

**CITY OF MINNEAPOLIS
CPED PLANNING DIVISION
HERITAGE PRESERVATION COMMISSION STAFF REPORT
BZH #26347**

ADDRESS: 20 Park Lane

CATEGORY/DISTRICT: Minneapolis Local Landmark

CLASSIFICATION: Historic Variance

APPLICANT: Lars Peterssen,

DATE OF APPLICATION: August 18, 2010

PUBLICATION DATE: October 5, 2010

DATE OF HEARING: October 12, 2010

APPEAL PERIOD EXPIRATION: October 22, 2010

STAFF INVESTIGATION AND REPORT: Aaron Hanauer, 612-673-2494

REQUEST: Historic variances to allow for a third-story addition and to reduce the minimum window requirement for an addition.

A. SITE DESCRIPTION AND BACKGROUND:

PROPERTY INFORMATION	
Current name	Lacey Residence
Historic Name	V.M.S. Kaufmann House
Current Address	20 Park Lane
Historic Address	20 Park Lane
Original Construction Date	1935
Original Contractor	Nelson and Benson
Original Architect	Wessel, Brunet, and Kline
Historic Use	Residential (Single-Family)
Current Use	Residential (Single-Family)
Proposed Use	Residential (Single-Family)

CLASSIFICATION:	
Individual Landmark	V.M.S. Kaufmann House 20 Park Lane
Period of Significance	1935-Present
Criteria of significance	Architecture
Date of local designation	1987
Applicable Design Guidelines	N/A

B. PROPOSED CHANGES:

Influenced by the examples of modern architecture at the Chicago World's Fair in 1933, V. Mel Kaufmann was determined to build an International style house. He hired architect James Brunet, a recent graduate of the University of Minnesota, to design a home that would capture the theme of "progress" on the shores of Cedar Lake. Surrounded by traditional homes, the modern design with its stucco exterior and flat roof stands out for its architectural distinctiveness. It evokes Le Corbusier's idea of a house as a "Machine for Living" where all superfluous ornamentation is stripped away. Architect Brunet used the latest advances in plumbing, materials and equipment throughout the house. Having been in the first class to be schooled in the "modern design," Brunet designed a prime example of the latest trends in architecture. After the house was built, professors from the University would have bus loads of students come for field trips (City of Minneapolis website).

The house has had four owners. The Kaufmanns lived in the house from 1936-1979. Robert and Julie Weber purchased the house in 1979 and lived there until 1986. In 1987, Penny and John Bynre purchased the property and lived there until 2001. In 2001, the Lacey's purchased the property.

The house was designated in April 1987. From the time the house was built to the designation, the Kaufmann House experienced minimal exterior alterations (see Attachment B37-B38). In the later part of 1987, Penny and John Byrne received Minneapolis Heritage Preservation Commission (HPC) approval for a second-story addition that included adding a new master bedroom, a new family room, and a roof terrace. The restoration also included a complete replacement of the stucco siding, extensive structural repair, as well as re-plastering the entire interior. In addition, the kitchen was renovated and expanded to meet the needs of the owner. This 1987 addition, designed by Meyer, Scherer, and Rockastle, received a 1992 Minneapolis Heritage Preservation Commission award for a new addition to an historic residential building (Attachment B21-B34).

In November 1990, the Byrnes received Heritage Preservation Commission approval for a third-story addition. However, this addition was not built (Attachment C36-C38).

SUMMARY OF APPLICANT'S PROPOSAL

The Applicant states: "Roger and Neroli Lacey have lived in the V.M.S. Kaufman House on Cedar Lake at 20 Park Lane for ten years, and in that time their family has grown.

Both are working professionals and one often works out of the home. The home, which the Lacey's specifically bought for the combination of modern design and its exceptional location, is an early example of the International Style. When the home was published in Architectural Forum in 1937, the program for the house described as: "PROBLEM: To design a house of use chiefly on the week-ends, by a couple with no children (Attachment B5-B6)." Mr. Peterssen also states that, "In the time our clients have lived there, they have begun to feel the home's limitations. They love the home, but it does not have enough space for a growing and active family" (Attachment C8).

"The renovations and additions that are being proposed by Peterssen/Keller build on the precedents set by the additions designed by MS&R that were subsequently approved by the HPC [in 1991] (Attachment C36-C38). As with the previous alterations, the proposed design matches the material, detail, color, form and style of the original 1936 home. Also, as with the previous MS&R additions, the distinction between new and old is not explicitly clear in every instance. Both the MS&R additions had points where the new additions to the home continued planes of stucco from the existing 1936 home to the new additions. The proposed design exhibits this as well, however it is done in careful and judicious manner."

The Historic Variance application includes two requests:

1. Construction of a third-story addition.

The Applicant is proposing to add a third-story addition that contains 738 square feet of living space (Attachment C26-C30). The addition includes a master suite, which consists of a bedroom, bathroom, closet and dressing area, and a small sitting area with access to a roof terrace overlooking Cedar Lake. The addition would be built with stucco to match the existing stucco (A-200), and glass block windows to reflect original construction. The Applicant had a structural analysis completed, and it was found that the existing structure could support the addition (Attachment C66-C71).

The maximum number of stories allowed for a single-family home is two-and-a-half stories. The top floor is considered a half story when the gross floor area of the half story is located under a gable or hip roof and all of the roof rafters shall abut the floor joists, except at gable ends or where dormers are allowed (520.160).

The proposed third story addition is not allowed by the zoning code because it does not meet the definition of a half story.

2. Allowing a building addition that does not meet the minimum window requirements.

For the third story addition, the Applicant is proposing glass block windows on the front elevation. The glass block windows would be compatible with the design of the first floor elevation, which features glass block. However, glass block is not counted towards meeting the minimum window requirement stated in 535.90: "Not less than fifteen (15) percent of the walls on each floor of single and two-family dwellings and multiple-family dwellings of three (3) and four (4) units that face a public street shall

be windows. “ As proposed, the street facing elevation of the third-story addition would have approximately 1.4% window coverage.

Additionally, the north elevation of the proposed addition does not have any windows. This is not in compliance with section 535.90 of the zoning code, which states, “Not less than five (5) percent of the walls on each floor of single and two-family dwellings and multiple-family dwellings of three (3) and four (4) units that face a rear or interior side lot line shall be windows.” As proposed, the third story addition on the north elevation would have 0% window coverage.

C. FINDINGS REQUIRED FOR A HISTORIC VARIANCE:

1. Before recommending approval of a historic variance, the commission shall make findings that the variance is compatible with the preservation of the property and with other properties in the area.

As outlined in the Certificate of Appropriateness report for this project, staff finds that the third story addition is not compatible with the preservation of this property. The addition would adversely impact the scale, size, and massing of the original construction. The proposed addition would have a substantial impact on the integrity of design for the house, which is of great importance for a property designated for its architecture. Additionally, staff finds that the proposed addition is not in keeping with the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties.

The glass block windows, which do not meet the zoning code’s requirements for window coverage, would be compatible with the preservation of the property because they match the glass block windows on the first floor, part of the original design of the house.

The north elevation of the house has relatively few windows, though both the first and second stories do include windows. Inclusion of windows on the third-story addition to fulfill the requirements of the zoning code would not be incompatible with the preservation of the property.

2. Before recommending approval of a historic variance, the commission shall make findings that the variance is necessary to alleviate undue hardship due to special conditions or circumstances unique to the property and not created by the applicant.

The historic variance is not necessary to alleviate undue hardship due to special conditions or circumstances unique to the property and not created by the applicant. The existing house is 3,382 square feet in area. While this is less than the maximum FAR allowed under the zoning ordinance, the house is not small. Small additions to the first floor, if approved by through the Certificate of Appropriateness process, would provide some additional space.

The prohibition of a third story is not unique to this property- it applies to all single-family residences in the City of Minneapolis. The inability to construct a “half-story” with a flat roof is also not considered a hardship. The definition of a half story is

outlined in the zoning code, and one of the requirements is that a half story be located completely under a hipped or gabled roof. The code itself cannot be the cause of a hardship. This circumstance is also not unique to this property. While flat roofed houses are not found in great numbers in Minneapolis, all such properties are subject to this provision of the code. The need for the variance is being created by the Applicant's request to build an addition that is not in compliance with the zoning code.

The variance is also not needed to alleviate undue hardship in regard to the window requirements. While the first floor of the front elevation does feature glass block, the second story of this elevation, and all other elevations of the house, contain other styles of windows that would be counted towards meeting the minimum window requirement. The existing north elevation of the house does feature windows, thus the third story addition could include them without having an impact on the integrity of the design of the house. It would be possible to design an addition that is both sympathetic to the design and integrity of the house and in compliance with the window requirements of the zoning code. The need for the window variance is being created by the Applicant's proposal to use glass block instead of windows on the street facing elevation and to not include any windows on the north elevation.

D. PUBLIC COMMENT

Notices were mailed on September 28, 2010. No public comments have been received.

E. STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends that the Heritage Preservation Commission **adopt** staff findings and **deny** a historic variance to allow for a third-story addition and to allow for an addition that does not meet the minimum window requirements.

Attachments

Attachments:

Attachment A: Staff Report (A1-A5)

Please refer to the Certificate of Appropriateness report for this project for all other attachments.