

**CITY OF MINNEAPOLIS  
HERITAGE PRESERVATION COMMISSION STAFF REPORT**

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FILE NAME: Ceresota Building

ADDRESS: 155 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue South

DATE OF APPLICATION: June 20, 2008

APPLICANT: Nathaniel Shea, Tanek Architects on behalf of Ross Dworsky

DATE OF HEARING: July 29, 2008

EXPIRATION OF APPEAL PERIOD:

HPC SITE/DISTRICT: St. Anthony Falls Historic District

CATEGORY: Contributing

CLASSIFICATION: Certificate of Appropriateness

STAFF INVESTIGATION AND REPORT: Carol Ahlgren

DATE: July 16, 2008

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**A. SITE DESCRIPTION AND BACKGROUND:**

Historically known as the Northwestern Consolidated Milling Company Elevator A, the Ceresota Building is a contributing resource in the St. Anthony Falls Historic District, sub-district West Bank Milling District. The St. Anthony Falls Historic District encompasses the Mississippi River, Nicollet Island, and the east and west banks of the river. The St. Anthony Falls Historic District was designated as a city of Minneapolis historic district in 1971; it is also listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Located at 155 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue South, the flat-roofed, rectangular shaped brick building features a seven story brick base that was historically used for grain storage. This section of the building is without windows on the east, west, and south elevations. The south façade fronting Second Street South features a painted sign that covers approximately half of the building wall with the word “Ceresota” and the brand’s historic logo. Above this portion of the building is a four story tower-like former workhouse section located near the buildings’ west façade. The workhouse section retains its historic fenestration pattern with windows on each floor of each elevation; brick corbelling is located at the cornice.

The west elevation of the workhouse is divided into two bays separated by a brick pilaster; single two over two-pane windows are symmetrically located on each floor for a total of eight (8) windows with an additional window located to the east on a one story parapet section of the building. The east façade has the identical workhouse fenestration pattern with the exception of two windows located in a one story section of the building that extends along the roofline. The west facade features four bays separated by brick pilasters; a single two over two pane window is located on each floor in each bay with the exception of the north façade which has a single window on the first level.

The Ceresota building is located on a block bounded by the West River Parkway and Mississippi River to the north; 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue South to the west, Portland Avenue to the east, and South 2<sup>nd</sup> Street to the south. To the east and north of the Ceresota building on the same block is the former Standard Flour Mill. The five story monitor roofed building was converted in to a luxury hotel in 1987; in 2006 the building was converted into condominiums. On the north end of the block is the former Crown Roller Mill which was converted into office space in 1987. The Ceresota building was also converted into office space in 1987; all three buildings are contributing to the Historic District and were certified restoration tax credit projects through the National Park Service.

As part of the rehabilitation of the Ceresota, Crown Roller and Standard Mills, a semi-circular drive isle was added on the 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue South side of the block. A curved drive isle was also added to the northeast edge of the block, off West River Parkway. Landscaped courtyard areas were developed during the 1987 rehabilitation projects; one is located between the Crown Roller, Whitney, and Ceresota buildings in the interior of the block. Another plaza/fountain area is located at the northeast corner of the block bounded by the Crown Roller and Whitney buildings; due to their date of construction (1987) these areas are considered to be non-contributing to the District.

According to the 1991 St. Anthony Falls Waterpower Area revision to the original District nomination, the Ceresota building was constructed in 1908 and was used to clean and store grain for the adjacent Crown Roller and Standard Mills. After milling operations ceased in the 1950s, the Ceresota building was used for grain storage until the early 1980s. As part of the certified restoration, the building was stripped of its equipment and bins. Exterior alterations included the removal of the train shed and overhead conveyor bridges. Prior to removal of equipment the building was documented according to Historic American Engineering Record (HAER) standards. A three story metal and glass entrance bay was added to the north façade; a one story copper roofed canopy was installed on the west façade. The other significant alteration for the new use was cutting of 60 new wooden double hung windows on the 1st through 6<sup>th</sup> floors on the eastern portion of the north façade.

## **B. PROPOSED CHANGES:**

The applicant is proposing to add new window openings on the north and west facades. On the north façade, 60 new double hung windows were added as part of the 1980's rehabilitation of the building. The applicant proposes to add an additional 14 windows to this facade (Attachment B, p 9). The new windows would match the c.1980s windows and would be added to the third, fourth, fifth, and sixth floors. The third floor would have one new double hung window located at the east end of the building near the previously approved metal canopy; on the fourth floor, a new window would be located directly above. On the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> floors, six new windows would be added to each floor.

The applicant also proposes to add windows to the west façade which has historically been a blank brick wall, indicative of the building's original use for grain storage. The applicant proposes to add a total of 40 new double hung windows, 8 on each of the five floors (Attachment B, p. 10). The existing metal canopy on the first floor would also be modified with the installation of a skylight system; new windows would be located on the first floor behind the canopy. The proposed new windows would match the existing previously approved windows in profile, color, and size. Sill and head details will be matched with salvaged bricks (Attachment B, p.11a.)

## **C. APPLICABLE REGULATION, POLICIES, AND GUIDELINES: ST. ANTHONY FALLS HISTORIC DISTRICT GUIDELINES Minneapolis Heritage Preservation Commission (June 1980)**

An addition to "District Guidelines for Utilization" (adopted April 18, 1978)

### **Preamble**

The St. Anthony Falls Historic District is a varied area that includes structures of historical significance (e.g. mills), some that are architecturally distinguished (e.g. Our Lady of Lourdes), buildings that contribute to the historicity of the district (e.g. Salisbury Mattress Co., now Main Place), some non-

contributive buildings (e.g. Post Office Parking Ramp), and also a great deal of open space. Traditional, uniform regulations are not adequate because of this variety. Instead, the HPC has divided the district into sub-areas that contain structures with common features and that share common concerns.

### **Purpose**

The purpose of the Heritage Preservation Commission in following these regulations for permit review is to provide architectural control and maintenance of the St. Anthony Falls Historic District by promulgating regulations governing construction and rehabilitation for the preservation, protection and perpetuation of the St. Anthony Falls Historic District designated by the State of Minnesota.

These regulations apply to any and all new construction and rehabilitation of existing buildings and structures within the St. Anthony Falls Historic District.

The furthermore are intended to:

- 1) preserve the memory of past events
- 2) encourage sympathetic new development
- 3) encourage and enable access to the river
- 4) foster along the riverfront and adjacent areas a viable community geared to the pedestrian.

### **General Regulations**

Infill construction shall be visually compatible with historic structures within the sub-area with regard to siting, height, proportions of facade, walls of continuity, rhythm of projections, directional emphasis, materials, nature of openings, texture, roof shapes, details, and color.

The Heritage Preservation Commission shall review all permit requests according to the standards established in the regulations. Variances to these regulations will be granted only in cases where an applicant clearly demonstrates that an alternative design is a superior and compatible solution.

#### **E. Right (West) Bank Milling**

This area is bounded by the Mississippi River, Third Avenue South, South Second Street and Tenth Avenue South.

1. Siting: New buildings shall have their exterior walls in the same axial orientation as the existing buildings.
2. Height: New buildings to be no higher than that of existing silo-mills in the area.
3. Rhythm of Projections: There shall be no major projections on the principal facades.
4. Directional Emphasis: New buildings shall have a generally vertical emphasis, at least above the first floor.
5. Materials: The exterior surface of new buildings shall be constructed of brick, concrete or stone.
6. Nature of Openings: Openings should appear in a consistent and repeated pattern across the principal facades. Window openings should be approximately 1-1/2 to 2-1/2 times as tall as they are wide. Doors and windows should be set toward the front of the openings but should not be flush with the masonry surface.

7. Roof Shapes: New buildings should have flat or nearly flat roofs.
8. Details: New buildings should have some emphasis given to the upper termination of the building. Surface treatment should divide the building into vertical bays. Where other surface treatment is used, it should reflect details from other buildings in the area.
9. Color: The primary surfaces of new buildings should be deep red, brown, or buff. Trim should be subdued earth tones or flat black, and new buildings should allow this same general pattern.

**The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation**  
U.S. Department of the Interior National Park Service  
1990

**Building Exterior**

**Masonry**: *Brick, stone, terra cotta, concrete, adobe, stucco, and mortar*

**Recommended:**

-Identifying, retaining, and preserving masonry features that are important in defining the overall historic character of the building such as walls, brackets, railings, cornices, window architraves, door pediments, steps, and columns; and joint and unit size, tooling and bonding patterns, coatings, and color.

**Not Recommended:**

-Removing or radically changing masonry features which are important in defining the overall historic character of the building so that, as a result, the character is diminished.

**Windows**

**Recommended:**

-Identifying, retaining, and preserving windows - and their functional and decorative features - that are important in defining the overall historic character of the building. Such features can include frames, sash, muntins, glazing, sills, heads, hoodmolds, paneled or decorated jambs and moldings, and interior and exterior shutters and blinds.

**Alterations/Additions for the New Use**

-Designing and installing additional windows on rear or other non-character-defining elevations if required by the new use. New window openings may also be cut into exposed party walls. Such design should be compatible with the overall design of the building, but not duplicate the fenestration pattern and detailing of a character-defining elevation.

**Not Recommended:**

-Changing the number, location, size or glazing pattern of windows, through cutting new openings, blocking-in windows, and installing replacement sash which does not fit the historic window opening.

**Alterations/Additions for the New Use**

-Installing new windows, including frames, sash, and muntin configuration that are incompatible with the building's historic appearance or obscure, damage, or destroy character-defining features.

**District/Neighborhood**

**Recommended:**

-Identifying, retaining, and preserving buildings, and streetscape, and landscape features which are important in defining the overall historic character of the district or neighborhood. Such features can include streets, alleys, paving, walkways, street lights, signs, benches, parks and gardens, and trees.

**Not Recommended:**

-Removing or radically changing those features of the district or neighborhood which are important in defining the overall historic character so that, as a result, the character is diminished.

-Removing a feature of the building, streetscape, or landscape that is unrepairable and not replacing it; or replacing it with a new feature that does not convey the same visual appearance.

**D. ANALYSIS**

The Ceresota building was part of a 1980's tax credit project that resulted in the renovation and rehabilitation of Minneapolis riverfront buildings including the former Crown Roller and Whitney Mills. These projects were part of the city's riverfront redevelopment which included rehabilitation of abandoned or underutilized industrial buildings and new construction, which has continued to the present. The Ceresota building was one of the early rehabilitation/reuse projects in the city's historic milling district on the west bank of the Mississippi River. Approved preservation practice at the time resulted in the recordation then removal of associated features such as train sheds, tracks, and conveyor bridges. Rehabilitation of the Ceresota building for office and commercial space also resulted in the recordation then removal of all interior equipment, and the introduction of 60 new windows on the north façade. The new windows were deemed necessary for the new use in the lower seven stories of the building which had traditionally been windowless for its historic use for grain storage.

During the 1980's rehabilitation the multi-story blank brick wall base of the east, west, and south facades was retained. Given that interior and exterior historic features were removed, these windowless brick facades are character defining and convey the building's historic use in the West Bank milling district. The addition of 40 new windows on the 1<sup>st</sup> through 6<sup>th</sup> floors of the west facade would have an adverse affect on the Ceresota buildings' historic integrity and would undermine its historic association with the district as a whole.

**E. FINDINGS**

1. The Ceresota building is a contributing resource in the St. Anthony Falls Historic District which is a city of Minneapolis Historic District and is also listed on the National Register of Historic Places.
2. Historically known as the Northwestern Consolidated Milling Company Elevator A, the Ceresota building was converted into office space as a certified tax credit project with the National Park Service in 1987.
3. The 1987 restoration project necessitated the removal of interior equipment and exterior associated features such as conveyor bridges and a train shed; these features were documented according to HAER standards prior to removal.
4. The 1987 restoration included cutting 60 new window openings on the 1<sup>st</sup> through 6<sup>th</sup> floors of the north façade, and the addition of a new metal canopy entrance.
5. The first through sixth floors of the west, south, and east elevations retain their historic appearance of windowless brick walls, indicative of the building's historic use for grain storage.

6. The addition of 40 new window openings on the historically blank brick wall of the west elevation would have a significant negative impact on the historic integrity of the Ceresota building.

**F. STAFF RECOMMENDATION:**

That the Heritage Preservation Commission **adopt** the staff findings and **approve the** Certificate of Appropriateness with the following conditions:

1. No new window openings will be added to the west elevation
2. The proposed 14 new windows on the north elevation are permitted; the new windows will match the existing c.1980's windows on this façade in terms of profile, color, size, and materials.
3. All final plans and elevations will be subject to approval by CPED Preservation Planning staff.

Attachments:

- A. Map of St. Anthony Falls Historic District
- B. Certificate of Appropriateness application, June 20, 2008.