

Department of Community Planning and Economic Development
Planning Division

Certificate of Appropriateness
BZH-26849

Date: July 5, 2011

Proposal: Request for Certificate of Appropriateness to replace windows

Applicant: Renewal by Andersen

Address of Property: 1900 Stevens Ave

Project Name: Certificate of Appropriateness to replace windows

Contact Person and Phone: Renewal by Andersen, Bryan Horton, 651-264-4088

Planning Staff and Phone: John Smoley, Ph.D., 612-673-2830

Date Application Deemed Complete: n/a

Publication Date: July 5, 2011

Public Hearing: July 12, 2011

Appeal Period Expiration: July 22, 2011

Ward: 6

Neighborhood Organization: Stevens Square Community Organization and Whittier Alliance

Concurrent Review: n/a

Attachments:

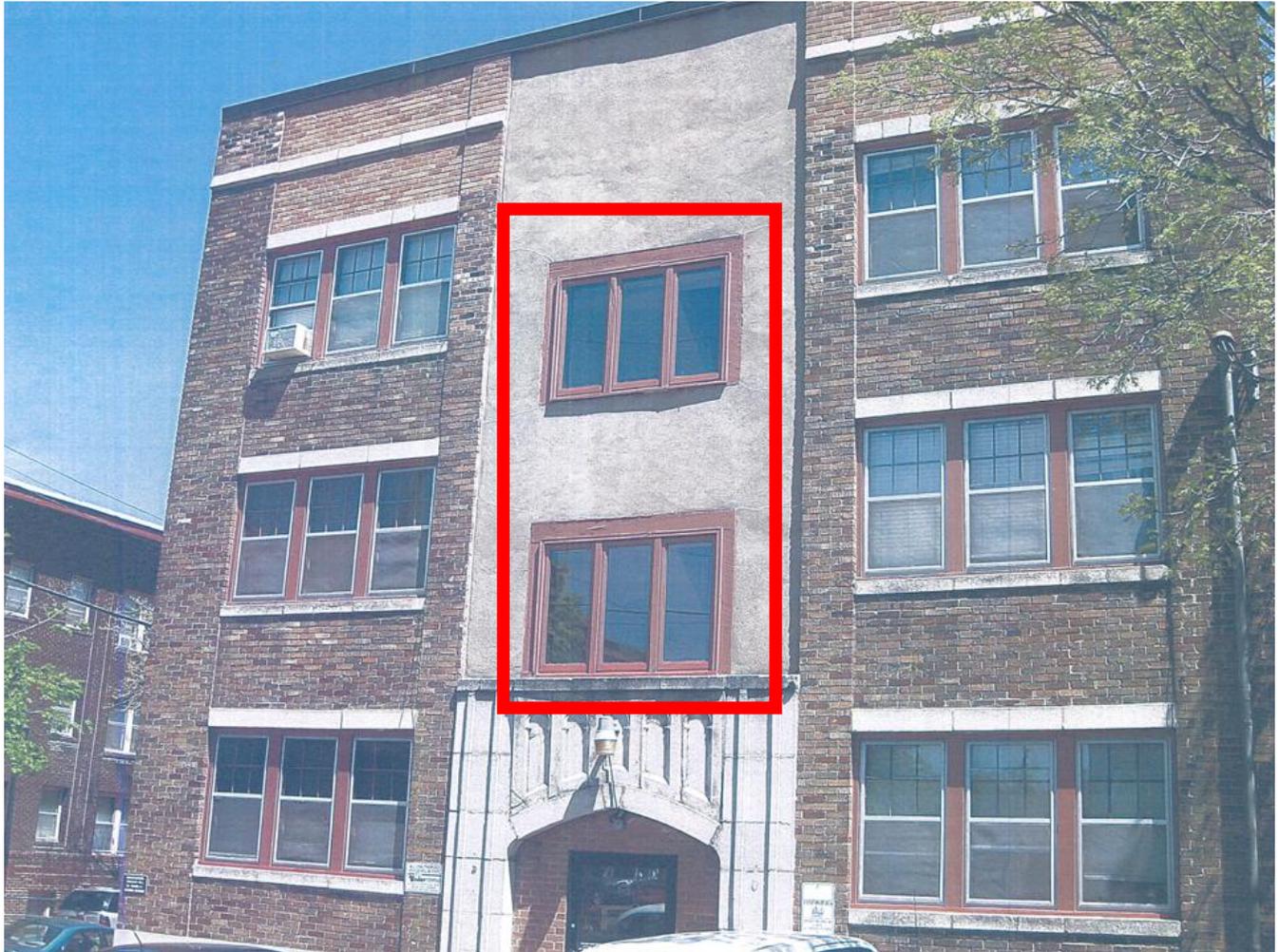
- Staff Report – A1-A12
- Materials Submitted by CPED – B1-B2
 - 350' radius zoning map – B1
 - 350' radius map with comprehensive plan land use categories indicated – B2
- Materials Submitted by Applicant – C1-C56
 - Application – C1-C56
- Materials Submitted by Other Parties – n/a

Department of Community Planning and Economic Development
Planning Division



1900 Stevens Ave, 2011, front face (with affected windows indicated), photo submitted by Applicant

Department of Community Planning and Economic Development
Planning Division



1900 Stevens Ave, 2011, rear face (with affected windows indicated), photo submitted by Applicant

Department of Community Planning and Economic Development
Planning Division

CLASSIFICATION:	
Local Historic District	Stevens Square Historic District
Period of Significance	1912-1926
Criteria of significance	Architecture: The neighborhood is unique because of its remarkable consistency in its housing characteristics, design, and appearance. The apartment buildings themselves are constructed of brown brick with occasional stone, terra cotta, and tile detailing.
Date of local designation	1989
Applicable Design Guidelines	<i>The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Treatment of Historic Properties</i> Stevens Square Historic District Design Guidelines

PROPERTY INFORMATION	
Current name	1900 Stevens
Historic Name	Coral Gables Apartments
Current Address	1900 Stevens Avenue
Historic Address	1900-1902 Stevens Avenue
Original Construction Date	1926
Original Contractor	Ecklund Building Company
Original Architect	W.W. Purdy
Historic Use	Multi-family Residence
Current Use	Multi-family Residence
Proposed Use	Multi-family Residence

Department of Community Planning and Economic Development
Planning Division

BACKGROUND:

The subject property is a four story condominium building. The building is located at the southwest corner of 19th Street East and Stevens Avenue in the Stevens Square Historic District.

The Stevens Square Historic District is mainly comprised of apartment buildings and single-family houses constructed during the 1910s and 1920s. Centered around Stevens Square park, these brick apartment buildings played a significant role in the residential development of Minneapolis before and after World War I. The district is contained within a one and one-half block radius of the park. It is roughly bounded by 17th Street East on the north, Franklin Avenue on the south, 3rd Avenue on the east, and 1st Avenue on the west, including the alley just west of 1st Avenue

SUMMARY OF APPLICANT'S PROPOSAL:

The Applicant wishes to replace four sets of nonhistoric (installed circa 1979) wood windows with accompanying wood trim. Each proposed set is comprised of two casement windows with a fixed window in between. Two sets of each sit at the front and back of the building. The proposed replacement windows are proposed to match (to within 1/16" of an inch) the existing window dimensions (Attachment C51-C52) but will be made of Fibrex (a composite of wood fibers and a special thermoplastic polymer – Attachment C33-C34).

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Staff has received no public comment on the project.

CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS: Certificate of Appropriateness to replace windows

Findings as required by the Minneapolis Preservation Code:

The Planning Division of the Minneapolis Community Planning and Economic Development Department has analyzed the application based on the findings required by the Minneapolis Preservation Ordinance. Before approving a certificate of appropriateness, and based upon the evidence presented in each application submitted, the commission shall make findings based upon, but not limited to, the following:

(1) The alteration is compatible with and continues to support the criteria of significance and period of significance for which the landmark or historic district was designated.

The district is significant for its historic residential architecture constructed from 1912-1926. The majority of windows on the building appear to be original, multi-light, double-hung wood windows. The proposed windows are made of a material (Fibrex) not available during the district's period of significance (1912-1926); utilize a different method of operation (casement and fixed) than the historic windows (double-hung); and have no division of lights, unlike the historic windows on the building which have a six panes over one pane (6/1) true divided light pattern. The alterations are not compatible with the criteria of significance and period of significance for which the historic district was designated.

(2) The alteration is compatible with and supports the interior and/or exterior designation in which the property was designated.

The exterior portions of the building at 1900 Stevens Avenue contribute to the district's significance. The district is significant for its historic residential architecture constructed from 1912-1926. The proposal to install windows whose materials, design, and operation are incompatible with the historic windows on the building does not support the property's exterior designation.

(3) The alteration is compatible with and will ensure continued integrity of the landmark or historic district for which the district was designated.

Based upon the evidence provided below, the proposed work **will impair** the integrity of the property.

Location: The Applicant proposes no changes to the building's location, thus the project will not impair the property's integrity of location.

Design: The Applicant proposes to replace non-historic windows. The proposed windows utilize a different method of operation (casement and fixed, rather than double-hung) than the historic windows and have no division of lights, unlike the historic windows. The proposed changes will damage the property's integrity of design.

Department of Community Planning and Economic Development
Planning Division

Setting: The Applicant proposes no offsite changes, thus the project will not impair the property's integrity of setting.

Materials: The Applicant proposes to replace non-historic wood windows with windows made of materials not available during the district's period of significance (1912-1926). The project will impair the property's integrity of materials.

Workmanship: The windows proposed for replacement are not historic, thus the project will not impair the property's integrity of workmanship.

Feeling: The Applicant proposes to replace nonhistoric windows, yet even the current windows hearken back to the district's period of significance more than the proposed Fibrex windows, which utilize a material not available until very recently. Furthermore, the Applicant proposes no design changes that would bring a more appropriate (double hung and divided light) design to the building. The project will impair the property's integrity of feeling.

Association: The Applicant proposes no changes that would break the property's association with the residential development of the city, thus the project will not impair the property's integrity of association.

(4) The alteration will not materially impair the significance and integrity of the landmark, historic district or nominated property under interim protection as evidenced by the consistency of alterations with the applicable design guidelines adopted by the commission.

The Applicant proposes to replace non-historic windows with new windows.

The property lies within the Stevens Square Historic District. The district's design guidelines stipulate that:

1. Windows shall have clear glass unless historical documentation is presented which shows patterned or opaque glass.
2. Anodized aluminum finishes are not permitted.
3. Mullion patterns will match original. Replacement windows shall replicate original window operation.
4. Exterior windows should not be blocked or obscured from the interior. Exceptions may be granted for windows on secondary facades if a special case can be made for the necessity of such an alteration.

The proposal complies with guidelines 2 and 4, but not guidelines 1 and 3.

Glass Specifications: Specifications submitted indicate that several glass coating options (clear, High-performance Low E4 Sun, and SmartSun) are available (Attachment C35). Specifications also indicate several glass pattern options (, no pattern, Obscure, Cascade, Reed, and Fern). Window glass whose color, reflectivity, and pattern match that of the historic glass would meet the design guidelines.

Department of Community Planning and Economic Development
Planning Division

Muntins: No muntins are proposed. Six panes over one pane (6/1) true divided light windows with muntins whose design, material, and dimensions match those of historic muntins on the front and rear of the building, respectively, would meet the design guidelines.

Operation: Replacement windows are proposed to be fixed and casement. Original windows on the building are double hung. Double hung replacement windows would meet the design guidelines.

Screens: Several different types of aluminum frame screens (fiberglass and stainless steel, available in one of three colors) are available for the proposed window units (Attachment C35-C36). The Applicant has not indicated which options they wish to use. The majority of windows on the building, both historic and nonhistoric, possess aluminum storm/screen combinations not available during the district's period of significance. Furthermore, the existing windows that are proposed for replacement do not have storm or screen windows. Windows without integral screens would meet the design guidelines.

(5) *The alteration will not materially impair the significance and integrity of the landmark, historic district or nominated property under interim protection as evidenced by the consistency of alterations with the recommendations contained in The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties.*

The Applicant is conducting a rehabilitation of the subject property. The proposed project does **not** follow the rehabilitation guidelines of *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties*.

The rehabilitation guidelines of *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties* recommend designing and installing new windows when the historic windows (frames, sash and glazing) are completely missing. The replacement windows may be an accurate restoration using historical, pictorial, and physical documentation; or be a new design that is compatible with the window openings and the historic character of the building.

The Applicant has demonstrated that the historic windows are missing, but the Applicant is proposing neither an accurate restoration nor a new design that is compatible with the historic character of the building.

The vast majority of windows on the front of the building appear historic and are all wood frame, double hung, true divided light (six panes over one pane (6/1)) windows. These serve as a useful benchmark in determining the appropriateness of replacement windows.

Window Dimensions and Installation Depth: The Applicant has submitted specifications which indicate that the replacement windows can match (up to 1/16" of an inch) the existing window dimensions (Attachment C51-C52). The Applicant has not, however, submitted dimensions of existing window components to verify that the replacement windows will match existing windows. Furthermore, the specifications do not indicate that the replacement windows can match the window depth and installation depth of the existing windows. In any event, the existing windows are not compatible with the building's historic design, due to their division and operation. Three double hung windows of equal size that fit inside the existing opening would

Department of Community Planning and Economic Development
Planning Division

meet the standards. New windows whose installation depth matches that of the historic windows would meet the standards. Since the proposed windows are double-paned, as opposed to the historic single-paned windows, and since the building's exterior communicates its historical significance, staff feels the proposed window depth need not match the existing window depth.

Materials: The window frames are proposed to be made of Fibrex, a composite of wood fibers and a special thermoplastic polymer (Attachment C33). This material was not available during the period of significance (1912-1926). Historic windows on the building possess wood window frames. New windows with wood frames would meet the standards.

Trim and Window Openings: The application indicates that the dimensions of the existing and proposed window trim shall match. Photos indicate that the existing trim is being used to not just frame the windows but also to fill in a gap between the existing window units and their openings. The proposed window trim will maintain an inappropriate partial blockage of window openings. The existing window trim is wood. The proposed trim is stated as coil (on the application form) and wood (as stated in the statement addressing the Certificate of Appropriateness findings. Coil is typically aluminum. Aluminum is not an appropriate window trim material. Proposed window trim that matches the window trim on historic windows in terms of dimension, design, and materials would meet the standards.

(6) The certificate of appropriateness conforms to all applicable regulations of this preservation ordinance and is consistent with the applicable policies of the comprehensive plan and applicable preservation policies in small area plans adopted by the city council.

Action 8.1.1 of the Minneapolis Plan for Sustainable Growth indicates that the City shall protect historic resources from modifications that are not sensitive to their historic significance. The project will modify the building in ways that are insensitive to its historical character, as discussed in items 4 and 5 above. A replacement based upon historic evidence would be consistent with this policy.

Comprehensive plan policy 8.1 states that the City will, "Preserve, maintain, and designate districts, landmarks, and historic resources which serve as reminders of the city's architecture, history, and culture." The proposed work will damage this building's ability to communicate its historical significance, as discussed in item 3 above. A replacement based upon historic evidence would be consistent with this policy.

(7) Destruction of any property. Before approving a certificate of appropriateness that involves the destruction, in whole or in part, of any landmark, property in an historic district or nominated property under interim protection, the commission shall make findings that the destruction is necessary to correct an unsafe or dangerous condition on the property, or that there are no reasonable alternatives to the destruction. 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

Department of Community Planning and Economic Development
Planning Division

delay a final decision for a reasonable period of time to allow parties interested in preserving the property a reasonable opportunity to act to protect it.

The project is not necessary to correct an unsafe or dangerous condition. Reasonable alternatives exist.

Before approving a certificate of appropriateness, and based upon the evidence presented in each application submitted, the commission shall make findings that alterations are proposed in a manner that demonstrates that the Applicant has made adequate consideration of the following documents and regulations:

(8) Adequate consideration of the description and statement of significance in the original nomination upon which designation of the landmark or historic district was based.

The Applicant included a statement describing how the project meets findings 1-6.

(9) Where applicable, Adequate consideration of Title 20 of the Minneapolis Code of Ordinances, Zoning Code, Chapter 530, Site Plan Review.

Title 20 of the Minneapolis Code of Ordinances, Zoning Code, Chapter 530, Site Plan Review does not regulate the replacement of windows in existing openings.

(10) The typology of treatments delineated in the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties and the associated guidelines for preserving, rehabilitating, reconstructing, and restoring historic buildings.

As discussed in finding #5, the application is not in compliance with the rehabilitation guidelines of *the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties*.

Before approving a certificate of appropriateness that involves alterations to a property within an historic district, the commission shall make findings based upon, but not limited to, the following:

(11) The alteration is compatible with and will ensure continued significance and integrity of all contributing properties in the historic district based on the period of significance for which the district was designated.

The proposed window materials, dimensions, and operation are not compatible with the building's historic character. The district is made up of many buildings similar to the subject property: four story masonry apartment buildings with regular window patterns. In such situations, out-of-character changes to one building are much more noticeable than in districts with a greater variety of building designs, materials, and uses. Replacing the current windows with inappropriate composite windows will further erode the district's ability to communicate its historical significance.

Department of Community Planning and Economic Development
Planning Division

(12) Granting the certificate of appropriateness will be in keeping with the spirit and intent of the ordinance and will not negatively alter the essential character of the historic district.

The spirit and intent of the City of Minneapolis' Heritage Preservation Regulations is to preserve historically significant buildings, structures, sites, objects, districts, and cultural landscapes of the community while permitting appropriate changes to be made to these properties. The homogeneity of the Stevens Square Historic District will make the proposed inappropriate changes much more noticeable, and will negatively alter the essential character of the historic district. The proposal, if approved, may also encourage similar changes in similar buildings within the district.

(13) The certificate of appropriateness will not be injurious to the significance and integrity of other resources in the historic district and will not impede the normal and orderly preservation of surrounding resources as allowed by regulations in the preservation ordinance.

Approval of this Certificate of Appropriateness will impede the normal and orderly preservation of surrounding resources within the district and City at large by setting an inappropriate precedent in a homogeneous district.

Department of Community Planning and Economic Development
Planning Division

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

CPED-Planning recommends that the Heritage Preservation Commission **adopt** staff findings and **deny** the Certificate of Appropriateness to install new windows.