

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

FILE NAME: 2527-2544 2nd Avenue South

DATE OF APPLICATION: January 5, 2009

APPLICANT: Meyer Scherer and Rockcastle 612-375-0336

PUBLICATION OF STAFF REPORT: February 3, 2009

DATE OF HEARING: February 10, 2009

APPEAL PERIOD EXPIRATION: February 20, 2009

CATEGORY: Includes Contributing Structure to the Washburn-Fair Oaks Historic District

CLASSIFICATION: Certificate of Appropriateness: New Construction

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

DATE: February 3, 2009

A. BACKGROUND

At the October 14, 2008 Heritage Preservation Commission meeting, MCAD presented their master plan to the Heritage Preservation Commission. They also presented their Phase 1A plans that included additional off-street parking. This included an underground parking ramp, surface parking lot, and no demolition of structures. The applicant has submitted revised plans. The applicant now proposes to demolish 2538 2nd Avenue South and construct a surface parking lot that would accommodate 138 vehicles on the parcels of 2527-2546 2nd Avenue South.

B. DESCRIPTION

B1. District

The Washburn Fair-Oaks Historic District is an approximately 18-block area that was locally designated in 1976 (see Attachment C1). The district is bounded by Franklin Avenue on the north, Fourth Avenue and I-35W on the east, 26th Street on the south, and the alley between Nicollet and First Avenue on the west, including the northeasterly corner of 24th Street and Nicollet. The district's period of significance is from 1858 to circa 1939. The Washburn Fair-Oaks District is significant for its concentration of residences built in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. These structures range from some of the city's most prestigious residential structures to modest framed houses, as well as constructed multifamily buildings. The architectural styles include small vernacular cottages, Queen Anne residences, American foursquares, brick rowhouses, apartment buildings, and stone mansions. The collection of these structures adds to the visual cohesion of the area and describes the development period of the area at that time.

In addition to the residential structures, the district contains prominent art buildings and infill development. In 1915, the original Minneapolis Institute of Arts (MIA) building, designed by McKim, Mead, and White, was completed. In 1916, the Julia Morrison Building, an addition to the Minneapolis Institute of Arts and new home to the Minneapolis School of Fine Arts was constructed (see Attachment C5). The district also contains MCAD's 1974 college building designed by world renowned architect Kenzo Tange, modern apartment buildings, and surface parking lots (see Attachment C3 and C5).

B2. Washburn Fair Oaks: Blocks 11-13

Today, Blocks 11-13 of the Washburn-Fair Oaks Historic District primarily consist of the MIA, Children's Theater Company (CTC), MCAD, and residential structures (see Attachment C5 for map and C3-C4 for aeriels).

The Minneapolis Institute of Arts designed by McKim, Mead and White Building and the Julia Morrison Building, designed by Edwin Hawley Hewitt, are located on opposite sides of Block 11. They were positioned and designed in a way that an axial relationship is formed with 2nd Avenue South (see Attachment C7). The McKim, Mead, and White Building faces north towards Washburn-Fair Oaks Park and East 24th Street. The main entrance is lined up with 2nd Avenue South. The Julia Morrison Building which faces south onto what was East 25th Street has its main entrance also lined up with 2nd Avenue South (see Attachment C7 and C8).

From 1916, when the Julia Morrison Building was constructed, to the early 1970's, Blocks 11-13 went primarily unchanged (see Attachment C9). In 1974, a \$26 million dollar expansion took place which added to the arts complex the Children's Theatre Company auditorium, an expansion to the MIA, a new arts building, a bus parking lot, and the 3rd Avenue parking ramp (see Attachment B2). This area was dubbed the Minneapolis Society of Fine Arts Park. For this expansion, approximately 32 houses were demolished, however, plans that would have demolished an additional 24 houses for a surface parking lot were denied by the City Council (see Attachment B3).

The 1974 MIA expansion and MCAD art school building were designed by world renowned architect, Kenzo Tange (see Attachment D1-D5). Mr. Tange designed only one other building in the United States (The American Medical Association in Chicago, Illinois). Although the Tange Art School Building is not designated it is a City of Minneapolis historic landmark.

The Tange Building located on the western side of 2nd Avenue South was built in a manor to respect the urban fabric that existed in the neighborhood. According to MCAD and the Minneapolis Society of Fine Arts, in their 1974 Progress Report, one of the key reasons that Kenzo Tange was selected as the architect of the expansion was the, "Mutual concern for the interrelationship of buildings and their functions with the total fabric of an urban environment (see Attachment D1)."

This report also contains a quote from Mr. Tange that describes his design philosophy:

"The city must serve as a place to live, a place to work, a place to play, and a place for traffic involved in these three activities. In all probability, the most important factor in making a city an organic entity it is core. However, equally important is a comprehensive method of linking all the various functions that comprise the whole city. The house, the street, the institution, the neighborhood, the district—these various levels of the community are the elements of which the city is comprised. Each element must have a certain degree of unity and perfection, and at the same time each must open onto a higher level and help create a system for a larger entity. We must consider the problem of preserving identity at each level, and at the same time we must find some way of making the meaning and value of each element comprehensible within the total system (see Attachment D2)"

In addition to respecting the existing residential buildings, the orientation and building location of Tange's work respected the axial relationship formed by the 1913 and 1916 arts buildings with 2nd Avenue South (see Attachment C7 and C8).

Until 1987, the MIA, MCAD, and the CTC were collectively known as the Minneapolis Society of Fine Arts (MSFA) and overseen by one board of trustees. In 1987, a reorganization took place that separated the entities.

The southern portion of Blocks 12 and 13 have and continue to be primarily residential (see Attachment C6). Currently there are nine structures south of the Kenzo Tange art school building, eight are residential structures and six are contributing to the Washburn-Fair Oaks Historic District). Through the early 1980's the southern portion of Blocks 12 and 13 had a greater concentration of buildings (see Attachment C10). However, since 1987, MCAD has demolished five structures in the southern portion of Blocks 12 and 13.

- 130 East 26th Street (1988)
- 2544 2nd Avenue South (1988)
- 2546 2nd Avenue South (circa 1988)
- 122 East 26th Street (1995)
- 2535 2nd Avenue South (2002)

B3. 2538 2nd AVENUE SOUTH

The property at 2538 2nd Avenue South, which is proposed to be demolished for the surface parking lot, is a vernacular style two-story residential structure that is a contributing structure to the Washburn-Fair Oaks Historic District. The property, which is a modest residential structure, is consistent with other late 19th century and early 20th century modest structures within the district in the property's scale, size, and massing. The garage is also a contributing structure to the Washburn-Fair Oaks Historic District. It was built in 1932 which is within the period of significance.

C. PROPOSED WORK

The applicant is proposing to demolish the residential structure at 2538 2nd Avenue South and construct a surface parking lot on the properties at 2527-2546 2nd avenue South (Attachment A). The applicant states that the reason for the parking lot is the combination of the Master of Fine Arts (MFA) program being incorporated into the main campus and the MIA's requirement to vacate use of the ramp.

The applicant has not provided the numbers of additional students and faculty that are part of the MFA program that is slated to move back onto the main campus. The applicant has also not provided numbers/figures on an increased demand for parking.

The applicant provides details of the surface parking lot (see Attachment A20 for site plan and A14 for narrative). The surface parking lot is proposed to be primarily north/south in orientation with a small portion on the east side of the existing 2nd Avenue that is oriented east/west. The parking lot will provide an additional 138 off-street parking spaces. The MCAD campus currently has 41 off-street parking spaces. Access to the parking lot will be from 2nd Avenue South. The applicant states that the parking lot will have rain gardens and pervious pavers to help manage site water runoff. The applicant also states that they plan on maintaining the trees along East 26th Street. However, the trees currently lining 2nd Avenue South will be removed (see Attachment A20).

D. REQUIRED FINDINGS FOR CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENES

The Minneapolis Code of Ordinances, Title 23, Heritage Preservation, Chapter 599 Heritage Preservation Regulations states that before approving the 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.

E. ANALYSIS

The applicant has not provided a clear analysis on how the proposal for a surface parking lot will not materially impair the integrity of the contributing structure [2538 2nd Avenue South] or the Washburn-Fair Oaks Historic District. The applicant has also not provided a written description of how their plan is consistent with the Washburn-Fair Oaks Historic District or the Secretary of Interior Guidelines for Rehabilitation.

The applicant does make the statement that “[2538 2nd Avenue South] does not appear to have individual significance under any criterion, so its significance is for its association with the historic district. This association has been diminished by the demolition and new construction in the vicinity (see Attachment A12).” The applicant in their conclusion also states that, “The construction of the proposed parking lot will not negatively affect the Washburn-Fair Oaks Historic District because of the district's lack of integrity in this location, and the parking lot will be well screened from intact areas of the historic district (see Attachment A15).”

CPED does not agree with the applicant's assessment. The property at 2538 2nd Avenue South is a character defining element of the district and retains its integrity. In addition, the southern portion of Blocks 12 and 13 also retain their integrity and are important in helping retain the integrity of the southern boundary of the Washburn-Fair Oaks Historic District.

The current proposal of a surface parking lot adversely impacts the district in at least four specific ways and is not in compliance with the Washburn Fair Oaks Historic District or Secretary of Interior Standards for Rehabilitation Guidelines.

1. The applicant's proposal of *demolishing a character defining feature and contributing structure to the Washburn-Fair Oaks Historic District [2538 2nd Avenue South] will adversely impact the District.*

The demolition of 2538 2nd Avenue South for a surface parking lot would adversely impact the Washburn-Fair Oaks Historic District. One of the character defining features of the Washburn-Fair Oaks Historic District is the modest residential structures built in the late 19th century. This property is a modest residential structure built in the 19th century and is consistent with the other modest 19th century structures in terms of scale, size, and massing. This property also retains its integrity (see other staff report for integrity analysis).

The demolition of this contributing structure is not in compliance with the following Guidelines:

1. Washburn-Fair Oaks: *Proposed new buildings [and new construction] shall not "materially impair the architectural or historic value of buildings on adjacent sites or in the immediate vicinity within the preservation district.*
2. Secretary of Interior Standards for Rehabilitation: Setting *Designing new onsite parking, loading docks, or ramps when required by the new use so that they are as unobtrusive as possible and assure the preservation of character-defining features of the site.*
3. Secretary of Interior Standards for Rehabilitation: Setting *Identifying, retaining, and preserving buildings and their features as well as features of the site that are important in defining its overall historic character.*

2. *The applicant's proposed surface parking lot proposal would adversely impact the Washburn-Fair Oaks Historic District in at least two ways.*

The construction of the proposed parking lot would adversely impact the southern boundary of the Washburn-Fair Oaks District. A majority of the parcels along the southern boundary of the Washburn-Fair Oaks Historic District were built within the period of significance and are contributing residential structures (see Attachment C1 and C6). Even though residential structures within Blocks 12 and 13 have been torn down within the last twenty years, the remaining structures still retain their integrity. A surface parking lot would break up the existing residential rhythm and tear away the residential character and setting of Blocks 12 and 13 (see Attachment A20 for site plan). The four plexes at 200-210 East 26th Street would be in particular adversely impacted (see Attachment C4).

The construction of the proposed surface parking lot would also destroy the axial relationship of the 1913 MIA Building and the 1916 arts building with 2nd Avenue South (see Attachment C7 and C8). 2nd Avenue South is an important street for the Washburn-Fair Oaks Historic District and the iconic historic arts buildings. The proposed surface parking lot would take away this relationship by eliminating the street. The adverse impact to the southern boundary of the Washburn-Fair Oaks Historic District and adverse impact to the iconic arts buildings axial relationship with 2nd Avenue South is not in compliance with the following guidelines:

1. Washburn-Fair Oaks: *Proposed new buildings [and new construction] shall not "materially impair the architectural or historic value of buildings on adjacent sites or in the immediate vicinity within the preservation district.*
2. Secretary of Interior Standards for Rehabilitation: Setting *Designing new exterior additions to historic buildings or adjacent new construction which is compatible with the historic character of the site and which preserve the historic relationship between a building or buildings, landscape features, and open space.*
3. Secretary of Interior Standards for Rehabilitation: Setting *Identifying, retaining, and preserving buildings and their features as well as features of the site that are important in defining its overall historic character. Site features can include driveways, walkways, lighting, fencing, signs, benches, fountains, wells, terraces, canal systems, plants and trees, berms, and drainage or irrigation ditches; and archeological features that are important in defining the history of the site.*
4. Secretary of Interior Standards for Rehabilitation: Setting *Designing new onsite parking, loading docks, or ramps when required by the new use so that they are as unobtrusive as possible and assure the preservation of character-defining features of the site.*

3. *Negative Impact to the Kenzo Tange Art Building (A non-designated historic landmark)*

The proposed parking lot would adversely impact the Tange Art Building to the north, in particular the building's setting and neighborhood context. The proposed surface parking lot is located directly to the south of the Tange Art Building. In 1974, MCAD highlighted the following about the residential environment that Mr. Tange factored into the design of the art building:

“Mutual concern for the interrelationship of buildings and their functions with the total fabric of an urban environment (see Attachment D1).

“External urban design considerations such as the characteristics of the neighborhood greatly influenced Tange's concept for the complex (see Attachment D3).

“At almost every turn in every building, a person can orient himself and his function to other people, other functions, other buildings and other parts of the neighborhood and the city (see Attachment D5).”

“The remarkable skill with which he has manipulated inside and outside spaces has enabled him to create a way, as he [Tange] puts it, to make the meaning and value of each element comprehensible within the total system, including the whole environment and that was a primary concern (Leonard Parker, associate architect to Mr. Tange see Attachment D5).”

If the surface parking lot is built as proposed it would destroy part of the residential character that Mr. Tange took into consideration for his design.

F. ORDINANCE AND POLICIES

F1. Zoning Code

The proposed demolition of the structure and proposed replacement of a surface parking lot is not in compliance with the recent zoning code amendment that updated the city's off-street parking standards.

On January 9, 2009, The City of Minneapolis adopted a zoning code amendment that updated the city's off-street parking standards and reduced the number of off-street parking required for most nonresidential uses (see Attachment B1 for press release). The revisions recognize the negative consequences associated with oversupplying parking. It has been shown that an overabundant supply of off-street parking:

- Precludes a balanced transportation system of encouraging use of single-occupancy automobiles;
- Sends excessive stormwater runoff into lakes, rivers, and streams;
- Increases urban heat island effect;
- Conflicts with the traditional urban character that the City's policies seek to promote.

The 2009 revised off-street parking revisions also reduced the off-street parking requirement for nonresidential structures in historic districts (see provision 541.430 below). This reduced parking requirement was added in large part to prevent historic structures from being torn down for surface parking lots.

541.430. Landmarks and historic districts. The minimum off-street parking requirement for nonresidential uses located in designated landmarks or located in contributing structures in historic districts shall be seventy five (75) percent of the minimum requirement specified in Chapter 541, Off-Street Parking and Loading.

F2. COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

The proposed demolition of the structures at 2538 2nd Avenue South and construction of the surface parking lot is in not in compliance with the following City of Minneapolis Comprehensive Plan policies:

Policy 1.7 of the Minneapolis Plan, adopted in 2000, states that “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.” In addition, Policy 4.14 of the 2000 Comprehensive Plan states that “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.”

In 2008 a draft version of Minneapolis Plan was approved by the City Council and submitted to the Metropolitan Council for formal review. Once the formal review is complete The Minneapolis Plan will be adopted by the City Council. While this is not the official planning document the policies in the plan provide additional support for the proposed ordinance amendments. The following are policies and implementation steps from the plan.

Policy 8.7: Create a regulatory framework and consider implementing incentives to support the ethic of “reduce, reuse, and recycle” and revitalization for buildings and neighborhoods.

8.7.1 Protect historic resources from demolition and explore alternatives to demolition.

Policy 8.8: Preserve neighborhood character by preserving the quality of the built environment.

Policy 8.11: Improve and adapt preservation regulations to recognize City goals, current preservation practices, and emerging historical contexts.

Policy 10.7: Maintain and preserve the quality and unique character of the city's existing housing stock.

10.7.1 Rehabilitation of older and historic housing stock should be encouraged over demolition.

10.7.3 Encourage adaptive reuse, retrofit and renovation projects that make the city's housing stock competitive on the regional market.

G. PREVIOUS ACTIONS

Staff is unaware of the City of Minneapolis Heritage Preservation Commission previously approving a demolition of a contributing structure to a historic district or a city landmark for approval of a surface parking lot.

The following is a partial list of City Council, City Planning Commission, and Heritage Preservation Commission decisions that have dealt with the demolition of contributing structures in the Washburn-Fair Oaks Historic District for parking or decisions that involved the issue of shared parking:

- In 1974, a surface parking lot for the Minneapolis Society of Fine Arts was denied and the construction of the 3rd Avenue parking lot was required. The main reason the surface parking was denied was because it would have required the destruction of additional residential structures (see Attachment B3).

- On March 12, 2002, MCAD proposed tearing down the house at 2535 2nd Avenue South for a surface parking lot. The Heritage Preservation Commission denied this request. MCAD appealed this decision to the Zoning and Planning Committee, and they granted the appeal to allow for the demolition. The house was torn down, but a surface parking lot was not constructed.
- In September 2002, the Planning Commission approved a conditional use permit (CUP) for the 2002 MIA expansion (BZZ 779). As part of this approval, a parking variance was approved to allow for the three institutions to use the existing off-street parking configuration.

H. PUBLIC COMMENTS

CPED notified property owners within 350 feet of the Demolition of Historic Resource application on January 27, 2009. As of February 3, 2009, the MIA, CTC, and Whittier Alliance have submitted comments on the construction of the surface parking lot (see Attachment G).

I. FINDINGS

1. The Washburn Fair-Oaks District is significant for its concentration of residences built in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. These structures range from some of the city's most prestigious residential structures to modest framed houses, as well as constructed multifamily buildings. The architectural styles include small vernacular cottages, Queen Anne residences, American foursquares, brick rowhouses, apartment buildings, and stone mansions. The collection of these structures adds to the visual cohesion of the area and describes the development period of the area at that time.
2. The district's period of significance is from 1858 to circa 1939.
3. The subject property, 2538 2nd Avenue South, is a contributing structure to the Washburn-Fair Oaks Historic District.
4. The Applicant is proposing to demolish the residential structure at 2538 2nd Avenue South and construct a 138-space surface parking lot on the properties at 2527-2546 2nd Avenue South
5. The applicant has not provided a clear analysis on how the proposal for a surface parking lot will not materially impair the integrity of the contributing structure or the Washburn-Fair Oaks Historic District. The applicant has also not provided a written description of how their plan is consistent with the Washburn-Fair Oaks Historic District nor the Secretary of Interior Guidelines for Rehabilitation.
6. The applicant has not provided the numbers of additional students and faculty that are part of the MFA program that is proposed to move onto campus, nor has the applicant provided numbers/figures on an increased demand for parking.
7. Staff is unaware of the City of Minneapolis Heritage Preservation Commission previously approving a demolition of a contributing structure to a historic district or a city landmark for the construction of a surface parking lot.
8. In 1974, a surface parking lot for the Minneapolis Society of Fine Arts was denied and the construction of the 3rd Avenue parking lot was required. The main reason the surface parking

was denied was because it would have required the destruction of additional residential structures.

9. On March 12, 2002, MCAD proposed tearing down the house at 2535 2nd Avenue South for a surface parking lot. The Heritage Preservation Commission denied this request. MCAD appealed this decision to the Zoning and Planning Committee, and they granted the appeal to allow for the demolition. The house was torn down but a surface parking lot was not constructed.
10. The demolition of 2538 2nd Avenue South for a surface parking lot would adversely impact the Washburn-Fair Oaks Historic District. This property is a contributing structure to the District and retains its integrity. The demolition of 2538 2nd Avenue South is not in compliance with the Washburn-Fair Oaks Historic District Guidelines nor the Secretary of the Interior Standards for Rehabilitation.
11. The construction of the proposed parking lot would adversely impact the Washburn-Fair Oaks District. A surface parking lot would break up the residential rhythm, character, and setting of Blocks 12 and 13 and the southern district boundary as a whole. The adverse impact the parking lot would have to this part of the District would not be in compliance with the Washburn-Fair Oaks Historic District Guidelines nor the Secretary of the Interior Standards for Rehabilitation.
12. The construction of the proposed surface parking lot would destroy the axial relationship of the 1913 MIA Building and the 1916 arts building with 2nd Avenue South. This relationship is a character defining features of the Washburn Fair Oaks District. The adverse impact the parking lot would have on 2nd Avenue South would not be in compliance with the Washburn-Fair Oaks Historic District Guidelines nor the Secretary of the Interior Standards for Rehabilitation.
13. The Tange Art Building is a City of Minneapolis historic landmark (non designated). The proposed parking lot would adversely impact the Tange Art Building to the north, in particular the building's setting. Kenzo Tange took into consideration the residential development near by for the design of this structure, and the surface parking lot would destroy the context the architect had when designing the art building.

J. STAFF RECOMMENDATION

CPED recommends that the Heritage Preservation Commission **adopt** staff findings and **deny** the Certificate of Appropriateness for the construction of a surface parking lot.

K. ATTACHMENTS

- A. Application
- B. Press Release and News Articles
- C. Maps, Aerials, and Images
- D. The Minneapolis Society of Fine Arts: Progress Report 1974
- E. Washburn-Fair Oaks Guidelines
- F. Secretary of Interior Guidelines for Rehabilitation: Setting
- G. Public Comments