

**CITY OF MINNEAPOLIS
CPED PLANNING DIVISION
HERITAGE PRESERVATION COMMISSION STAFF REPORT
BZH #25776**

FILE NAME: 2100 Stevens Avenue
CATEGORY/DISTRICT: Washburn-Fair Oaks Historic District (Interim Protection)
CLASSIFICATION: Certificate of Appropriateness
APPLICANT: Bolder Options, (612) 379-2653
DATE OF APPLICATION: March 25, 2009
PUBLICATION DATE: May 5, 2009
DATE OF HEARING: May 12, 2009
APPEAL PERIOD EXPIRATION: May 22, 2009
STAFF INVESTIGATION AND REPORT: John Smoley, Ph.D., (612) 673-2830
REQUEST: Install mechanical equipment

A. SITE DESCRIPTION AND BACKGROUND:

2100 Stevens Avenue is a 2.5 story brick building designed in the Georgian Revival style. Originally used as a residence, the building now houses a non-profit organization: Bolder Options. This building is located mid-block along Stevens Avenue in the Washburn-Fair Oaks Historic District.

According to the local nomination, the Washburn-Fair Oaks Historic District is locally significant for its depiction of turn-of-the-century residential architecture ranging from opulent mansions to modest homes. The Luther Farrington House is a contributing property in this district as an excellent example of Georgian Revival architecture in a very large residence.

The Applicant applied for a Certificate of No Change to conduct exterior repairs in October 2008. Staff approved this work but denied a subsequent Certificate of No Change application for mechanical work. The Applicant installed the mechanical equipment, was cited by Code Enforcement, and has since come forward seeking approval of the previously installed equipment. The applicant's proposal includes additional equipment, equipment screening, and repairs of damage caused by the installation of older mechanical equipment, as described in the current application.

B. PROPOSED CHANGES:

The property owner seeks approval of the following work:

1. removal of electrical conduit and window air conditioning units from the building

2. repair of brick and mortar damaged by electrical conduit
3. installation of two louvered energy recovery units within the existing wood basement transom window frames on the south side of the building to include:
 - a. removal and preservation of the existing wood window sashes
 - b. painting of the louver to match the color of the existing brick
4. installation of one louvered makeup air intake unit within the existing wood basement transom window frame on the north side of the building to include:
 - a. removal and preservation of the existing wood window sash
 - b. painting of the louver to match the color of the existing brick
5. installation of one louvered flush kitchen exhaust fan in the northern wall to include:
 - a. toothing in the brick around the 1' 10" wide x 2' 4" high opening required for the fan
 - b. painting of the louver, metal sill, and metal flashing to match the color of the existing brick
6. removal of one existing brass water spigot and installation of a new frost-proof brass water spigot approximately six feet to the east (to avoid proposed electrical equipment associated with the proposed heat pump air condensing units), repairing the brick that formerly housed the spigot
7. installation of three freestanding heat pump air condensing units and accompanying concrete pad, piping, wiring, outlet box, and electrical panels on the north side of the building, with the wall-mounted electrical panels and outlet box to be painted to match the color of the brick
8. installation of one four inch diameter boiler flue pipe on the north side of the building, with PVC pipe painted to match the color of the brick
9. installation of one 20"x20" electrical panel, painted to match the color of the brick, on the north side of the building next to an existing electrical panel
10. installation of a six foot high wood fence and gate to screen the proposed mechanical equipment on the north side of the building
11. planting of nine four-foot high techny arborvitae trees to screen the proposed mechanical equipment on the north side of the building

C. FINDINGS REQUIRED FOR A CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS:

Certificate of Appropriateness

***In general.* Before approving a certificate of appropriateness, and based upon the evidence presented in each application submitted, the commission shall make findings based upon, but not limited to, the following:**

(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.

According to the local nomination, the Washburn-Fair Oaks Historic District is locally significant for its depiction of turn-of-the-century residential architecture ranging from opulent mansions to modest homes. The Luther Farrington House is a contributing property in this district as an excellent example of Georgian Revival architecture in a very large residence.

The exterior portions of the residence at 2100 Stevens Avenue contribute to the district's significance. Regardless of what changes are made to the subject property, it will maintain its historical significance, but proposed changes may affect its integrity (i.e. the property's ability to communicate its historical significance). Since the property will maintain its integrity if the proposed alterations are made (see findings 3-5 below), the proposed alterations are compatible with and continues to support the criteria of significance and period of significance for which the landmark or historic district was designated.

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

The exterior portion of this building, not its interior, communicates its historical significance. The applicant is requesting approval of the installation of a variety of mechanical equipment, screening for that equipment, and rehabilitation work designed to repair damage left by older mechanical equipment. Apart from repair work, all mechanical equipment will be installed on the sides of the property, will be properly screened, and will minimize building wall penetrations. The alterations are compatible with and support the exterior designation in which the property was designated.

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

Both the city of Minneapolis' Heritage Preservation Regulations and the National Register of Historic Places identify integrity as the authenticity of historic properties and recognize seven aspects that define a property's integrity: location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association. Based upon the evidence provided below, the proposed work will not impair the integrity of the contributing resource (residence).

Location: The Applicant proposes no changes to the contributing resource's location, thus the project will not impair the contributing resource's integrity of location.

Design: The Applicant proposes to install appropriately screened freestanding mechanical equipment, additional mechanical equipment in existing building openings, and other equipment in limited areas as required by building features and functions. Additionally, the Applicant seeks approval of the removal of highly visible, out-of-character window air conditioning units. The project will improve the property's integrity of design.

Setting: The Applicant proposes no offsite changes, thus the project will not impair the contributing resource's integrity of setting.

Materials: The Applicant proposes to install several air vents in existing basement transom window openings. Also, the Applicant seeks to install other equipment in building walls as required by building features and functions. Additionally, the Applicant seeks approval of the removal of highly visible, out-of-character window air

conditioning units and accompanying electrical conduit. The project will not impair the property's integrity of materials.

Workmanship: The Applicant proposes no changes to the contributing resource's workmanship, thus the project will not impair the contributing resource's integrity of workmanship.

Feeling: The Applicant proposes to install mechanical equipment in a manner that minimizes vision of the equipment from the public right of way and remove mechanical equipment that severely impairs the property's historic appearance. The project will improve the property's integrity of feeling.

Association: The Applicant proposes no changes that would break the residence's association with Georgian Revival design and residential development common to the district, thus the project will not impair the property's integrity of association.

(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 Heritage Preservation Commission adopted the Washburn-Fair Oaks Historic District Guidelines in 1976. These guidelines have no standards related to installing mechanical equipment, screening mechanical equipment, repairing damage from such equipment, installing fences, or installing landscaping. The alteration will not materially impair the significance and integrity of the historic district as evidenced by the consistency of alterations with these guidelines.

(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 most recent standards for the treatment of historic properties established by the National Park Service are *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties with Guidelines for Preserving, Rehabilitating, Restoring, and Reconstructing Historic Buildings* authored by Kay Weeks and Anne Grimmer and published in 1995. The most appropriate treatment for this historic resource is rehabilitation.

The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties (Rehabilitation, Building Interior: Mechanical Systems: Heating, Air Conditioning, Electrical, and Plumbing, Alterations/Additions for the New Use) recommend installing a completely new mechanical system if required for the new use so that it causes the least alteration possible to the building's floor plan, the exterior elevations, and the least damage to the historic building material. The proposed installation maintains the existing floor plan and exterior elevations. While there is some damage to historic building materials (bricks and windows), staff

recommends the project be conditioned to salvage and save as many bricks as possible to ensure the wall-mounted equipment installations will be reversible. The proposal also utilizes properly screened freestanding (which does not require building envelope penetrations) mechanical equipment to the greatest extent feasible.

The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties (Rehabilitation, Building Interior: Mechanical Systems: Heating, Air Conditioning, Electrical, and Plumbing, Alterations/Additions for the New Use) recommend installing heating/air conditioning units in the window frames in such a manner that the sash and frames are protected. Window installations should be considered only when all other viable heating/cooling systems would result in significant damage to historic materials. These standards also do not recommend radically changing the appearance of the historic building or damaging or destroying windows by installing heating/air conditioning units in historic window frames. The proposal involves removing window air conditioning units and conduit that marred the appearance and historic building materials at 2100 Stevens Avenue. The vents and fan proposed to be installed in windows are limited to basement transom windows on side elevations, which staff believes are the least historic and visible windows around the building. The proposed window installations are considered far more sympathetic to the building than penetrations of the historic brick walls. The vents and fan proposed to be installed in these windows will be installed within the existing window frame and the sashes shall be removed and preserved to ensure the change can be reversed in the future, should reversal be required.

(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.

Action item 8.1.1 of the City of Minneapolis' comprehensive plan states, "Protect historic resources from modifications that are not sensitive to their historic significance." As conditioned, the project complies with *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties*.

2100 Stevens Avenue lies within no adopted small area plan area.

***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:**

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

According to the local nomination, the Washburn-Fair Oaks Historic District is locally significant for its depiction of turn-of-the-century residential architecture ranging from opulent mansions to modest homes. The Luther Farrington House is a contributing property in this district as an excellent example of Georgian Revival architecture in a very large residence. The

exterior portion of this building, not its interior, communicates its historical significance. The applicant is requesting approval of the installation of a variety of mechanical equipment, screening for that equipment, and rehabilitation work designed to repair damage left by older mechanical equipment. Apart from repair work, all mechanical equipment will be installed on the sides of the property, will be properly screened, and will minimize building wall penetrations.

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

The proposed repair work, mechanical equipment, and screening comply with the Zoning Code's standards.

(9) 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.

As discussed in finding #5, the application is in compliance with *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties*. In keeping with preservation standards that promote the reversibility of changes made outside of a resource's period of significance, staff recommends the project be conditioned to salvage and save as many bricks as possible to ensure the wall-mounted equipment installations will be reversible, if necessary.

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:

(10) 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 applicant is requesting approval of the installation of a variety of mechanical equipment, screening for that equipment, and rehabilitation work designed to repair damage left by older mechanical equipment. Apart from repair work, all mechanical equipment will be installed on the sides of the property, will be properly screened, and will minimize building wall penetrations. The project complies with *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties*.

(11) 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 spirit and intent of the City of Minneapolis' Heritage Preservation Regulations is to preserve historically significant buildings, structures, sites, objects, districts, and cultural landscapes of the community while permitting appropriate changes to be made to these properties. The applicant is requesting approval of the installation of a variety of mechanical equipment,

screening for that equipment, and rehabilitation work designed to repair damage left by older mechanical equipment. Apart from repair work, all mechanical equipment will be installed on the sides of the property, will be properly screened, and will minimize building wall penetrations. The project complies with *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties*.

(12) 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 applicant is requesting approval of the installation of a variety of mechanical equipment, screening for that equipment, and rehabilitation work designed to repair damage left by older mechanical equipment. Apart from repair work, all mechanical equipment will be installed on the sides of the property, will be properly screened, and will minimize building wall penetrations. The project complies with *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties*. The proposal 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.

D. PUBLIC COMMENT

Staff received no public comment on the project.

E. STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends that the Heritage Preservation Commission **adopt** staff findings and **approve** a Certificate of Appropriateness for the proposed work subject to the following conditions:

1. Salvage and save as many bricks as possible to ensure the wall-mounted equipment installations will be reversible, if necessary.
2. CPED-Planning Preservation Staff shall review and approve the final plans and elevations prior to building permit issuance.

Attachments

- A. Vicinity Map (prepared by staff)
- B. Application (submitted by Applicant)
- C. Plans (submitted by Applicant)
- D. Letter to Councilmember and Neighborhood Group (submitted by Applicant)