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Planning Division**
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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: October 26, 2010
RE: Pre-Application Review: Holden Building, 607 Washington Avenue North: Proposed Building Rehabilitation

Background

The Parlin and Orendorff Plow Company Warehouse, commonly known as the Holden Building, is located at 607 Washington Avenue North. This seven story warehouse building was designed by Bertrand and Chamberlain and constructed in 1910. The first story of this large symmetrical warehouse building consists of brick that appears to be painted in a cream color while the remaining six floors are of a deep wine-red color brick. The building is distinguished by a refined panelization of its facade with four giant raised brick panels separating the window bays on the third through sixth floors. Eight smaller panels define the seventh floor. Craftsman details consisting of geometric bands of ornamentation occur on the upper story and the cornice terminates in a graceful curve. The large window openings on the first floor have been infilled with concrete block although two octagonal Doric columns which once flanked the original entry are still intact. Building permit records also indicate the second through fourth floor windows have been replaced, however the openings appear intact. This structure represents the most monumental design of the numerous buildings by Bertrand and Chamberlain in the warehouse district. The building contains an exterior loading dock along Seventh Avenue North. The building is a contributing resource to the Minneapolis Warehouse Historic District.

In 1926, a one-story addition or annex was constructed on the east side of the building along Washington Avenue North. The building permit states that it was a service building for trucks. The facade of the one-story building appears to be painted in the same cream color as the first floor of the 1910 building. The one story building has an adjacent elevated loading dock along Sixth Avenue North with a series of roll-up overhead doors in the 6th Avenue North facade of the building. The building is a contributing resource to the Minneapolis Warehouse Historic District. Together the 1910 warehouse and the 1926 annex building fill the block face along Washington Avenue North between Sixth and Seventh Avenues North.

The rear of the 1910 and 1926 buildings abuts a Great Northern rail spur. The corridor is a contributing resource to the Minneapolis Warehouse Historic District and significant as it shaped the development patterns and design of the buildings within the Warehouse District. The rear of the 1910 warehouse has an integrated rail car loading facility that tied into the rail spur behind the building. This integrated rail car loading facility is a key character defining feature to the building and the district, as a whole.

Proposed Alterations

The Applicant is proposing to rehabilitate the 1910 warehouse building and the 1926 addition. The 1910 building will contain a commercial tenant space, building offices, and parking on the first floor. The upper stories will contain 120 apartment units. The 1926 addition will be used for commercial tenant space.

The Applicant is currently pursuing federal and state historic tax credits for the project. They are currently discussing the project components with the State Historic Preservation Office Historical Architect and the National Park Service tax credit reviewer.

The detailed scope of the Applicant’s proposed work can be found on page 14 of attachment A. A summary of the proposed work is below. The Applicant has found original building plans and historic photographs of the building from the District’s period of significance, which is 1864-1930. The Applicant is using this documentation to guide the rehabilitation of the building and the restoration of some of the building’s original elements. Examples of this documentation can be found in attachment A.

1910 Warehouse Building:

<i>Washington and Seventh Avenues Facades</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Replace non-historic aluminum storm windows with painted, aluminum windows consistent with historic design of windows (second floor: large lower sash with four-by-two light top sash; third through seventh floor: four-by-three light windows). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Floor Plan: Drawing A107 ▪ Elevation: Drawing A500. A503 ▪ Historical Documentation: Attachment A, page 3
<i>Washington Avenue Facade (North)</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Restore central historic entrance for use as a primary entrance to building 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Floor Plan: Drawing A101 ▪ Elevation: Drawing A500 ▪ Historical Documentation: Attachment A, pages 3 and 4 ▪ See notes D1-D5 on Drawing A500
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Reopen in-filled street-level openings using new storefront window modeled after original design 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ See note D1 – Drawing A500
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Paint removal on first floor to return brick to historical appearance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ See note D10 – Drawing A500
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Remove non-historic metal band above first floor 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ See note D6 – Drawing A500
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Convert current entrance in easternmost bay of warehouse into accessible entry with elements modeled after original storefront design. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ See note D7 – Drawing A500
<i>Seventh Avenue Facade (West)</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Remove existing electrical transformer and chain link gate and replace with storefront modeled after original storefront 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Floor Plan: Drawing A101 ▪ Elevation: Drawing A503 ▪ Historical Documentation: Attachment A, page 3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Leave concrete block in three transom first-story windows- <i>note plans provided indicate a reopening of these windows.</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ See note D13 – Drawing A503
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Remove two non-historic metal loading dock doors. Replace one with recessed concrete block wall; retain surrounding non-historic concrete block wall 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ See note D13, 6, and 7 – Drawing A503
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Remove non-historic garage door; replace with painted metal and glass overhead garage door 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ See note 9 – Drawing A503
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Retain existing loading dock along street; repair spalled concrete and replace steel edging 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Floor Plan: Drawing A101 ▪ Elevation: Drawing A503
<i>Sixth Avenue Facing Facade (East)</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Cut window openings into warehouse wall to allow development of apartments on the interior. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Floor Plan: Drawing A107 ▪ Elevation: Drawing A501 ▪ See note D18 – Drawing A501

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Retain remainder of non-historic ghost sign not disturbed by new window installation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Floor Plan: Drawing A107 ▪ Elevation: Drawing A501
<i>Rear Facade (South)</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Install windows in two large openings that were cut to load printing equipment on upper floors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ See note D20 -Drawing A502
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Repair/restore historic windows on rear facade where feasible and retrofit historic windows with storm windows. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ See note D22 -Drawing A502
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Convert former railroad spur/dock for access to parking on first floor and basement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Floor Plan: Drawing A101 ▪ Elevation: Drawing A502 ▪ See notes D23 and 3 –Drawing A502
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Install glass block in openings along former railroad spur that are currently filled in with wood panels and concrete block 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Floor Plan: Drawing A101 ▪ Elevation: Drawing A502 ▪ See notes D23 and 3 –Drawing A502
<i>Roof</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Remove non-historic passenger elevator penthouse near northeast corner of roof 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Floor Plan: Drawing A108- See note 1 ▪ Elevation: Drawing A501 – see note D26
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Repair terra-cotta tiles on cornice- Replace damaged or missing tiles with new tiles that match existing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ See note D12 on all elevation drawings – A500 – A503
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 750 square foot club room addition adjacent to existing elevator penthouse. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Floor Plan: Drawing A108 ▪ Elevation: Drawing A501
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Roof top deck with trellis 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Floor Plan: Drawing A108 ▪ Elevation: Drawing A501
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Four new skylights north of elevator penthouse 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Floor Plan: Drawing A108

1926 Annex

<i>All facades</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Remove non-historic paint using gentlest means possible 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Elevation: Drawing A500 and A501- ▪ See note D10 and D8 respectively
<i>Washington Avenue Facade (North)</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Restore central entrance with angled storefront modeled after original design 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Floor Plan: Drawing A101 ▪ Elevation: Drawing A500 ▪ Historical Documentation: Attachment A, page 5
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Remove infill from historic window openings on front facade and restore storefronts following original design 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ See note D1- Drawing A500
<i>Sixth Avenue Facade (East)</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Repair and preserve extant historic doors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Elevation: Drawing A501
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Remove modern concrete-block filled in first three windows on north end of facade. Install windows based on original architectural plans 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ See note D1- Drawing A501
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Remove modern aluminum storefront and infill in two historic doorways. Remove air conditioning units and restore horizontal window openings above western doorway. Insert two one-over-four light transom windows 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ See note D24 and D25- Drawing A501
<i>Rear Facade (South)</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Save wood door 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ See note 1- Drawing A502
<i>Roof</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ New charcoal gray asphalt shingles 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Elevation: Drawing A501

Discussion Items

Staff and the Applicant are looking for general feedback on the proposed project, but are also interested in particular feedback on the following issues.

Proposed window replacement on Washington and Seventh Avenue facades of 1910 Building

The Applicant stated that they are looking for feedback on the proposed window replacement on the Washington and Seventh Avenues facades. The Applicant states that the existing windows, which are aluminum storm windows, are not original. The Applicant is proposing a large lower sash window with an upper four-by-two light smaller sash for the second floor and a four-by-three light window with an operational awning on the first row of lights for the third floor. The applicant has provided historical documentation of the windows and elevations of the proposed windows but not any further documentation of the existing or proposed windows.

The Warehouse Historic District Design Guidelines state that “Original and historically significant windows shall be retained and repaired.” The guidelines further go on to state that “Replacement windows will be considered if evidence is provided that significant numbers of the historical or original windows have been previously removed. A survey of the existing windows is required to document their condition and type.”

The Applicant has not provided a window survey or conditions assessment that indicates which windows are original or the existing window configuration.

Proposed installation of windows on Sixth Avenue facade of 1910 Building

The Applicant stated that the installation of the windows on this facade is critical to the success of the proposed rehabilitation project. This facade of the building currently has three wall openings and has several painted ghost signs. The Applicant states that they have discussed the location and size of the proposed windows with SHPO and NPS staff. The Applicant has not provided any information to describe the need for the proposed location and size of the windows. They have stated that they will take efforts to protect the portions of the painted ghost signs not damaged in the window installation.

The Warehouse Historic District Design Guidelines state that “New window openings on secondary facades will be considered.” The guidelines further state that “original or historically significant painted signs (ghost signs) on the sides of building shall be retained.”

Staff understands the need for windows in a residential apartment project; however the Applicant has not demonstrated the need or desire for the proposed size and location of the windows.

- Could the windows be smaller or located in a way to preserve more of the ghost sign?
- Are the proposed windows appropriate in size and design?
- The proposed windows do not match the size of the existing or proposed windows on the other elevations of the building. Is this variation in size and design complimentary, but distinct enough to differentiate the new opening from the original openings?

Proposed treatment of openings in former rail loading dock area on rear of building

The rear loading dock was originally used for rail freight transfer. It appears that the original design may have left the rear and side walls open. Currently the Seventh Avenue opening is a wooden garage door, the rear openings are infilled with concrete block and wooden boards, and the east facing opening is blocked-off by a chain link fence. A metal platform sits approximately in the middle of the area where freight cars were once parked.

The applicant is proposing to use this feature for vehicular circulation to and from the enclosed parking. Access to the basement parking will be provided by a two-way drive aisle accessed off of Seventh Avenue. Access to the first floor parking will be provided by a two-way drive aisle accessed from the east opening of the dock. The applicant is proposing to add six parking stalls at the level of the first floor in the loading area in a similar location to the existing metal platform. The west and east sides of the freight loading area will be enclosed with glass and painted metal overhead doors. The rear facade will be enclosed with glass block. This treatment will allow light to pass through the openings and provide for a reinterpretation of this historic loading area.

The Warehouse Historic District Design Guidelines state that “character defining features such as loading docks, water towers, fire escapes and chimneys shall be preserved.”

- Is the proposed treatment of this freight loading dock appropriate?
- Is the material choice of glass block appropriate?

Proposed rooftop addition and deck

The applicant is proposing a 750 square foot rooftop addition adjacent to the existing stair and elevator penthouse. A patio and planted roofscape is proposed on the southeast corner of the proposed addition. The planted roofscape appears to be accessible to the residents of the building and will have a guardrail along its perimeter. This feature will be located 19 feet 1 inch from the east building wall and 19 feet 9 inches from the south (rear) building wall. The parapet wall along the building varies in height around the building. Along the Seventh and Washington Avenues facades the parapet wall of the building is approximately four feet tall. Along the east and rear facades the parapet wall is approximately eighteen inches tall.

With regard to the rooftop additions the Warehouse District Design Guidelines state the following:

Rooftop additions are rarely appropriate on buildings. Rooftop additions on buildings that are less than four stories are not allowed due to their visibility. In cases where a rooftop addition is allowed the guidelines are intended to minimize visibility of the addition from the public street by limiting its footprint, scale, height and mass. This minimizes alterations to the historic character of the building, the surrounding historic district, streetscape or other adjacent structures.

The guidelines go on to further state that “a new rooftop addition shall be set back a minimum of one structural bay or 15 feet, whichever is greater, from all sides of the building. This setback does not constitute a standard right, but a baseline, additional setbacks may be required to meet the intent of the guidelines.” They also state that “roof top additions to contributing buildings are rarely appropriate. A rooftop addition will be considered if visibility and site line studies indicate that the addition is minimally visible from any public right-of-way.”

The proposed rooftop addition and decking are setback one structural bay, however the Applicant has not provided any visibility and site line studies to that indicate the visibility of the addition and deck. Nor has the applicant provided elevation drawings of the rooftop deck.

- Staff is concerned that the low parapet wall on the east facade of the 1910 building and prominent view of the portion of the building due to the site lines created by nearby contributing historic buildings may make the proposed location quite visible.

Proposed use of the basement and portions of the first floor for parking

The applicant is proposing 54 parking spaces in the basement and 33 parking spaces on first floor of the building. The Washington Avenue facade of the building will have active uses on the first floor but the Seventh Avenue Facade of the building will only have 19 percent of the facade with active uses. The zoning code requires that office, commercial, or residential uses are located between the street and the parking garage area, with the exception of providing vehicular or pedestrian access. This provision cannot be varied in the zoning code. The Applicant’s current proposal does not comply with the zoning code requirements. The Applicant has the option to redesign the parking facilities in the building to allow for active uses along the Seventh Avenue facade. Or the Applicant could apply for a Historic Variance.

The original design of the building presents a design challenge to encouraging active uses, but does not prohibit them. The building has one storefront window located on the corner of the building along Seventh Avenue adjacent to Washington Avenue. The building then has a series of three bays of transom windows and then a series of three openings for loading doors. The transom windows and the loading doors do not appear to be designed with the intent of creating pedestrian access or viewable display areas such as the Washington Avenue facade was. The Applicant’s materials indicate that the transom windows and one of the doorway will be infilled with concrete block and the other doors will be used for loading/unloading and vehicular access.

The intent of the zoning ordinance is to help encourage a safe and inviting pedestrian environment and the adjacency to a loading dock creates a space that could be potential utilized by a commercial tenant or building inhabitants that will further activate the vitality of the street life in the Warehouse Historic District and the North Loop Neighborhood. Facilitating a more active street life implements the long term vision adopted by the City Council for this area in the North Loop Small Area Plan and the Minneapolis Plan for Sustainable Growth.

- Is the Applicant’s proposed treatment appropriate?
- Are there appropriate design solutions that could be considered to bring this facade of the building more into compliance with the zoning code standards?