

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

FILE NAME: 2103 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue South (BZH 25805)

APPLICANT: Matthew Finn, Cermak Rhoades Architects, on behalf of Alliance Housing

DATE OF APPLICATION: March 10, 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 Rehabilitation Project

**A. SITE DESCRIPTION AND BACKGROUND**

<b>District/Area Information</b>	
Historic District	Washburn-Fair Oaks Historic District (see Appendix D1)
District Areas of Significance	Architecture (see Appendix A1)
Neighborhood	Whittier Neighborhood
Date of Local Designation	1976
Period of Significance	Circa 1858-1926
<b>Property Information</b>	
Address	2103 2 <sup>nd</sup> Avenue South
Classification	Contributing
Construction Date	1912
Historic Contractor	David Comb and Sons
Historic Architect	V.F. Brauwere
Historical Use	Single-Family
Current Use	Multi-Family
Historic Name	Norton M. Cross House
Building's Defining Features Impacted by Proposed Work	Red brick masonry, original windows, front entrance masonry stairs, and fascia and trim
Additional Dates of Significance	1953: Converted to eight-unit building

The Cross House is a large, two-story, L-shaped brick house with a side gable roof. It is framed in wood, covered with a brick veneer, and sits on a substantial site-cast concrete foundation. The house is characterized by a gabled stoop over an off-centered entrance, a front gable dormer, eave brackets, and six-over-one windows. A metal, exterior fire escape is located on the south elevation. A rear-facing garage occupies the southeast corner of the basement (see Appendix B6).

Mr. Cross was an attorney who had a private practice until 1916, when he became a partner in the firm of Keith, Kingman, Cross, and Wallace. Mr. Cross, along with his wife Martha, resided in this house until 1945. The house was converted into an eight-plex between 1945 and 1953.

## B. REQUIRED FINDINGS FOR CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS

Required findings for certificate of appropriateness. In general. Before approving a certificate of appropriateness, the commission shall make findings that the alteration will not materially impair the integrity of the landmark, historic district or nominated property under interim protection and is consistent with the applicable design guidelines adopted by the commission, or if design guidelines have not been adopted, is consistent with the recommendations contained in The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation, except as otherwise provided in this section.

## C. PROPOSED WORK AND ANALYSIS

For this analysis, the applicant's proposed exterior work has been divided into eight parts:

1. Masonry
2. Windows
3. Window Sills
4. Window Lintels
5. Rear Porch
6. Front Entrance Masonry
7. Fascia and Trim
8. Detached Garage

Each part contains a background, a description of the proposed work, and staff analysis.

### 1. Masonry

**Background:** The subject property was constructed of dark red brick on all four elevations; the property still retains most of the original brick, however, there are portions of the west, east, and north elevations that have had repointing or new masonry work done that does not match the original (see Appendix B10, B13, B14, and B15).

**Proposed Work:** The applicant states that they propose to repoint portions of the mortar only where it is necessary. For the repointing work, the applicant has called out an area on the east elevation and the north elevation as areas that need the most extensive work (see Appendix B7 and B38). The northeast corner of the building has seen significant water intrusion and will require greater attention and complete repointing. The applicant also proposes to replace failing brick only when necessary.

**Analysis:** The applicant's proposal to repoint mortar joints where there is evidence of deterioration is in compliance with the Secretary of Interior Guidelines for Masonry. If the masonry work is completed in the following manner it will meet the Secretary of Interior Guidelines for Masonry:

1. Rehabilitation work is carried out without the use of sandblasting;
2. New mortar shall match the old mortar in strength, composition, color, and texture;
3. New mortar joints shall match old mortar joints in width and in joint profile.
4. Any new brick that is used shall match existing in color, texture, strength, and composition.

### 2. Windows

**Background:** The subject property contains 69 windows. The majority of the windows are double hung windows with a divided-light upper sash. In addition to the double hung windows there are also several casement and leaded windows. Almost all the windows appear to be original to the building (see Appendix B8 and B29). As part of this application, the applicant completed a window analysis of 46 of the 69 windows (see Appendix B29).

**Proposed Work:** The applicant proposes to replace all 69 windows in the building with aluminum-clad wood windows to match existing configurations (see Appendix B9 and B43). The new windows

would be Marvin Clad-Ultimate Series with a standard Kynar pre-finished black exterior color and standard Marvin profile (see Appendix B8 and B49). The windows are proposed to be installed with a pre-finished brick mould and sub-sill to closely resemble the existing wood window profiles (see Appendix B43). Also, the leaded and stained windows on the north elevation are proposed to be retained as decorative inserts (see Appendix B8 and B14).

The application provides details on the reasons why they did not choose restoration of the existing windows or wood replacement windows (see Appendix B9).

**Analysis:** The proposed replacement of the windows is not in compliance with the Washburn-Fair Oaks Historic District Guidelines, Secretary of Interior Standards, nor the Secretary of Interior Guidelines for Windows. The Washburn-Fair Oaks Historic District Guidelines, Secretary of Interior Standards, and Secretary of Interior Guidelines all recommend retaining and preserving character defining windows when possible. The divided-light double hung windows, casement windows, and leaded windows of the subject property are all character defining features of the building and not beyond repair.

CPED believes that the repairing of the window frames, sashes, and other parts is a preferred and viable alternative to replacement of the original windows. It is apparent with the submitted photos and the analysis that the windows are in need of repair. However, the window analysis does not state that the windows have deteriorated to a point of not being reparable (see Appendix B29). In addition, the applicant states the windows can be restored (see Appendix B9).

The application would meet the Washburn-Fair Oaks Historic District Guidelines and the Secretary of Interior Guidelines for the Windows if the work is conducted in the following manner:

1. Windows are completely restored using the Secretary of Interior Guidelines for Window Repair.
2. A window restoration scope of work is submitted to staff prior to beginning other work.

### **3 Window Sills**

**Background:** The window sills are a combination of a soldier course and mortar wash (see Appendix B18 and B43).

**Proposed Work:** The applicant is proposing to repair and reconstruct the soldier course and the wash at each opening.

**Analysis:** The proposed window sill work will meet the Washburn-Fair Oaks Historic District Guidelines and the Secretary of Interior Guidelines for Masonry if it is completed in the following manner:

1. The existing bricks shall be used for the rehabilitation of the window sills
2. The rehabilitated window sills shall maintain the original soldier course profile
3. New mortar shall match the original in strength, composition, color, and texture
4. New mortar joints should match the old mortar joints in width and joint profile.

### **4. Window Lintels**

**Background:** The windows contain steel lintels.

**Proposed Work:** The applicant proposes to replace 11 of the 69 window's steel lintels. The applicant states that these lintels are rusted and have swelled to a point of not functioning or providing proper protection (see Appendix B7 and B11-B14).

**Analysis:** The proposed window lintel work will meet the Washburn-Fair Oaks Historic District Guidelines, Secretary of Interior Standards, and the Secretary of Interior Guidelines for Windows if it is completed in the following manner:

1. The applicant uses steel replacement lintels that match the existing in profile.

## 5. Rear Porch

**Background:** The rear 14.75 foot wide by 8.25 foot deep portion of the house is likely original to the house but has experienced substantial alterations including possible enclosure (see Appendix B10, B13 and C1). This portion of the house has a non-original brick veneer that differs from the original brick.

The applicant has provided details about the poor structural condition and water damage of this portion of the house (see Appendix B10). The applicant states that the water damage has compromised the joists, flooring, sheathing, studs and sill plates of the wall below.

**Proposed Work:** The applicant is proposing to remove the non-original brick veneer of the rear porch and rebuild the structure using a fiber-cement trim and panel for the exterior material that is consistent with the profile of the wide fascia and deep soffits at the existing gable roof (see Appendix B10, B13 and B39).

**Analysis:** The proposed structural improvements to the rear porch is in compliance with the district guidelines and Secretary of Interior Standards for Rehabilitation, however, the proposed exterior treatment is not in full compliance with historic district guidelines nor the Secretary of the Interior Standards for Rehabilitation.

CPED believes that the rear porch should continue to have masonry as the exterior material for two reasons. First, staff believes that the proposed fiber-cement trim will materially impair the architectural value of the property by introducing a new exterior material and design to the building. It is realized that the current configuration of the rear porch is likely not original, however, the fiber-cement trim would adversely impact the architectural value compared to the reconstruction of the masonry.

Second, staff believes that the proposed fiber-cement trim will materially impair the architectural value of the district. The rear elevation is visible from 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue South and this material if allowed will be a focal point of the house (see Appendix C2 and C3).

The application would meet the Washburn-Fair Oaks Historic District Guidelines and the Secretary of Interior Guidelines for the Windows if the work is conducted in the following manner:

1. The new brick matches the brick pattern of the other portions of the house in terms of brick size, texture, and color;
2. The new mortar shall match the house's original mortar in strength, composition, color, and texture;
3. New mortar joints shall match old mortar joints in width and in joint profile.

## 6. Front Entrance Masonry

**Background:** The front entry masonry stairs, side walls, and planters are original to the building (see Appendix B15). The applicant points out that these stairs have been repaired several times and are currently a collection of masonry and painted concrete.

**Proposed Work:** The applicant proposes to replace the front entry stair walking surfaces with concrete and replace the side walls and planters with salvaged original brick and/or brick to match the original (see Appendix B7 and B37). The applicant states that the proposed substitution of concrete is to make it easier to maintain for this high traffic area.

**Analysis:** The proposed replacement of the front elevation stairs' masonry with concrete is not in compliance with the Washburn-Fair Oaks Historic District Guidelines, Secretary of Interior Standards, nor the Secretary of Interior Guidelines for Windows. The Washburn-Fair Oaks Historic District Guidelines, Secretary of Interior Standards, and Secretary of Interior Guidelines all recommend retaining and preserving character defining features when possible. The original front entry stairs, side walls, and planters are character-defining features of the building and the proposed concrete replacement material would materially impair the architectural value of the property by introducing a new exterior material and design to the front facade.

CPED believes that the repairing of the front entry stairs' masonry material is a preferred and viable alternative to the concrete replacement.

The applicant's proposed work to the front stairs will be in compliance with the Secretary of Interior Standards and Guidelines for Masonry if the work is conducted in the following manner:

1. The applicant repairs, and when needed, replace the masonry of the staircase in a way that uses physical evidence as a model to reproduce the staircase that matches the original design.
2. The applicant repoints the staircase shoulders in a way that matches the original mortar, color, strength, and texture as the original mortar.

## 7. Fascia and Trim

**Background:** The subject property retains the original wood fascia and trim.

**Proposed Work:** The applicant proposes to replace the wood fascia and surrounding trim to match existing size, configuration, and profile (see Appendix B37).

**Analysis:** The south elevation image shows that the fascia is in need of repair or replacement (see Appendix B12). The north elevation fascia appears to be in better condition.

The applicant's proposed work to the fascia and trim will be in compliance with the Secretary of Interior Standards and Guidelines for Masonry if the work is conducted in the following manner:

1. The replacement trim match existing in terms of material, size, configuration, and profile.

## 8. Detached Garage

**Background:** The existing detached garage was built in 1957 and is a non-contributing structure to the district and the site (see Appendix C3).

**Proposed Work:** The applicant is proposing to replace the wood fascia, soffit, and trim at roof overhang with prefinished aluminum material to match existing. The applicant is also proposing to replace the existing overhead head doors, reroof the garage, and remove the parapet wall clay tile.

**Analysis:** The detached garage is a non-contributing structure to the site and district. The applicant's proposed work will not adversely impact the subject property nor the district if the proposed new materials meet the Washburn-Fair Oaks Historic District Guidelines.

## C. FINDINGS

### *General District and Building Findings:*

1. The Washburn Fair-Oaks District is significant for its late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries architecture.
2. The district's period of significance is from 1858 to circa 1939.
3. The Cross House, built in 1912, is a contributing structure to the Washburn-Fair Oaks Historic District.
4. The exterior character defining features of the Cross House that are impacted by the proposed work include the following: windows, masonry, front entrance, and fascia.

### *General Proposed Work Findings:*

5. The proposed work to the masonry, window sills, window lintels, fascia and trim, and detached garage will meet the Secretary of Interior Standards and Guidelines with specified conditions of approval.

### *Window Findings:*

6. The proposed replacement of the windows is not in compliance with the Washburn-Fair Oaks Historic District Guidelines, Secretary of Interior Standards, nor the Secretary of Interior Guidelines for Windows. These Guidelines and Standards recommend retaining and preserving character defining windows when possible.
7. Repairing of the window frames, sashes, and other window parts is a preferred and viable alternative to replacement of the original windows.
8. The applicant has not shown that the windows have deteriorated to a point of not being reparable.

### *Rear Porch Findings*

9. The rear porch portion of the house has been substantially altered, but the footprint is likely original.
10. The proposed replacement of the rear porch masonry with fiber-cement trim is not in compliance with the Washburn-Fair Oaks Historic District Guidelines, Secretary of Interior Standards, nor the Secretary of Interior Guidelines for Masonry.
11. The proposed fiber-cement trim would materially impair the architectural value of the property by introducing a new exterior material and design.
12. The proposed fiber-cement trim will materially impair the architectural value of the district. The rear elevation is visible from 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue South and this material would become a focal point of the house.

### *Front Entrance Masonry*

13. The proposed replacement of the masonry front entrance stairs with concrete is not in compliance with the Washburn-Fair Oaks Historic District Guidelines, Secretary of Interior Standards, nor the Secretary of Interior Guidelines for Masonry.
14. The proposed concrete stairs would materially impair the architectural value of the property by introducing a new exterior material and design to the front façade that is not compatible with the original construction.

### **D. STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

Staff recommends that the HPC adopt staff findings and **approve** a Certificate of Appropriateness for a projecting sign at 2103 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue South with the following conditions:

1. CPED-Planning review and approve final site plan, floor plans, and elevations.
2. The following details are added to the proposed masonry scope of work:
  - a. Rehabilitation work is carried out without the use of sandblasting;
  - b. New mortar shall match the old mortar in strength, composition, color, and texture;
  - c. New mortar joints shall match old mortar joints in width and in joint profile;
  - d. Any new brick that is used shall match existing in color, texture, strength, and composition.
3. The following details are added to the proposed window scope of work:
  - a. Window restoration plan is submitted and approved by CPED staff;
  - b. Windows are completely restored using the Secretary of Interior Guidelines for Window Repair;
  - c. Window restoration work shall be completed at the same time or prior to other work.
4. The following details are added to the proposed window sill scope of work:
  - a. The existing bricks shall be used for the rehabilitation of the window sills;
  - b. The rehabilitated window sills shall maintain the original soldier course profile;
  - c. New mortar shall match the original in strength, composition, color, and texture;
  - d. New mortar joints should match the old mortar joints in width and joint profile.
5. The following details are added to the proposed window lintel scope of work:
  - a. The applicant uses steel replacement lintels that match the existing in profile.
6. The following details are added to the proposed rear porch scope of work:
  - a. The new brick matches the brick pattern of the other portions of the house in terms of brick size, texture, and color;
  - b. The new mortar shall match the house's original mortar in strength, composition, color, and texture;
  - c. New mortar joints shall match old mortar joints in width and in joint profile.
7. The following details are added to the proposed front entrance masonry scope of work:
  - a. The applicant repairs, and when needed, replace the masonry of the staircase in a way that uses physical evidence as a model to reproduce the staircase that matches the original design;
  - b. The applicant repoints the staircase shoulders in a way that matches the original mortar, color, strength, and texture as the original mortar.
8. The following details are added to the proposed work to the fascia and trim:
  - a. The replacement trim match existing in terms of material, size, configuration, and profile.
9. The applicant shows on submitted plans that the proposed exterior work to the garage meets the Washburn-Fair Oaks Historic District Guidelines for materials.

## **E. ATTACHMENTS**

Appendix A: Washburn-Fair Oaks Information

Appendix B: Application

Appendix C: Staff Images and Research

Appendix D: Guidelines