notable as a well-conserved, and rare example of a Prairie-School Greek chapter house.
14. The Pi Beta Sorority House was designed by two of the first women architects to practice in Minnesota, Marion Alice Parka and Ethel Bartholomew.
15. The Pi Beta Sorority House is the only property in Minneapolis that is historically designated in which Marion Alice Parker is accredited as being the architect. Marion Alice Parker is significant for her contributions to the Prairie architectural style and for being one of the first female architects to practice in Minnesota.

Integrity

16. The property owner has provided an analysis of the integrity. Mr. Freund believes the property possesses only one aspect of integrity, location.

17. The Greek Letter Chapter House Designation Study states that 1019 University Avenue's historic integrity is good. CPED believes that the property has not lost any of its historic integrity.
18. CPED believes that the property is in need of some maintenance work, but retains all seven aspects/qualities of integrity: location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association.

Economic Value or Usefulness of the Existing Structure

19. The City of Minneapolis records indicate that the property has rights as a 16-room boarding house.
20. Hennepin County Assessor records indicate the value of the estimated market value as of January 2, 2008 is \$486,100. The land was estimated at \$148,300 and the building was estimated at \$337,800. Mark Freund, the property owner, purchased the property in December 1999 for \$484,300.
21. The Applicant submitted an estimate from Crowe Construction that indicates the cost to gut and rehab the structure will exceed \$435,000. However, the applicant does not provide details of this plan nor a proforma that shows the rehabilitation is not feasible.
22. The Pi Beta Sorority House does have economic value and usefulness in its current function. The property is not structurally deficient and can continue to provide housing for a chapter house, other university students or non-students.

Comprehensive Plan

23. Policy 1.7 and 4.14 do not support the demolition of 1019 University Avenue S.E.

H. STAFF RECOMMENDATION

CPED recommends that the Heritage Preservation Commission **adopt** staff findings and **deny** the demolition application of the property at 1019 University Avenue S.E.

I. ATTACHMENTS

Appendix A: University of Minnesota Greek Letter Chapter House Historic District

Appendix B: Application

Appendix C: CPED Supplied Information (Designation Study Excerpts, Property Images, Maps, AIA Guide to the Twin Cities Excerpt, Historic Newspaper Information)

Appendix D: Public Comments

Appendix E: National Register Bulletin Guidelines for Evaluating Integrity

APPEAL OF THE DECISION OF THE
HERITAGE PRESERVATION COMMISSION
MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA

The undersigned hereby Appeals to the City Council the decision of the Heritage Preservation Commission, as authorized in section 599.190 of the Minneapolis Code of Ordinances.

BZH
25781

1. Name of Appellant: Mark Freund
Address: 1678 Selby Ave, St Paul, MN 55104
Daytime Telephone: Mark Freund 651-238-4052

2. Street address of Affected Property: 1019 University Ave SE
Mpls, MN 55414
Legal Description: The SWLY 160 ft of SELY 9 ft of Lot 8 and the
SWLY 160 ft of NWLY 1/2 of Lot 9

3. Describe the decision being appealed and the reasons for appealing the decision.
Attach additional documentation as needed:
I am appealing the HPC decision to not allow
the demolition of the building on this site
See attached description and documentation

4. Attach a list of property owners and mailing labels for property located within 350 feet of the affected property obtained from:

Hennepin County Taxpayer Services Division
A-600 Government Center
300 South 6th Street
Minneapolis, MN 55487
Telephone: 612-348-5910

5. Attach three copies of scaled and dimensioned plans for the project including at least one copy that is reduced to 8 1/2" x 11" or 11" x 17". Project plans must include a site plan, floor plan, and all exterior elevations.

Signature of Applicant:

 _____

Date: 23 Apr 09

Submit completed application and required attachments to:

Minneapolis Community Planning & Economic Development (CPED)
Preservation and Design
250 S. 4th Street, Room 300
Minneapolis, MN 55415-1385
Telephone: 612-673-2597
Telephone: 612-673-2597

For CPED-Planning use only:

Date received: _____

Received by: _____

Date application complete: _____

Name of building/project: _____

Historic district (if applicable): _____

Public hearing date: _____

Date HPC decided: _____

Date City Council Approved: _____

Date City Council Denied: _____

**An Overview of the Project Proposal by Mark Freund for 1019 University Ave SE
including a Brief Relevant History of Mark Freund as well as the
Historic, Present, and Proposed uses of the site
Substantiating the Justification for
Demolition and Reconstruction as the Only Viable Alternative for this property**

I have been a property owner in the Marcy-Holmes neighborhood for 12 years. In that time I've purchased and rehabilitated 10 properties. Without exception, each property that I've purchased was in such poor shape that I was amazed that people actually lived there.

The first thing I do when I purchase a property is introduce myself to my neighbors if they are homeowners, and give them my phone number. I tell them about my business and assure them that the running of the property will change dramatically. I am keenly aware that my neighbors appreciate me more than most in my position. It is important that I contribute positively to the neighborhood. One example is that I am the only landlord who ever rode on the city garbage truck to pick up trash when MHNA did this annually for oversized items and other things that couldn't ordinarily go out in the trash.

Once a property has gone through my processes of improvement, I fill them with the quality tenant that any landlord would like and that any neighbor doesn't hate. About 2/3 of all my tenants are graduate or international students, about 1/4 are undergrads who understand that "Animal House" is anywhere but my house, and the final approximate 10% are young professionals.

In the more than 75 units that I own, I generally retain about 2/3 of my tenants from year to year as I am a landlord who takes care of his properties and cares about his tenants.

After exploring all other options for this property, I came to the conclusion that the only financially feasible option was to demolish this house and start over. As you will see, I considered all possibilities from simply adding an apartment in the basement in conjunction w/combining smaller rooms (to not increase density) to clearing out all floors and making three 4BR apartments from basement to 2nd floor w/an addition on the back to an action that I took at the request of my future tenant in 2005 (discussed later) was that I combined 6 rooms into 3 "suites" with doors between them so that they could be used as one or separately, depending on their needs. The costs involved in these (other than the combining rooms which I did) are so prohibitive that no lender or investor would or could consider them. Removing rooms on the 1st floor to provide more gathering space will not attract Greek suitors as the remaining rooms (8 of 11) would be in the 7 x 10 range. Moving the house is also not a viable alternative because a 7 x 10 room continues to be a 7 x 10 room no matter where the house is located. It is an invitation for blight wherever it is.

Once I was informed about the possible historical significance of this property, I began to do research on it. Marion Alice Parker was the architect on this project in 1916. There was very little to be found about her and even less about the house. More information about her history and this house is included in the outline format below. The short Greek affiliation is also included below.

I am consoled in the fact that the vote in the Heritage Preservation Commission about my project proposal was not unanimous. Linda Mack and Kevin Kelley strongly supported my proposal while two other commissioners appeared to be “on the fence” about it but ultimately did not come down on my side.

Regardless, I was not able to have a dialogue with them as they made their suggestions to me in “closed session.” They suggested that I explore (which I already had but may not have articulated very well) to basically “raze” everything inside and start over making apartments or whatever might make sense. They further stated that the only thing that needed to be saved was the front elevation (street presence).

What I would have liked to have asked, and purport to contend here is “what” are we preserving of the history of the building or the architect and her place in history if all we have is the front elevation. It’s clear that there’s nothing inside to save or restore and with so much of the exterior having been compromised over the years—none of this does justice to history nor does it provide any context to that what it once was. My proposed project addresses all of these, but we didn’t get to that part as the “construction” proposal was never addressed having not cleared this first hurdle.

The following is an outline of the important points regarding this property and how, with the redevelopment proposed, I will be able to continue my trajectory of continually improving the neighborhood and the tenant/student experience from the living standpoint.

Thank you for your consideration.

- 1) The existing building built as a sorority house in 1916 is functionally obsolete.
 - a) This is a 17-room Lodging House with rooms apportioned as follows:
 - i) 9 rooms < 100 sq. ft averaging 85 sq ft w/smallest 78 sq ft
 - ii) 5 rooms >= 140 sq ft which is reasonable for living
 - iii) the remaining rooms are between these 2 ranges
 - iv) Only 12 rooms have closets
 - b) The majority of the rooms can feasibly be rented for \$300 per month.
 - i) The population attracted to a room of this rate as witnessed by the current owner tends to be primarily criminal, i.e 54 y/o men w/ankle bracelets, drug dealers, panhandlers, etc. “Anything will help God Bless” signs were found in several rooms when purchased.
 - ii) Upon purchasing this house, this owner was contacted by FBI, Mpls Police, Hennepin County Sheriff on multiple occasions looking for different individuals (with each inquiry) at this address. Drug activity was confirmed.
 - iii) This rate attracts a different population than the graduate, international, undergraduate student populations as well as young professionals who just need a room as they newly begin.
 - c) Less than ½ of the building is, therefore, viable for rental as rooms. This creates a financial hardship for any owner who serves the student or professional populations.

- 2) This was the 6th of the first 9 sorority houses built between 1912 and 1936. That, in and of itself should not lend itself to any particular significance as it wasn't the 1st nor the last.
 - a) While built with many Prairie School attributes, the compromises made from the very inception of the project with the exceedingly small living spaces (which is the exact opposite of the Prairie School tradition) do not make this an exceptional example of that movement.
 - b) There are a number of other beautiful and prime examples of well-preserved Prairie School architecture in which this architect contributed significantly many of which are located right here in Minneapolis. Examples are provided in this packet and various credit is given to Marion Alice Parker in the parabiographies written by William Gray Purcell himself while others have been researched by scholar Nicole Watson (described later in this document).
- 3) In 1916, the sorority house was built for "young ladies who need just enough for a bed and a small table." It was commissioned by Pi Beta Phi sorority which stayed in it for just 12 years. Before reaching their 10th year in the house, they realized that they had made an error in judgment and that this house would not suffice. The rooms were small, as designed, but the young ladies needed more space (even in 1916) and they commissioned a new house to be built. They have continuously occupied that house since 1928 when it was completed. It is located at 1109 5th St SE.
 - a) In 2009 peoples' needs for space are far different
 - i) a 10' x 10' room is considered small in any home.
 - ii) a 7' x 10' space is a closet in many homes.
 - iii) Hennepin County Jail Cells measure 8 x 12.
 - b) In the foreseeable future, the space needs addressed with the proposed project seem to be satisfactory.

4) Addressing Building Integrity

- a) **Location:** The property is in the same location where it was originally constructed. Other than being from the same era as most of the surrounding structures there is nothing significant about its location.
- b) **Design:** Built in the progressive Prairie Style, this house was typical of the structures built by the architectural firm in its day. Both interior and exterior have sustained significant changes to the original design. Save several 7x10 and 8x10 rooms, there is almost nothing else to salvage "design-wise" of the original interior, as walls have been moved and/or constructed completely alien to the original design. The exterior has been changed as well as window sizes/numbers were changed to accommodate double-hung windows (a style that did not exist in the original structure). The poor attempt to match the original stucco due to size difference is evident in several locations where these changes occurred. At least 2 locations are of significant size difference. 45 of the 53 current windows have been replaced in this manner thusly changing significantly the original design and flow. There is virtually no integrity to the original design left.

- c) **Setting:** When referring to the Greek Letter Chapter House Historic District there is absolutely no integrity of setting as the entire district, with few exceptions, resides in the 4 blocks between 1515 and 1901 University Ave SE. This house has no Greek relevance whatsoever other than its original use. It is not surrounded by any Greek houses nor are there any on the block. This block is located nearly ½ mile away from the contiguous Greek District known as Fraternity Row. This house is “spot-zoned” for lack of a better term in the Greek District and it’s location does not lend itself to the Greek District as that district resides on the other side of the east bank campus.
- d) **Materials and Workmanship:** Most of the materials used in the original construction have been compromised significantly. More than 90% of the interior spaces are unlike original in workmanship, material and decor while the exterior, appearing to be more intact percentage-wise, one cannot ignore the fact that there have been significant modification such as the 45 of 53 current windows were been replaced w/vinyl replacement windows w/significantly different size/shape aspect ratios and noticeably poor attempts to match the original stucco to accommodate these changes. This leaves the exterior integrity tremendously compromised regarding materials and workmanship.
- e) **Feeling:** There is no significant integrity feeling given by this property as it’s street presence is clearly felt when one walks or drives by, unable to avoid seeing the obviously poorly executed exterior changes that only leaves one to imagine the condition on the inside. I have cleaned and painted the building but this “feeling” remains. The intangible but obvious “feeling” of apprehension is sensed immediately upon greeting prospective tenants at this property as opposed to my other rooming houses where you can palpate the positive. Beginning with that “negative” is nearly impossible to overcome when you then reveal some of the smallest rooms available in the neighborhood. We have had a number of visitors who are “Prairie School” aficionados who are incredulously disappointed once they enter only to see virtually nothing of the “Prairie School” aspect remaining. The proposed structure, while larger than it’s surrounding structures will be balanced as it is placed exactly in the middle of the block w/2 structures on each side. Furthermore, it will provide balance to the 6-story building being constructed immediately across the street thereby creating a gateway to the University.
- f) **Association:** Aspect 1: There is virtually no association with it’s district as it is a “spot-zoned” blip of the Greek District located ½ mile to the west of the actual contiguous district. Other than the association on paper, there is no other. Aspect 2: Currently there is no association w/the building as the architect is virtually unknown. That, however, is something that I would like to address in constructing a building to honor her and put “on the map” of which she is currently only an occasional footnote.

5) **Addressing the Greek Letter Chapter House Historic District**

- a) I was presented by city staff with an overlay showing that this property was “spot-zoned” into this named district. This overlay is included.

- b) In observing this named district there is a contiguous area east of 15th Ave SE that is clearly in a “district.” One must travel nearly 4 city blocks west of this (which are NOT in this district) before you begin to see a “peppering” of claimed parcels for this district. “Off the row” is an invented term used to justify including disparate locations in an otherwise clearly defined district. I state this because in all other applications, the city actively opposes the practice of “spot-zoning.”
- c) The city has consistently over many years shown its disdain for the concept of “spot-zoning” in which a parcel’s use is changed to be unlike those surrounding it. That is exactly the concept that has a claim on this parcel.
- d) There is absolutely nothing of this structure to commemorate or otherwise celebrate this district. This is especially obvious when you travel east of 15th Ave SE where you can feel the “Greek Spirit” that embodies the contiguous district. That integrity of feeling is absolutely, noticeably absent when you travel so many blocks west of this and come upon a spattering of houses “caught up” in this unkempt spot-zoning of properties peppered within the greater Dinkytown neighborhood.
- e) This house has a total of 16 years of its 93 year history as a Greek house. The first 12 were by the organization that commissioned it to be built, only to abandon it when it realized that it was inadequate for Greek use. Delta Upsilon occupied it for 1 year while they were renovating a new house one block away. Kappa Alpha Psi occupied it for the first 3 years I owned it as we made the best attempt to make it work. Ultimately, after achieving a nearly 100-year goal to have a house, KAP had to leave as they could not keep members in the “shoebox” rooms.
- f) I request that this property be removed from this district as part of this process as the potential to cause undue financial hardship because of its inclusion in the district is undeniable. There is nothing financially feasible that can be done to bring it back “into the fold” of this important district of which it physically does not belong. Any continued affiliation with this district will only ensure its demise.

6) Recent and current uses of building

- a) In the entire 93 years of its history (excluding the original sorority) there are only 2 periods when this house has participated in Greek traditions. Both of those times were experiments in the last 10 years.
- b) Delta Upsilon (DU) occupied this house for 1 year while they searched for and renovated a permanent house which they have occupied since on the same block but on 4th Street SE. This owner had contact w/a DU member who lived in the house who confirmed that the room sizes were the reason why this house was not in contention.
- c) Kappa Alpha Psi (KAP) most recently occupied the house for 3 years. This was the first African American Fraternity to have a house in the history of the University of Minnesota. After the euphoria wore off in year 2, it became increasingly difficult for KAP to keep the house filled w/their membership. Reluctantly, they gave up the house after year 3.

- d) Since the departure of KAP in August 2008, the house has barely been 50% full. It has proven to be a “revolving door” as several of the tenants who have occupied the small rooms have given their 30-day notice on their move-in day as they had just “bought time” to find a reasonable place to stay. Some have said just so. Operating in this manner is not sustainable.

7) Risks of not re-developing this property

- a) The owner would have to operate this property with different standards than currently maintained in order to achieve 100% occupancy.
 - i) The application process would eliminate credit/criminal background checks in order to fill the house to capacity to make it financially viable.
 - ii) The quality of tenant would revert to previous owner standards to include drug addicts, panhandlers, criminals, and other “down and out” individuals who will only be steps, once again, from the entrance and exit ramps of 35W.
 - iii) The FBI, Mpls Police, and Hennepin County Sheriff would once again need to frequent the house to deal with this population.
- b) Another option would be to sell the property which would more than likely assure 4)a)i) and 4)a)ii) above as that is the description of the house in all years prior excepting the 4years of Greek activity.

8) Heritage Preservation

- a) The commission to preserve is an important charge that is not to be taken lightly. It is a difficult charge because, as human beings, our passions facilitate us to the best we can do.
 - i) For that reason it is easy to see how one can become so committed to preserving that any other alternative becomes foreign.
 - ii) For that reason we must all strive to maintain a keen eye to the value of preserving w/o losing perspective of developing something new that may become historic in its own right.
- b) The reasons for preservation of any item must be weighed with the value given by that preservation vs. the cost, monetary and functionality-wise.
- c) The very first paragraph of the very first page of the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation website even states, “The Standards are to be applied to specific rehabilitation projects in a reasonable manner, taking into consideration economic and technical feasibility.” This is also prominently placed in the margin in red as it is set out to be considered.
 - i) The Secretary of the Interior recognizes that not everything needs to be saved.
 - ii) “Reasonable” is a key word in this statement

- d) Minneapolis Code of Ordinances, Title 23, Heritage Preservation, Chapter 599 also speaks specifically to “if there are no reasonable alternatives to the demolition. In determining whether reasonable alternatives exist, the commission shall consider, but not be limited to”
 - i) The significance of the property
 - ii) The integrity of the property
 - iii) **The economic value or usefulness of the existing structure, including its current use, costs of renovation and feasible alternative uses.**

9) The Marion Alice Parker House Development Proposal

- a) Because of the functional obsolescence of the sorority house built by Marion Alice Parker in 1916 I submit a proposal for the redevelopment of the site with a very unique perspective on historic reference, and preservation with new development.
- b) **Historic Reference**
 - i) Marion Alice Parker was a female draftsman and later an architect who worked on and built a number of projects primarily in MN but also in ND, CO, and IA. She was a pioneering woman who whole-heartedly immersed herself into the progressive movement. The Prairie School was the manifestation of this movement.
 - ii) There are 29 properties that can be connected to Marion Alice Parker either as a draftsman or as an architect in the 4 states mentioned. 15 of them are in the Twin Cities and 13 of those are in Minneapolis. Four are in the National Register of Historic Places and **ALL**, with the exception of 1019 University are in pristine condition.
 - iii) Scholar Nicole Watson writes, “To date, Parker’ biography and architectural contributions, completed with the firm and during her years as a successful independent Minneapolis architect, have gone undocumented.”
 - iv) In my research on this house, and on Marion Alice Parker, I found very little when I searched her name. I could find a paragraph here or there mainly in historical architectural websites but not much more. One name, however, kept coming up in my searches. Nicole Watson. It turns out that Nicole Watson had just recently finished her Master’s degree @ St. Thomas and her thesis was exclusively on Marion Alice Parker. I had the opportunity to meet Nicole and we have corresponded about Ms. Parker and this project on several occasions. She sent me a copy of her thesis which has proven to be an invaluable resource as I’ve researched the lady architect. Nicole has visited 1019 and reluctantly understands that the house has lived past its years.

c) Preservation together with New Development.

- i) In taking all of this in, and considering any number of possibilities to use the structure with extensive interior remodeling and possibly adding on to the back of the structure, it became apparent that there would be an untenable cost in relation to the outcome. The cost/benefit ratio would put me under.
 - ii) With all of this research accomplished, I took a fresh look at the project and realized that best solution to this site would be to build a monument, if you will, to this virtually unknown, but not unimportant female architect. And firmly place her in history by placing a structure to celebrate her using her own design. Her presence will be prominently displayed for all to see for many years to come.
 - iii) Building on that theme, the one piece of architecture that survives today is the original sawed-wood ornament above the door. This piece will carefully be restored and placed in its same place over the new entryway door if possible. If not possible, it may be displayed in a case in the entryway or perhaps at the Minnesota Historical Society or Minneapolis Institute of Art.
 - iv) A display will be located in the lobby area of the main entrance. Exactly what this display will contain is yet to be determined but Nicole Watson has pledged herself as a resource to help put this all together.
- d) Insight on the communications between myself and the scholar, Nicole Watson who is utmost authority on Marion Alice Parker as there has been no other who has dedicated so much time to research her.
- i) I had requested that Ms. Watson attend the HPC meeting and her response was an email including the following:
 1. "I guess I want to give this some careful consideration before I give you an answer. Here's the thing, Mark -- I have spent over two years researching Marion Alice Parker and her work... While I understand that it may not be very viable as a Greek house or a college dormitory..." it is an historic structure. She went on to say, **"At the same time, if the house must be torn down, I am happy to acknowledge that you are making a real effort to preserve the memory of the architectural style of 1019;** you seem to value Parker's contributions to our local architectural history and my impression is that you are seeking the help of several professionals who, like me, can weigh in on different aspects of your project....To truly pay homage to Parker and progressive design, your new project would have to encompass all of these elements. This may not be a financial possibility, and I know that building codes change frequently and need to be taken into account in the planning of a new structure. Plus, we don't really know what the interior of 1019

looked like when it was originally completed. I guess my point is that I am not sure what's really at stake for the HPC -- is it just the shell of the current house (its exterior design and appearance) that is most important, or is it the entire structure, including its interior layout? Is the purpose of your project to simply celebrate Parker or to follow her intentions in terms of progressive principles and architectural design?"

2. "I'm rambling a bit, but hopefully this helps you understand my perspective and some of the questions I'm grappling with in my effort to assist you while remaining committed to preserving the history of Parker and her work."
- ii) Prior to this email exchange, I had emailed the elevation that you're looking at and her response to that was most heartening for me as I will quote her response:
1. "Thanks for passing along this drawing... **You have done a really nice job of incorporating Parker's vision of Prairie School architecture**—I especially appreciate the bands of windows, the wood banding and variations in color and window size/shape across the façade. **I think Parker and Purcell would be pretty impressed.**"
- e) **The New Development Statement:** The Marion Alice Parker House will be a house built in the Prairie Style much like the current house @ 1019 on the same site together with a neighboring site to solidify her place in Minnesota history.

In conclusion, I understand the importance of wanting to preserve a rooming house designed by a woman drafter. However, I believe that because of the hardships outlined above, the best course of action is to continue to improve on the tradition that Marion Alice Parker began by involving women architects and builders in the whole process of constructing a new house in its place—honoring her legacy in a safe, comfortable, and viable apartment home for students and young professionals. Please allow us this opportunity to build on old history in a way that will create new history. Once again, thank you for your consideration.



Mark Freund