



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

Date: August 10, 2006

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

Referral to: Zoning and Planning Committee

Subject: Historic variances to allow a reception/meeting hall on the third floor including an historic variance to reduce the required number of parking spaces from 60 to 0 for the third floor reception/meeting hall.

Recommendation: To adopt the staff findings and approve the Historic Variances to allow a reception/meeting hall on the third floor including an historic variance to reduce the required number of parking spaces from 60 to 0 for the third floor reception/meeting hall with conditions for the Semple House located at 100-104 West Franklin Avenue in the OR2 zoning district.

Previous Directives: N/A

Prepared or Submitted by: Shanna Sether, City Planner, 612-673-2307

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

Presenters in Committee: Shanna Sether, City 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: 6

Neighborhood Notification: Stevens Square Community Organization, adjacent to Whittier

Alliance

City Goals: Consistent with “Preserve and enhance our natural and historic environment and promote a clean, sustainable Minneapolis.”

Comprehensive Plan: Consistent

Zoning Code: Section 525.530 and Section 599.490 authorizes the historic variance “To encourage the preservation and reuse of landmarks and properties in historic districts by providing the commission with authority to recommend departure from the literal requirements of any of the applicable zoning regulations.

Other: Not applicable.

Background/Supporting Information Attached: The attached report summarizes the actions taken by the Heritage Preservation Commission at a public hearing on July 25, 2006. The findings and recommendations are respectfully submitted for your consideration.

CITY OF MINNEAPOLIS

CPED PLANNING DIVISION

HERITAGE PRESERVATION COMMISSION STAFF REPORT

FILE NAME: 100-104 West Franklin Avenue

DATE OF APPLICATION: July 5, 2006

APPLICANT: Kristina Oman

WARD: 6

NEIGHBORHOOD ORGANIZATION: Stevens Square Community Organization,
adjacent to Whittier Alliance

DATE OF HEARING: July 25, 2006

HPC SITE/DISTRICT: Anne C. and Frank B. Semple House

CATEGORY: Contributing

CLASSIFICATION: Historic Variance

STAFF INVESTIGATION AND REPORT: Shanna Sether

DATE: July 7, 2006

SITE DESCRIPTION & BACKGROUND:

The Anne C. and Frank B. Semple House and attached carriage house are located at the northwest corner of West Franklin Avenue and LaSalle Avenue. The Semple House was designed by the local architecture firm of Long and Long in 1901 and is one of the best examples of Renaissance Revival architecture in Minneapolis. The Semple House is a massive three-story brick and stone Renaissance Revival mansion with columned entrance portico, symmetrical façade, tripartite windows and dentiled cornice under the eaves. The Semple house has two facades. The east elevation, which faces LaSalle Avenue, is typical of Italian Renaissance style houses in its symmetry. The windows, doors, porch and balustrades are perfectly symmetrical. The building faces south, along West Franklin Avenue and is set back approximately 30 feet from the street and has a

certain asymmetry because of the setback section that connects the house with the carriage house.

The property was placed in the National Register of Historic Places on February 26, 1998. In January of 2006, the property owner contacted Planning staff requesting local designation of the property.

At the public hearing May 22, 2006 the CPC approved the landmark designation of the Anne C. and Frank B. Semple House and Carriage House. At the public hearing of May 23, 2006, the HPC approved the landmark designation of the Anne C. and Frank B. Semple House and Carriage House. At the public hearing June 8, 2006 the Zoning and Planning Committee of the City Council approved the landmark designation of the Anne C. and Frank B. Semple House and Carriage House.

The house has been used as office space since about 1935. The reception hall, grand staircase and ballroom retain much of their integrity, but the rest of the house and the carriage house have been divided into a series of small offices.

In 1961 the house became the office of the Franklin National Bank. The applicant has provided two letters, one from the previous owner and another from the Branch President of the Franklin National Bank (see attached) indicating use of the 3rd floor ballroom as a reception hall for the years 1961 through 1969, the year the building was sold. In the mid-1980s the property was purchased by the principals of Hills Gilbertson Architects and was later sold to African American Family Services in 1996. The applicant has also provided a letter from Randy Hager, Chief Financial Officer of African American Family Services, indicating use of the ballroom facility as an income source between the years of 1996 and 2005.

In 2004, there were several land use applications made to the CPC in order to allow for the conversion of the existing office space in the mansion to twelve (12) condominiums. One of the land use applications that were required due to the proposed construction was a Site Plan Review. The existing parking area on the southwest corner of the subject property was required to be designed in a way to meet the minimum required standards of the Zoning Ordinance. The previous owner abandoned the project and the site improvements were never made. The parking area on the subject site was recently paved by the current owner and is out of compliance with the Zoning Ordinance. The Zoning Enforcement section of CPED may address these concerns.

PROPOSED HISTORIC VARIANCES:

The applicant is applying for an historic variances to allow a reception/meeting hall on the third floor including a variance to reduce the required number of parking spaces from 60 to 0 for the third floor reception/meeting hall.

Section 525.530 of the Minneapolis Zoning Code and section 599.490 of the Minneapolis Heritage Preservation Regulations authorize the historic variance “to encourage the preservation and reuse of landmarks and properties in historic districts by providing the commission with authority to recommend departure from the literal requirements of any of the applicable zoning regulations.”

1. Proposed variances for reception/meeting hall:
 - a) The applicant, Kristina Oman, is applying for an historic variance to allow a reception/meeting hall in the OR2 zoning district. The reception/meeting hall would be located on the third floor of the three-story mansion. The applicant has stated that previous owners have used the ballroom consistently and has submitted letters from said owners. The other two floors are occupied as office space.
 - b) The applicant is requesting to allow for the third floor ballroom as a reception/meeting hall. The floor area of the ballroom is three-thousand (3,000) square feet. The parking requirement is based on thirty (30) percent of the occupancy of persons, at one (1) person per fifteen (15) square feet of floor area. The applicant is requesting that the required sixty (60) parking spaces for the reception/meeting hall be varied to zero (0) additional spaces. The applicant currently provides fifteen (15) on-site parking spaces and meets the parking requirements, with grandfathered rights, for the office use.

The applicant has stated that there will be approximately 20 events scheduled in the reception/meeting hall. The applicant has also secured two lease agreements for parking of vehicles during events at the reception hall. The first is with Park Nicollet Clinic; their lot is directly south of the subject property, located on the corner of Blaisdell Avenue South and West Franklin Avenue. This lot has 130 parking stalls. The second lease is with Plymouth Congregational Church located on the corner of LaSalle Avenue and West Franklin Avenue, directly east of the subject property. This lot has 144 parking stalls. In order to alleviate the need for the variance the applicant could make a shared parking application to the zoning administrator. The term of such lease requires approval by the zoning administrator, or by special parking assessment certificate, where applicable. The lease is required to be filed and recorded in the Office of Hennepin County Recorder or Registrar of Titles, and evidence of proper filing is required to be submitted to the zoning administrator prior to the issuance of any permits or licenses.

FINDINGS

1. The property is an individually designated landmark.
2. The previous owners, Franklin National Bank and African American Family Services have used the existing ballroom on the third floor as a reception/meeting hall.
3. The previous gatherings have not been reported as having parking or traffic issues. The applicant has secured two lease agreements for parking spaces in excess of the minimum requirement of 60 stalls.
4. The applicant has not requested to vary the maximum hours open to the public for the OR2 District which are: Sunday through Thursday, from 7:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. and Friday and Saturday, from 7:00 a.m. to 11:00 p.m. or as otherwise controlled by a license for liquor, wine or beer and any special late hours entertainment license approved for the facility.
5. The exterior and interior integrity of the mansion would remain intact.
6. A unique circumstance of the property is that the built environment and parking constraints would force the applicant to maintain parking off-site parking with a long-term lease in order to meeting the parking requirement in the Zoning Ordinance.
7. The proposed variances are compatible with the preservation of the property and other properties in the area and alleviate undue hardships due to the unique conditions of the property.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends that the HPC adopt staff findings and forward to the City Council a recommendation to approve the historic variances to allow a reception/meeting hall on the third floor including an historic variance to reduce the required number of parking spaces from 60 to 0 for the third floor reception/meeting hall, subject to the following conditions:

1. The applicant shall be required to meet the minimum standards in the Zoning Ordinance and International Building Code and obtain any necessary building, plumbing and/or electrical permits.
2. Statements from the current property owner that identify how the ballroom facility is to be maintained shall be submitted.
3. Statements from the property owner identifying the parking arrangements for accommodating event parking at nearby facilities shall be submitted.

