

**Community Planning & Economic Development
Planning Division**
250 4th Street South, Room 300 PSC
Minneapolis, MN 55415



City of Minneapolis
*Department of Community Planning
& Economic Development - CPED*

MEMORANDUM

TO: Heritage Preservation Commission
FROM: Chris Vrchota, City Planner, 612-673-5467
DATE: March 1, 2011
RE: National Register of Historic Places Nomination – Abbott Hospital

Background

On January 11, 2011 the Minnesota Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) sent the Minneapolis Heritage Preservation Commission a letter requesting comments on the nomination of Abbott Hospital by Hess, Roise, and Company (Appendix A). The property is located at 110 18th Street East, extending the entire width of the block between 1st Avenue South and Stevens Avenue. The property has protections in place, as it is located in the locally and nationally designated Steven's Square Historic District, and is considered a contributing property within the district.

As a Certified Local government, the Commission is granted, by federal law, the opportunity to participate in the National Register nomination process as follows:

- Afford the public a reasonable opportunity to comment on the nomination;
- Prepare a report as to whether or not the subject property is eligible for National Register listing; and
- Have the chief local elected official (the Mayor) submit this report and his/her recommendation to the Minnesota State Historic Preservation Officer within sixty days of notice from the SHPO.¹

¹ More than a simple comment letter, this report provides the City with significant decision making power in the matter. If both the commission and the chief local elected official recommend that the subject property not be nominated to the National Register, the SHPO shall take no further action, unless within thirty days of the receipt of such recommendation by the SHPO an appeal is filed with the State. If such an appeal is filed, the State shall follow the procedures for making nomination pursuant to established procedures. Even then, the City's report and recommendations are included with the nomination submitted by the State to the Keeper of the National Register.

The owner, Gateway Commons LLC, has retained Hess, Roise, and Company to nominate the subject property to the National Register of Historic Places, with the ultimate goal of obtaining financial aid for a substantial rehabilitation of property as it is converted into apartments. The owner seeks state and federal historic preservation tax credits to accomplish this goal, both of which require:

- The property to be listed in the National Register of Historic Places;
- The work to consist of a substantial rehabilitation (an amount greater than the pre-rehabilitation cost of the building(s));
- The work meet the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation*; and
- The property's historic character be maintained for five years.

Attachment B includes a copy of the nomination for your review and comment.

Nomination Review

To be eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places, a property must be significant within a given context and retain its integrity, defined as its ability to communicate that significance.

Significance

Hess, Roise, and Company has conducted detailed research into the history of the Abbott Hospital building. The research team consulted numerous sources to develop a long, detailed statement of significance. The nomination states that the subject property is significant under National Register criteria A (events) due to associations with and representation of the evolution of hospital facilities and the health care industry through the first half of the 20th century. The nomination states, "Unlike contemporary hospitals in Minneapolis, where evidence of these formative eras has been lost through substantial alterations or demolition, Abbot stands as an excellent physical documentation of these important phases of hospital evolution in the first half of the twentieth century."

However, the nomination does not specifically identify which other hospitals are considered as contemporaries or what happened to each, leaving Abbott as "the only example that retains integrity", as stated on page 20 of section 8 of the nomination form. (See appendix B-34.) Staff recommends that additional information on other examples in the city, Twin Cities metro area, and state of Minnesota be provided to affirm this statement.

Context

The nomination describes how and why the various additions were made to the hospital over its lifetime. It describes why the various additions were needed, how the needs for each addition drove their timing, size, and design, and how the design of each addition reflects architectural trends from the period during which it was built, while relating back to the design of the Dunwoody building, the original building on the site. The description of

each addition is further explored in relation to developments in hospitals and the health care industry locally and nationally. The nomination provides excellent insight and background on how and why Abbott Hospital developed as it did. As stated in the *Significance* section, staff believes further information is needed to illustrate how the hospital relates today to other hospitals whose construction and additions are a physical record of their growth during this time period, and how this affects the significance of the site.

Integrity

The National Register of Historic Places divides integrity into seven aspects: location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. Possessing several, and usually most of these aspects allows resources to successfully communicate their historical significance within a given context.² The nomination provides a detailed description of each of the additions and a substantial narrative history of the site, providing a context for the development of the hospital and making a strong case for its significance. However, the issue of Integrity is not directly addressed. Changes that have been made over time are identified in the description of each addition, but the impact of these alterations on the integrity of the building is not analyzed. Of particular importance is an exploration of how the site retains its integrity of association. Specifically, how the integrity of association with the development of the hospitals and the health care system is impacted by the fact that the site no longer serves as a hospital. Staff recommends an analysis of each aspect of integrity be included in the nomination.

Staff Recommendation:

The Applicant team has prepared an extensive nomination that clearly indicates their consideration of the subject property's significance to the city, state, and nation. The nomination would provide a solid foundation for a local designation study, should the City choose to update the local designation to an individual landmark status. Listing of the property in the National Register of Historic Places could lead to enhancements and investment within the Steven's Square Historic District by allowing financial tools to be used for the rehabilitation of the building. Staff recommends that the Commission adopt this report (with suggestions), approve the nomination, and direct staff to transmit the report to the State Historic Preservation Officer.

² National Park Service, *How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation* (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1998) 44-49.