

**Community Planning & Economic Development
Planning Division**
250 South 4th Street, Room 110
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City of Minneapolis
*Department of Community Planning
& Economic Development - CPED*

MEMORANDUM

TO: Heritage Preservation Commission

FROM: Aaron Hanauer, Senior City Planner, 612-673-2494

DATE: July 26, 2011

RE: Conceptual Review, Pillsbury A Mill Complex, Dominion Proposal

Background and Summary of Applicant's Proposal:

There are two developers that have an ownership stake in the Pillsbury A-Mill Complex, Dominion and Doran Companies. Dominion currently has a purchase agreement with BNC Bank to acquire the following historic buildings of the A-Mill Complex (and the land surrounding the buildings): the Pillsbury A Mill Building, Cleaning House, South Mill, Red Tile Building and Warehouse No 1, White Grain Silos, Warehouse No. 2 and the Machine Shop (Attachment A5-A12 for historic images and B7 for site plan).

Dominion is proposing to rehabilitate and adaptively reuse the Pillsbury A Mill Building, the Cleaning House, the South Mill, and Warehouse No. 2 into live-work affordable artist housing (Attachment B1 and B7-B9 for site plans). Dominion states that the Machine Shop is expected to be converted in a combination of office/restaurant/retail; currently, there are no proposed plans for the White Grain Elevators (Attachment B1).

Discussion Items

Dominion has hired BKV Group to provide architectural/landscape architectural services for their project. At this time, Dominion is seeking feedback on three concept site plan reviews developed to illustrate parking and amenities in the rail corridor that runs through the center of the A-Mill Complex (Attachment B7-B9); no rehabilitation plans have been provided for the historic buildings.

The Heritage Preservation Commission's input will be used by Dominion and Doran as they further refine their design and development scenarios and move forward in preparing a formal application.

Some Commissioners will recall that the 2006 project approved by the City Council for the A-Mill complex included parking for all historic structures and new buildings at two locations: (1) structured parking below an apartment building that was then proposed for the site of the white grain silos, and (2) structured parking underneath the four condo towers approved as new

construction along SE Main Street, east of the Red Tile Elevator. In the earlier project, the rail corridor had very few parking spaces.

Because the site is now being split between two developers, and because Dominion intends to retain the white grain silos (in order to utilize state and federal preservation tax credits), locating parking on the site is more challenging. In joint meetings with both developers, CPED has identified five possible scenarios for handling parking for the historic structures:

1. Parking in additional levels of structured parking proposed to be built below Doran's Mill and Main project. This would add additional expense to the Dominion project and require a leasing or joint development arrangement between both developers.
2. Structured parking in a linear ramp built underneath the length of the rail corridor. The roof of this structure would be publicly used amenity space that would include historic interpretive features. This would add additional expense to the Dominion project. A careful structural analysis would be needed to sort out any potential concerns related to building a new structure within and amidst the foundations of the historic structures.
3. Off site parking in the nearby St. Anthony ramp or nearby surface parking lots. This option would be problematic relative to the on site requirements in the Minneapolis Zoning Code. In addition, Dominion would likely have a very difficult time getting approved bank financing for a project that does not have on site parking.
4. Reduce the City's parking requirement to zero (0) though an Historic Variance application. Assuming the Commission and City Council approve such an application, this solution would be technically possible. However, it does not address the fact that Dominion would likely have a very difficult time getting approved bank financing for a project that does not have on site parking.
5. Provide parking for all historic structures in a linear surface parking lot that is built at grade along the length of the rail corridor. At your meeting on July 26th, Dominion and BKV will be walking Commissioners through three design concepts that explore this scenario.

In preparation for this agenda item, the Heritage Preservation Commissioners should refer to the following documents in their preservation binders to guide your thinking and feedback on the proposed site plan proposals:

- St. Anthony Falls Historic District Design Guidelines (Pages 5.6.1-5.6.11, the East Bank Milling Subdistrict is Page 5.6.8),
- Minneapolis Heritage Preservation Regulations, Required Findings for a Certificate of Appropriateness Application, Section 599.350 (Page 1.1.16-1.1.17),
- Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties (Page 1-244), in particular the Guidelines for site and setting (Preserving 68-69, Rehabilitating, 137-145, Restoring, 211-219, Reconstructing, 241-242).

Attachments

Appendix A- Material Provided by Staff:

- A1: 1938 Aerial Photograph
- A2: 1912-1951 Sanborn Map
- A3: Contemporary Aerial, Circa 2009
- A4: Oblique Aerial, Circa 2007
- A5-A12: Minnesota Historical Society Historic Images

Appendix B- Material Provided by the Applicant

- B1-B3: Introduction and Project Description
- B4-B5: Vision Images
- B6: Existing Condition Site Plan
- B7-B9: Proposed Site Plans