

**Community Planning & Economic Development
Planning Division**

250 South 4th Street, Room 110
Minneapolis, MN 55415-1385



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

MEMORANDUM

TO: Heritage Preservation Commission
FROM: Brian Schaffer, Senior City Planner 612.673.2670
DATE: June 8, 2010
RE: East Bank Mills Update

The Pillsbury A Mill was a world leader in flour production from the early 1880s to approximately 1930. The Pillsbury A Mill and associated buildings were built along the Mississippi River near St. Anthony Falls starting in 1881. The A Mill was the first building to be constructed and is a National Historic Landmark (one of only 23 in Minnesota). The Pillsbury A Mill was designed by architect Leroy S. Buffington and completed in 1881, it is one of the most notable structures on the Mississippi riverfront. The accessory buildings to the A Mill building include the Red Tile Elevator, South Mill, Cleaning House, Warehouse 1, Machine Shop, and Warehouse 2. All of the contributing buildings were constructed between 1910 and 1917 and are considered a group of significant archaeological, historical, and architectural properties. All of the buildings are listed as contributing resources in the St. Anthony Falls Historic District, placed on the National Register in 1971, and represent some of the last remaining structures that contributed to Minneapolis' designation as milling capital of the world from the 1880's to 1930 and to the St. Anthony Falls Waterpower District. In addition to buildings the complex also contains resources such as the railroad corridor and a series of underground tunnels used to power the complex by harnessing the power of the river and the falls.

The Red Tile Elevator was constructed by Pillsbury in 1910 to accommodate its growing milling operations. It forms the east end of the historic A Mill Complex, and it is visible for miles with its distinctive 23 foot tall "Pillsbury's Best Flour" sign. The South Mill (1917), Cleaning House (1916), and Warehouse 1 (1917) were constructed by Pillsbury as infill buildings between the landmark A Mill building and the Red Tile elevator. The Machine Shop was constructed by Pillsbury in 1916 to provide a location to fabricate tools and equipment for its milling operations. Located at the corner of 3rd Avenue SE and 2nd Street SE, the Machine Shop is a stand-alone brick structure. Warehouse 2 was constructed in many phases (from 1914-1917) by Pillsbury to accommodate the storage needs of its milling operations. Located at the corner of 5th Avenue SE and 2nd Street SE, Warehouse 2 is a structure of four stories with an attached shed of one story.

Previous Applications and Approvals

In January and February of 2006 the Minneapolis Heritage Preservation Commission and the City Council heard and ultimately approved a rehabilitation plan for the Pillsbury 'A' Mill Complex which included the rehabilitation of six buildings, the demolition of grain elevators and the construction of six new buildings on the site. The approved plans have not been executed due to changes in the market and

the official preservation approvals for the project have now expired. However, the project is far from dormant. Over the past year CPED staff has been collaborating with the property owner Mill Development, LLC/Schafer Richardson on projects and proposals to move the work on the 'A' Mill Complex forward despite the changed marketplace.

Funding Tools and Possibilities

CPED has been collaborating with Mill Development, LLC to find public and private funding sources to help accomplish the mutual goal of long term preservation of the Pillsbury A Mill complex through adaptive re-use.

In late 2009 CPED partnered with Mill Development, LLC on two Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund "Legacy" grants applications. One of the grant applications was for a large grant (over \$50,000) to fund roof stabilization of the A-Mill and the Warehouse II buildings and a window survey of all the building in the complex. The second grant application was for a small 'fast track' grant (under \$7,000) for the scoping an assessment for the reuse of the Energy Center. CPED and Mill Development, LLC received the fast track grant for the scoping for the energy center in the Pillsbury 'A' Mill Complex. The work for this project is currently underway.

CPED continued this partnership with Mill Development, LLC, submitting another Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund grant application in 2010. The 2010 grant application was roof stabilization of the A-mill roof and the repair and replacement of the roof of Warehouse II.

CPED has also provided a loan to Mill Development, LLC for a study of the Energy Center. In addition to this loan Mill Development, LLC also received a grant from the St. Anthony Falls Heritage Board to photograph the tunnels and mill traces and create a computer model of these resources.

Other funding tools that are being explored include:

- Affordable Housing Trust Fund
- Tax Increment Financing
- Metropolitan Council Livable Communities Demonstration Account (LCDA) Grants
- Hennepin County Transit Oriented Development (TOD) Funds

Discussion

Representatives from Mill Development, LLC/Schafer Richardson will provide a tour of portions of the Pillsbury 'A' Mill Complex and provide an introduction and update on the various components of the project. CPED and Mill Development, LLC seek your insights and advice on this project.