

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

FILE NAME: 1019 University Avenue SE (BZH 25782)

APPLICANT: Crowe Construction Management (651) 203-1166 on behalf of property owner,  
Mark Freund (651) 238-4052

DATE OF APPLICATION: March 11, 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 New Construction at 1013-1019 University Avenue S.E.

**A. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The property owner, Mark Freund, submitted plans to construct a four story, 23-unit building at 1013 and 1019 University Avenue S.E. As part of this project, the applicant submitted a Certificate of Appropriateness application for the new construction. Based on the Heritage Preservation ordinance, Secretary of Interior Standards, and Comprehensive Plan, staff is recommending that the Heritage Preservation Commission deny the Certificate of Appropriateness application.

**B. BACKGROUND**

<b>District/Area Information of Subject Property</b>	
Historic District	University of Minnesota Greek Letter Chapter House Historic District
District Significance	Architecture and Social Significance
Neighborhood	Marcy Holmes
Date of Local Designation	2003
Date of National Designation	N/A
Period of Significance	1907-1936
<b>Property Information</b>	
Address	1019 University Avenue S.E.
Historic Name	Pi Beta Phi Sorority House
Classification	- Contributing to University of Minnesota Greek Letter Chapter House Historic District  - Eligible for individual landmark designation
Construction Date	1916
Historic Builder/Contractor	Carlsted Brothers
Historic Architect	Ethel Bartholomew and Marion Alice Parker
Architectural Style	Prairie-School
Historical Use	Chapter House
Current Use	Boarding House

## C. DESCRIPTION

### C1. District

The University of Minnesota Greek Letter Chapter House District consists of 33 properties and two parts: *Fraternity Row* and *Off the Row*. The district was designated based on local criterion 1 and 4.

*Criteria 1: The property is associated with significant events or with periods that exemplify broad patterns of cultural, political, economic or social history.*

*Criteria 4: The property embodies the distinctive characteristics of an architectural or engineering type or style, or method of construction.*

*Fraternity Row* is made up of 19 fraternity chapter houses that are located between 1515 University and 1901 University Avenue S.E. that were built between 1907 and 1930 (see Appendix B27).

There are three noncontributing properties within *Fraternity Row*.

*Off the Row* consists of 11 non-contiguous fraternities and sororities dating from 1911-1936; 10 of these properties are located west of *Fraternity Row* (see Appendix B27).

### C2. 1019 University Avenue SE

The structure at 1019 University Avenue S.E. is stucco, two-stories, and rests on a concrete foundation. The low-pitched hip roof has asphalt shingles, wide eaves, and a prominent stucco-clad chimney at the roof peak (Appendix B17, B18, B28, and B40). The front elevation contains a projecting bay with eight single-pane casement windows and fixed transoms. The west elevation entry is under an Elmslie-inspired sawnwood arched hood wood ornament with short returns (see Appendix B17). At the second story, seven windows are placed directly under the soffit of the wide eaves.

The properties that are adjacent to Pi Beta Sorority House are modest residential structures that were built prior to the construction of the Pi Beta Sorority House (see appendix B40 and C4-4.2)

The Pi Beta Sorority at 1019 University Avenue S.E. is an important Minneapolis building with at least five honors or distinctions:

1. It is contributing structure to the Greek Letter Chapter House District which is designated for its social significance (Criteria 1) and architecture (Criteria 4);
2. It is potentially eligible for individual designation based for its social significance, architecture and possible association with a master architect;
3. The Pi Beta Sorority House, built in 1916, is one of the earliest examples of a chapter house built by a sorority at the University of Minnesota (see Appendix C17 and C18);
4. The Pi Beta Sorority House is a well-conserved and rare example of a Prairie-School Greek chapter house;
5. The Pi Beta Sorority House exemplifies the work of Marion Alice Parker and Ethel Bartholomew. Ms. Parker and Ms. Bartholomew were two of the first women architects to practice in Minnesota and the Pi Beta Sorority House is the earliest known property extant that Ms. Parker is the accredited architect. The City of Minneapolis does not have a designated property by either of these women.

## **D. PROPOSED WORK**

The Applicant submitted plans to tear down the residential structures at 1013 and 1019 University Avenue, join the lots, and construct a new, four-story, 23-unit building (see Appendix B38-B49). The dimensions of the building are 77.5 feet wide by 85 feet deep (6,587 square feet). The square footage of the four floors would be 26,350 square feet. The exterior materials of the building are proposed to be Bravissi block and stucco panels

## **E. 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.

### ***E1. The Alterations Will Not Materially Impair the Landmark***

The applicant's proposal to demolish the Pi Beta Phi Chapter House would materially impair a historic landmark. Although not currently designated as a historic landmark, the Pi Beta Phi Chapter House is eligible based on its social significance, architecture, and possibly for its association with a master architect.

### ***E2. The Alterations Will Not Materially Impair the Historic District***

The applicant's proposal to demolish the Pi Beta Phi Chapter House, which is a contributing structure to the Greek Row Chapter House Historic District, would adversely impact the District in the following ways:

1. Reducing the number of contributing structures within the district;
2. Demolishing one of the earliest examples of a chapter house built by a sorority at the University of Minnesota;
3. Destroying a well-conserved and rare example of a Prairie-School Greek chapter house.

### ***E3. The Alteration is Consistent with the Greek Letter Chapter House Historic District Guidelines.***

The Pi Beta Sorority at 1019 University Avenue S.E. is contributing building to the Greek Letter Chapter House District and is part of the *Off the Row* portion of the district. *Off the Row* consists of 11 non-contiguous fraternities and sororities. The designated chapter houses that are *Off the Row* are characterized as being unpretentious houses that fit in with their neighboring surroundings in scale, size, and massing, which is the case with the Pi Beta Sorority House (see Appendix C3, C12, C13, and C15).

CPED analyzed the new construction proposal for consistency with the 2004 Greek Row Chapter House Historic District New Construction and Parking Lot guidelines. CPED believes that the proposal does not meet the intent of Greek Row Chapter House Historic District New Construction Guideline A, B, C, E, and F and Parking Lot Guideline B.

### **New Construction Guidelines**

***A. New buildings should relate to the placement and orientation of adjacent historic buildings. To reinforce the historic streetscape, new buildings should maintain the setback of existing historic buildings.***

The proposed building does not meet the intent of Guideline A. The proposed building would be located approximately 13 feet from the front property line which does not relate to the placement of the neighboring properties at 1009 and 1023 University Avenue SE (see Appendix B42 and C5). The properties at 1009 and 1017 University Avenue Southeast are setback approximately 27.4 feet and the property at 1023 University Avenue Southeast is setback approximately 17.4 feet. In order to respect the placement of the adjacent properties the proposal should be setback at a minimum a distance equal to 1023 University Avenue.

***B. New buildings should relate to the scale, size, height, massing, and materials of adjacent historic buildings and the streetscape. Acceptable exterior materials include stone, brick, rusticated concrete block, stucco, terra cotta and wood.***

The proposed building does not meet the intent of Guideline B in terms of scale, size, height, massing, and materials.

*Scale:* The proposed building does not relate to the scale of the adjacent buildings. The applicant's proposal is a four-story, 52.4-foot high, 77-foot wide structure. This substantially contrasts the modest 2.5 story homes that are adjacent to the proposal: 1009 and 1023 University Avenue S.E. (see Appendix B39).

The proposed building also does not relate to the scale of any contributing structure within the District. No designated fraternity or sorority is greater than three stories in height. In addition, the properties that are *Off the Row* are described as ranging "from medium-sized, unpretentious houses to club-like, three story buildings (see Appendix C12.5)." And the seven sororities *Off the Row* are described as being "modestly-sized, comfortable houses that were similar to any well appointed residence in the city (see Appendix C15)." The proposed structure does not relate in terms of scale to the other properties *Off the Row*.

*Size:* The proposed building does not relate to adjacent buildings. There is not a property on the 1000 block of University Avenue S.E. that is greater than 4,800 square feet (see Appendix C5). The proposed structure would be 26,350 square feet which is more than five times the size of the largest residential structure on this block. Furthermore, the proposed building would be nearly three times larger than a chapter house located *Off the Row* (see Appendix C5.5).

*Height:* The proposed building does not relate to the height of the adjacent buildings. The proposal is approximately 52.4 feet in height, which is substantially higher than the properties at 1009 and 1023 University Avenue S.E which are approximately 27 feet measured to the midpoint (see Appendix B39). The applicant did not provide height measurements of the adjacent structures, therefore, a specific comparison is not provided. However, if the proposed development's façade rendering is accurate, the bottom of the eaves of 1009 and 1023 University Avenue S.E. are well below the third floor of the proposed development (see Appendix B39).

*Massing:* The proposed building does not relate to the massing, that is, the composition and shape of the adjacent historic buildings. The proposal is substantially wider and deeper than 1009, 1017, or

1023 University Avenue S.E (see Appendix B36.5, B39, and B48). The proposed building is also bulkier than any other designated property within the Greek Row Chapter House Historic District (see Appendix C6-C9).

*Materials:* The proposed building's materials do not meet the intent of the Guidelines. The applicant is proposing to use Bravissi block for the first floor façade and stucco panels for floors two through four (see Appendix C19 and C20 for product information). Neither of these materials are acceptable per the district guidelines. The guidelines state that stone, brick, and stucco are acceptable materials; rusticated concrete block is intended for exposed foundations.

***C. Pitched or flat roofs should be compatible with historic buildings in the adjacent streetscape. All roofs should have appropriately detailed parapets and/or cornices.***

The applicant's proposed roof does not meet the intent of Guideline C. If a new structure is allowed at 1019 University Avenue S.E. it has the opportunity to unify or respect the roofline heights of 1009 and 1023 University Avenue S.E (see Appendix B39). The proposed roof will be approximately 54 feet in height at the bottom of the eaves and tower over the adjacent properties. Even though the *Off the Row* properties are non-contiguous they are recognized as being unpretentious houses, built to a maximum of three stories, and fit in with their neighboring surroundings in scale, size, height, and massing (see Appendix C12.5, C13, and C15).

***D. Facades should maintain the traditional multi-story division of adjacent buildings, usually including an articulated entry-level base, an upper facade with appropriately spaced windows, and a well-defined roofline.***

The applicant's proposal meets the intent of Guideline D. The applicant's proposed façade does include an articulated entry level base that is separated from the upper façade by a first-level canopy. The upper façade windows are appropriately spaced and the roofline is well defined.

***E. Windows, entries, and other openings should be compatible with adjacent historic buildings in their type, size, alignment, and proportion.***

The applicant's proposal does not meet the intent of Guideline E. The proposed front-facing attached garage would substantially detract from the adjacent structures and the historic district. No designated property within the district has a front-facing garage (see Appendix C6-C9). The front yard of the fraternities and sororities, although they are typically small, are a place to provide a pedestrian-friendly welcoming entrance and/or gathering space. The proposed front-facing garage would substantially detract from a pedestrian entrance or gathering space.

***F. Large residential buildings with few entries are traditional in the district. Rowhouse-style buildings with multiple single entries and porches are not compatible.***

The applicant's proposal meets the intent of Guideline F. The applicant is proposing to have a main entrance to the building and entrance/exit on the rear elevation.

**Parking Lots**

***A. Parking lots should not be constructed at the front elevation.***

The applicant's proposal of constructing a rear parking lot meets the intent of Guideline A (see Appendix B42).

***B. When required, parking lots at the rear and side elevations should be screened with landscaping, low masonry walls, or iron or steel fencing of appropriate design.***

The applicant's proposal does not meet the intent of Guideline B. The applicant does propose to have the existing trees in the rear of the property remain and to have a six-foot fence, however, no other details are provided on landscaping plan or materials for this portion of the lot.

***E4. The Alteration is Consistent with the Secretary of Interior Standards for Rehabilitation***

The demolition and new construction is not in compliance with the Secretary of Interior Standards for Rehabilitation: The first standard is "A property shall be used for its historic purpose or be placed in a new use that requires minimal change to the defining characteristics of the building and its site and environment (see Appendix B12)." The applicant's proposal would demolish the historic structure.

Mr. Freund points out that the Secretary of Interior Standards state, "The Standards are to be applied to specific rehabilitation projects in a reasonable manner, taking into consideration economic and technical feasibility." However, the applicant has not provided sufficient information that a rehabilitation of the Pi Beta Sorority House is not economically and technically feasible.

**F. COMPREHENSIVE PLAN POLICIES**

The following City of Minneapolis Comprehensive Plan policies do not support the proposed demolition and new construction of 1019 University Avenue SE.

Policy 1.7 "Minneapolis will recognize and celebrate its history." This policy is supported by the following implementation step "encourage new developments to retain historic structures, incorporating them into new development rather than demolishing them."

Policy 4.14 "Minneapolis will maintain the quality and unique character of the city's housing stock, thus maintaining the character of the vast majority of residential blocks in the city." The following implementation step is listed under this policy "encourage adaptive re-use, retrofit and renovation projects that make the city's housing stock competitive on the regional market."

**G. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

CPED notified property owners within 350 feet of the Certificate of Appropriateness applications on March 27, 2009. The applicant submitted two letters from the Marcy Holmes Neighborhood Association (see Appendix B13-B14). The Marcy Holmes Neighborhood Association also submitted one letter to CPED (see Appendix D1).

The most recent letter from the Marcy Holmes Neighborhood dated February 25, 2009 states, "The MNHA board and land use committee support the demolition provided the HPC agrees that the destruction of the historical properties in this case in the only appropriate measure (see Appendix B13)."

**H. FINDINGS**

*District Background*

1. The Greek Letter Chapter House Historic District was locally designated in 2003 for its social significance (Criteria 1) and architecture (Criteria 4).
2. The City Council and the Heritage Preservation Commission unanimously supported the designation.
3. The district's period of significance is 1907-1936.

4. The University of Minnesota Greek Letter Chapter House District consists of two parts: *Fraternity Row* and *Off the Row*. The fraternities and sororities that are part of *Off the Row* are non-contiguous.
5. The Pi Beta Sorority House is part of the *Off the Row* portion of the historic district.

#### *Building Significance*

6. The Pi Beta Sorority House is a contributing structure to the Greek Letter Chapter House District.
7. It is eligible for individual designation for its social significance, architecture, and possibly with its association with a master architect.
8. The Pi Beta Sorority House, built in 1916, is one of the earliest examples of a chapter house built by a sorority at the University of Minnesota.
9. The Pi Beta Sorority House is a well-conserved and rare example of a Prairie-School Greek chapter house.
10. The Pi Beta Sorority House exemplifies the work of Marion Alice Parker and Ethel Bartholomew.

#### *Proposed Work*

11. The Applicant submitted plans to tear down the residential structures at 1013 and 1019 University Avenue, join the lots, and construct a new 23-unit building on these properties.

#### *Proposed Alterations Impact to Landmark*

12. The applicant's proposal to demolish the Pi Beta Phi Chapter House would materially impair a historic landmark. Although not currently designated as a historic landmark, the Pi Beta Phi Chapter House is eligible based on its social significance, architecture and possibly for its association with a master architect.

#### *Proposed Alterations Impact to District*

13. The applicant's proposal to demolish the Pi Beta Phi Chapter House, which is a contributing structure to the Greek Row Chapter House Historic District, would adversely impact the District in the following ways:
  - a. Reducing the number of contributing structures within the district;
  - b. Demolishing one of the earliest examples of a chapter house built by a sorority at the University of Minnesota;
  - c. Destroying a well-conserved and rare example of a Prairie-School Greek chapter house.

#### *Proposed Alterations Consistency with District Guidelines*

14. The proposal does not meet the intent of the Greek Row Chapter House Historic District New Construction Guidelines A, B, C, E, and F and Parking Lot Guideline B.

#### *Proposed Alterations Consistency with the Secretary of Interior Standards for Rehabilitation*

15. The proposal is not in compliance with the first standard of the Secretary of Interior Standards for Rehabilitation: "A property shall be used for its historic purpose or be placed in a new use that requires minimal change to the defining characteristics of the building and its site and environment."
16. The applicant has not shown economically or technically that a rehabilitation of the Pi Beta Sorority House could be completed.

#### *Proposed Alterations Consistency with the Comprehensive Plan*

17. The proposed demolition of the Pi Beta Phi Chapter House and new construction is not consistent with Policy 1.7 or 4.14 of the Comprehensive Plan.

## **I. STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

CPED recommends that the Heritage Preservation Commission **adopt** staff findings and **deny** the Certificate of Appropriateness application for new construction at 1013-1019 University Avenue S.E..

## **J. ATTACHMENTS**

Appendix A: University of Minnesota Greek Letter Chapter House Historic District Information

Appendix B: Application

Appendix C: CPED Supplied Information (Designation Study Excerpts, Property Images, Maps, AIA Guide to the Twin Cities Excerpt, Historic Newspaper Information)

Appendix D: Public Comments