

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

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FILE NAME: 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue North, between Washington Avenue North and 5<sup>th</sup> Street North  
BZH-25880

CATEGORY/DISTRICT: North Loop Warehouse Historic District & Interim Protection for the  
NRHP Minneapolis Warehouse Historic District

CLASSIFICATION: Certificate of Appropriateness to allow for the reconstruction of 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue  
North between Washington Avenue North and 5<sup>th</sup> Street North including an  
areaway abandonment at 250 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue North.

APPLICANT: Jenifer Loritz, (612) 673-3625

PUBLICATION DATE: May 5, 2009

DATE OF HEARING: May 12, 2009

APPEAL PERIOD EXPIRATION: May 22, 2009

STAFF INVESTIGATION AND REPORT: Brian Schaffer (612) 673-2670

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**A. BACKGROUND**

The North Loop Warehouse District was adopted in 1978 by the City of Minneapolis. While the designation is focused mainly on the buildings that housed the wholesaling warehouse industry and the railroads that facilitated the rise of the industry, the designation does state that the district "...consists of linkage of buildings, structures, lands and space, a majority of which continue to exist in their original location..." The streets in the district provide the setting and consistent edges for building walls and are significant and contribute to the district. This evaluation holds true for the NRHP Minneapolis Warehouse Historic District as well.

The subject area is a three block section of 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue North between Washington Avenue North and 5<sup>th</sup> Street North. This site lies on a small portion of the northwestern edge of the North Loop Warehouse Historic District and is within the National Register of Historic Places Minneapolis Warehouse Historic District.

The roadway currently carries two lanes of traffic in the southwest direction, has parking on the northwest side of the street and has a designated bicycle lane. The project is adjacent to the Target Field. The ballpark project required the closure of 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue North south of its intersection with 5<sup>th</sup> Street North. The sidewalk is discontinuous along this section of 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue North. There is no sidewalk on the southwest side between Washington Avenue and 3<sup>rd</sup> Street North. There are several loading docks interrupting the sidewalk on the northwest side. The loading docks conceal areaways; one of those areaways is required to be abandoned for this project. The areaway abandonment is adjacent to the 250 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue North, the Moline, Milburn & Stoddard Company building or more commonly known as the Traffic Zone Building. This structure was individually designated to the NRHP and locally in 1975 and is included in both the national and local historic districts.

Within the project area 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue North consists of multiple paved sections ranging in age from 16 to 75 years. The existing pavement is combination of asphalt and asphalt over concrete . The concrete section was overlaid in 1991. The street is rated in fair condition by the City's pavement management system. The average Pavement Condition Index (PCI) rating is a 65-75 out of a possible 100.

## **B. PROPOSED CHANGES**

### **Layout**

The applicant is proposing to reconstruct three blocks of 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue North. The project will consist of the complete removal and replacement of pavement, curb and gutter and sidewalk surfaces. The street and sidewalk material are not original and were installed, altered, and resurfaced over the past seventy-five years, with many changes occurring in 1991. The majority of the existing right-of-way is 80 feet wide and is not proposed to be reduced. However, the layout of the street is proposed to change.

The proposed layout of for the project includes two traveling lanes (two in the south-westerly direction), parking on both sides of the street and the installation of sidewalks on both sides of the roadway. An eleven foot wide sidewalk is proposed on the northwest side of the roadway. The current pedestrian access on this side of the roadway is provided through elevated loading docks. The sidewalk will be installed adjacent to the loading docks creating a larger pedestrian area than currently exists. Only one of the loading docks will be altered and the length, width and heights of all the loading docks will remain the same.

### **Materials**

The existing roadway is concrete and bituminous and the proposed roadway will be constructed of bituminous. The existing sidewalks are currently made of concrete and the proposed sidewalks are concrete. An approximately 25 by 10 ft (250 square foot ) area of original street pavers along the entrance to Traffic Street off of 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue North is proposed to be removed and replaced with concrete.

### **Loading Dock- Areaway Abandonment**

The project consists of the removal of an area way roof and the areaway below with the purposes of abandoning and filling in the areaway. The openings between the building and the areaway will be filled with masonry and cast in place concrete the entire foundation wall below grade will be treated with a spray-on waterproofing treatment.

The original width of the raised areaway/loading dock will remain and is approximately 15 feet 8 inches. The material will be concrete to match the existing. The proposed elevated sidewalk includes a railing with three sets of stairs to access the multiple storefront entrances of the building. The existing raised sidewalk did not have a railing or stairs. The only defined access on the existing sidewalk is on the south side of the sidewalk, which is at grade with the surrounding street, and the north sidewalk that is accesses by a sloped ramp. The introduction of a railing and stairs to a loading dock or areaway is not uncommon in the NRHP Minneapolis Warehouse Historic District.

## **C. FINDINGS**

- (1) The alteration is compatible with and continues to support the criteria of significance and period of significance for which the landmark or historic district was designated.**

The period of significance for the district is 1865-1930. The right-of-way for 3rd Avenue has not changed as evidenced by the continuous building wall for the structures along this section of 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue North and its alignment provides the setting and context for the structures. The structures on the southeast side of the street have been removed and replaced with the entrance ramps to Interstate 394. The proposed alteration does not modify the width of the right-of-way.

The proposed alteration maintains the size and scale of the existing loading docks. These are character defining features of this industrial warehousing district.

- (2) The alteration is compatible with and supports the interior and/or exterior designation in which the property was designated.**

The district was designated for the impact the wholesaling industry had on the commerce of Minneapolis and the architecture that embodied that industry. The designation includes “linkages of buildings, structures, lands and space...” The right-of-way is part of the designation and the spatial relationship it creates with the surrounding buildings is intact. The proposed reconstruction does not alter that relationship; only the configuration of the roadway. The areaway abandonment and the retention of the loading docks preserves the character defining features of the district and is compatible with the designation.

- (3) The alteration is compatible with and will ensure continued integrity of the landmark or historic district for which the district was designated.**

The proposed reconstruction will not impair the integrity of the district and will allow for better pedestrian and automotive use of the roadway, which will likely have positive impacts to the district through increased access. The areaway abandonment will continue the integrity of the district and the Traffic Zone Building as the width, length and height of the proposed elevated loading dock will remain the same.

- (4) The alteration will not materially impair the significance and integrity of the landmark, historic district or nominated property under interim protection as evidenced by the consistency of alterations with the applicable design guidelines adopted by the commission.**

The current North Loop Warehouse District design guidelines do not offer specific guidance on the treatment of the public right-of-way.

- (5) The alteration will not materially impair the significance and integrity of the landmark, historic district or nominated property under interim protection as evidenced by the consistency of alterations with the recommendations contained in The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties.**

The guidelines for Setting in the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation are most applicable to the proposed project. The guidelines recommend "retaining the historic relationship between buildings and landscape features of the setting." The proposed alterations maintain the width of the right-of-way and retain the relationship of the character defining features such as the loading docks.

- (6) **The certificate of appropriateness conforms to all applicable regulations of this preservation ordinance and is consistent with the applicable policies of the comprehensive plan and applicable preservation policies in small area plans adopted by the city council.**

The proposed layout meets the City's Design Guidelines for Streets and Sidewalks and implements the policies called out in the Access Minneapolis plan.

*Adequate consideration of related documents and regulations.* Before approving a certificate of appropriateness, and based upon the evidence presented in each application submitted, the commission shall make findings that alterations are proposed in a manner that demonstrates that the applicant has made adequate consideration of the following documents and regulations:

- (1) **The description and statement of significance in the original nomination upon which designation of the landmark or historic district was based.**

See above analysis

- (2) **Where applicable, Title 20 of the Minneapolis Code of Ordinances, Zoning Code, Chapter 530, Site Plan Review.**

Not applicable

- (3) **The typology of treatments delineated in the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties and the associated guidelines for preserving, rehabilitating, reconstructing, and restoring historic buildings.**

The treatment can be best described as rehabilitating. The setting and location of the street are original, but most of the materials are not. The configuration of the street has varied over time and the proposed project does not attempt to reconstruct the street, just reuse it.

The treatment of the loading dock is more of a reconstruction and includes the introductions of steps and a railing.

*Additional findings for alterations within historic districts.* Before approving a certificate of appropriateness that involves alterations to a property within an historic district, the commission shall make findings based upon, but not limited to, the following:

- (1) **The alteration is compatible with and will ensure continued significance and integrity of all contributing properties in the historic district based on the period of significance for which the district was designated.**

The proposed reconstruction of the roadway, additional sidewalks and the areaway abandonment will increase accessibility of the area and be more inviting to pedestrians. These improvements could increase pedestrian traffic, which will ensure the use and better access to the structures within the district without compromising their setting.

- (2) **Granting the certificate of appropriateness will be in keeping with the spirit and intent of the ordinance and will not negatively alter the essential character of the historic district.**

The improvements will make the area more accessible, while preserving the relationship between buildings. The additional 11 foot wide pedestrian area that is proposed to extend out from the current elevated areaways and loading docks will allow for improved ADA accessibility of the area while retaining the elevated loading docks and the essential character of the area. While the allocation of the right-of-way will change to accommodate more pedestrians, its size and the setting it creates will not change and will not negatively alter the essential character of the historic district. Other examples of at grade pedestrian sidewalks in front of elevated areaways and loading docks can be found on 600 and 700 blocks North 1<sup>st</sup> Street, which is located in the NRHP Minneapolis Warehouse Historic District and the St. Anthony Falls Historic District.

- (3) **The certificate of appropriateness will not be injurious to the significance and integrity of other resources in the historic district and will not impede the normal and orderly preservation of surrounding resources as allowed by regulations in the preservation ordinance.**

The proposed alterations will not alter the significance or integrity of other resources in the district and will continue to allow for normal and orderly preservation of surrounding resources in the district.

#### **F. STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

Staff recommends that the Heritage Preservation Commission **adopt** staff findings and **approve** the certificate of appropriateness to allow for the reconstruction of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue North between Washington Avenue North and 5<sup>th</sup> Street North including areaway abandonment at 250 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue North. with the following condition:

1. CPED-Planning review and approve final site plan, floor plans, and elevations.

#### **F. ATTACHMENTS**

- A. Map
- B. Application
- C. Areaway Abandonment Plans
- D. Roadway Plans