

**Community Planning & Economic Development
Planning Division**
350 South 5th Street, Room 210
Minneapolis, MN 55415-1385



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

MEMORANDUM

TO: HPC
FROM: Brian Schaffer
DATE: March 25, 2008
RE: 1121 & 1127 Hennepin Avenue, Harmon Place Historic District

The applicant is proposing to construct a five story mixed use building on the site of 1121 and 1127 Hennepin Avenue. The applicant has submitted two proposals for CPED staff feedback and based on productive discussions with the applicant about the design of this project, CPED staff determined that it would be beneficial to bring an informational item to the Heritage Preservation Commission in order to generate discussion and take feedback into the design process as the proposal is being finalized.

The subject site consists of two properties that are located in the Harmon Place Historic District, 1121 Hennepin and 1127 Hennepin. 1121 Hennepin Avenue is a commercial building that was constructed in 1956. According to the Harmon Place Designation Study this property was considered noncontributing to the district. The applicant is proposing to demolish this structure. 1127 Hennepin Avenue is an empty lot that is currently being used as a parking lot.

The applicant is proposing to construct a five story mixed use building on the site of 1121 and 1127 Hennepin Avenue. The proposed structure will have a first story retail component along Hennepin Avenue with residential apartment units above. The proposed structure will have a brick masonry exterior and an ornamental metal cornice.

The applicant has submitted two proposals for CPED staff feedback and CPED staff determined that the proposals should be brought before the HPC. Both proposals are five stories and have the same site configuration, exterior materials and cornice detail. The proposals differ in their height in feet. The first proposal has a height of 56 feet with an additional 3 foot tall parapet wall resulting in a total height of 59 feet. The other proposal has height of 61 feet with an additional 3 foot tall parapet wall resulting in a total height of 64 feet. The additional height in the second proposal will allow for a more traditional storefront height of 14 feet. Neither proposal includes the height of the proposed penthouse for the elevator and stairs.

The Harmon Place Historic District Guidelines, which are attached, do not explicitly state a height requirement for new construction within the district. The guidelines state “new buildings and additions should relate to the scale, size, height, massing and materials of existing historic buildings. Acceptable

materials include stone, brick, rusticated concrete block and decorative terra cotta. Synthetic stucco, including EIFS, should not be used.” The Guidelines also states that “Windows, entries, and storefronts should be compatible with surrounding historic buildings in their alignment, type and proportion. Features such as divided lights, transoms, signbands, and bulkheads are typical of many storefronts and should be included in new design where appropriate.”

The tallest building within the Harmon Place Historic District is the St. Thomas Parking Ramp at 1101 Harmon Place. It received HPC approvals in 2001 under interim protection while the Harmon Place Historic District was being studied. The height of the structure is 59 feet, with a penthouse for the elevator and stairs that is 71 feet above grade. The next tallest structures in the historic district are four-stories, which includes the Kenosha Building located at 1204 Harmon Place.

In the applicant’s statement he addresses a maximum height of a building in the “Harmon District” being “a 4 story building or fifty-six (56) feet, whichever is less not including a three foot (3) parapet which is exempt from limitation.” The applicant is not referencing guidelines for the Harmon Place Historic District but the Zoning Ordinance, which includes a Harmon Area Overlay District. The Harmon Place Overlay District was adopted with the 1999 Zoning Ordinance, which precedes the creation of the Harmon Place Historic District in 2002. The purpose of the Harmon Area Overlay District is “to preserve and protect the unique character of the Harmon area... by limiting the height and scale of development.” Either proposal for the project will require a Conditional Use Permit to increase the height of the structure to five stories.

Attachments

1. Map of Harmon Place Historic District
2. Harmon Place Historic District Design Guidelines
3. Harmon Area Overlay District
4. Applicant’s Project Description and Plans