

Department of Community Planning and Economic Development
Planning Division

Historic Designation

Date: April 27, 2010

Proposal: Local Designation of Green & DeLaittre Wholesale Grocery Company Warehouse – 500 North Third Street

Applicant: City of Minneapolis CPED

Address of Property: 500 North Third Street

Planning Staff and Phone: Brian Schaffer, 612.673.2670

Publication Date: April 27, 2010

Public Hearing: May 4, 2010

Ward: Ward 7

Neighborhood Organization: North Loop Neighborhood Association

Attachments:

- Attachment A: Green & DeLaittre Wholesale Grocery Company Warehouse Designation Study-500 North Third Street Designation Study – April 19, 2010
- Attachment B: Map of Site
- Attachment C: Letter from Minnesota State Historic Preservation Office – April 15, 2010
- Attachment D: City Planning Commission Memo – March 19, 2010
- Attachment E: HPC Nomination Staff Report and Actions – December 2, 2008

Department of Community Planning and Economic Development
Planning Division

Background

On December 2, 2008 the Minneapolis Heritage Preservation Commission held a public hearing on the nomination of 500 North Third Street, the Green & DeLaittre Grocery Warehouse Building, as a local historic landmark. The Minneapolis HPC placed the property at 500 North Third Street under interim protection and directed the Planning Director to commence a designation study of the property.

Consistency with City of Minneapolis Adopted Plans and Policies

The designation of the property at 500 North Third Street is supported by the Minneapolis Plan for Sustainable Growth. In 2009, the City Council approved the comprehensive plan: *The Minneapolis Plan for Sustainable Growth*.

Policy 8.1 of the comprehensive plan provides the most guidance on this item and states the following: "Preserve, maintain, and designate districts, landmarks, and historic resources which serve as reminders of the city's architecture, history, and culture." The property at 500 North Third Street is the oldest extent example of C.A.P. Turner's flat slab mushroom capital system of concrete construction in Minneapolis. C.A.P. Turner developed his revolutionary system of flat slab concrete construction in Minneapolis and his technique became internationally renowned.

The proposed designation of the Green & DeLaittre Wholesale Grocery Company Warehouse at 500 North Third Street is consistent with the development plans and objectives adopted by the City Council. The Minneapolis Plan for Sustainable Growth identifies two small area plans that include the property at 500 North Third Street: *The Downtown East North Loop Master Plan* adopted by the City Council in 2003 and the *Warehouse Preservation Plan*, which was adopted in 2000 by the City Council.

The Downtown East -North Loop Master Plan

The Downtown East -North Loop (DTE-NL) Master Plan was developed around the Hiawatha Light Rail Line and other future light rail and commuter rail lines that are planned for the area including the multi-modal station. The proposed designation is consistent with and supported by the master plan. The plan has a section titled "Preservation of Remaining Historic Fabric." This section of the plan discusses the preservation of historic resources and states "Wherever possible, as many existing older buildings as possible should be retained through historic designation."

The land use policies of the plan are separated into smaller precincts such as Warehouse West. The property at 500 North Third Street is located in the Warehouse West precinct. In general the DTE-NL master plan supports the preservation of the district. More specifically it states that "the historic structures in [Warehouse West] precinct should be protected and preserved with an emphasis on adaptive re-use of existing structures."

The Warehouse Action Plan

The Warehouse Action Plan was adopted by the City Council in 2000. The plan area was bounded by Hennepin Avenue to the south and 10th Avenue North as the northern boundary. First Street North was the eastern boundary and Seventh Street North was

Department of Community Planning and Economic Development
Planning Division

the western boundary. The plan was developed for the NRHP Minneapolis Warehouse Historic in response to the demolition of five historic buildings for the construction of the Federal Reserve Bank.

The first goal of the Warehouse Action Plan is to “Preserve the distinctive character of the Plan Area, through rehabilitation of buildings, conservation of historic streetscape features, and compatible design for new construction.” The proposed designation will preserve the distinctive character of the flat slab mushroom capital system of concrete construction while allowing sensitive rehabilitation of the building.

Local Designation Criteria

The City of Minneapolis developed seven local designation criteria based on the larger historical context of the city as outlined in the Preservation Plan. The proposed designation meets the following designation criteria.

Designation Criterion Four:

The property embodies the distinctive characteristics of an architectural or engineering type or style, or method of construction.

Built in 1908, the Green & DeLaittre Wholesale Grocery building is the earliest known extant example in Minneapolis of the ‘Mushroom System’ of reinforced concrete flat-slab construction. The engineer, C.A.P. Turner, received national and international recognition for his contributions to reinforced concrete. Turner’s experimental designs using the ‘Mushroom System’ of load-bearing reinforced concrete columns made it possible to design buildings that improved fire resistance, provided more natural light, and increased usable space, among other benefits. The revolutionary design of the “Mushroom System” of reinforced concrete is most evident on the interior building where the structural system is located.

C.A.P. Turner’s innovations in reinforced concrete flat-slab construction have been recognized nationally. In 2002, Turner’s Marshall Building (1907) in Milwaukee was dedicated as a National Civil Engineering Landmark for being the earliest extant example in the country of Turner’s flat-slab designs. The so-called ‘Turner System’ is also an important component of the significance of Frank Lloyd Wright’s 1939 Johnson Wax Administrative Building which is a National Historic Landmark.

Designation Criterion Six:

The property exemplifies works of master builders, engineers, designers, artists, craftsmen or architects.

The Green & DeLaittre Grocery Warehouse is significant under criterion six for its association with Minneapolis’ C.A.P. Turner whose ‘Mushroom System’ for reinforced concrete flat slab construction had national and international impacts. His advancements enabled buildings to be constructed with ample structural support, but in less time, for less money, and with greater design versatility. By 1913, only seven years

Department of Community Planning and Economic Development
Planning Division

after it was first displayed, Turner's Mushroom System had been used in over 1000 buildings around the world, and today is commonplace.

Reviews & Comments

The Preservation Chapter of the Minneapolis Code of Ordinances (Chapter 599) requires that the designation be submitted to the Minnesota State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) for review and comment.

State Historic Preservation Office

The designation was submitted to SHPO for comment on February 19, 2010. In a letter dated April 15, 2010 (see attachment C for the letter) SHPO provided favorable comments on the designation and stated:

“Constructed in 1908, the Green & DeLaittre Wholesale Grocery Company Warehouse is a four-story reinforced concrete building faced with reddish-brown brick. It is located within the North Loop neighborhood of downtown Minneapolis. The warehouse building is the earliest known extant example in Minneapolis of the “Mushroom System” of reinforced concrete slab construction. This construction system utilized reinforced concrete columns that allowed buildings to be designed with improved fire resistance, greater natural light and increased floors space. Minneapolis engineer Claude Allen Porter (C.A.P.) Turner patented this highly efficient column-and-slab structural system for concrete in 1908, the same year the Green & DeLaittre Warehouse was built. By 1913, Turner's system had been used in over 1000 buildings around the world. Green & DeLaittre's building is contributing within the Minneapolis Warehouse Historic District, which was listed in the National Register of Historic Places on November 3, 1989. As such, it is an ideal candidate for local designation.”

City Planning Commission

Chapter 599 of the Minneapolis Code of Ordinances also requires that the designation be submitted to the Minneapolis City Planning Commission (CPC) for review and comment. The Ordinance states that the city planning commission shall consider, but not be limited to, the following factors:

- (1) The relationship of the proposed designation to the city's comprehensive plan.
- (2) The effect of the proposed designation on the surrounding area.
- (3) The consistency of the proposed designation with applicable development plans or development objectives adopted by the city council.

The designation study was submitted to the CPC on March 19, 2010. On April 15, 2010 the CPC found that the proposed designation was consistent with the City of Minneapolis's Comprehensive Plan and applicable development plans and objectives adopted by the City Council. The CPC found that the proposed designation would have a positive effect on the surrounding North Loop Neighborhood and Minneapolis Warehouse Historic District. A copy of the staff report submitted to CPC is located in Attachment D.

Department of Community Planning and Economic Development
Planning Division

Staff Recommendation

CPED Staff recommends that the Minneapolis Heritage Preservation Commission **adopt** the above report and attachments as findings of fact and submit the same together with a recommendation to the Zoning & Planning Committee of the City Council to **approve** the local designation of the property at 500 North Third Street with the following conditions:

1. The designation includes the entire property, including the exterior of the building and the interior of the building.
2. The Secretary of Interior's Standards for Treatment of Historic Properties will be used to evaluate alterations to the interior of the property, as they have during interim protection, until such time local design guidelines for this individual property are adopted. The Secretary of Interior's Standards for Treatment of Historic Properties and the Minneapolis Warehouse Historic District Design Guidelines will be used to evaluate alterations to the exterior of the property.