

Department of Community Planning and Economic Development
Planning Division

Certificate of Appropriateness
BZH-26865

Date: June 7, 2011

Proposal: Certificate of Appropriateness for building and site modifications at the Morrison Building

Applicant: Minneapolis College of Art and Design

Address of Property: 2501 Stevens Avenue South

Project Name: Morrison Building Water Infiltration Mitigation

Contact Person and Phone: Brock Rasmussen, 612-874-3814

Planning Staff and Phone: Chris Vrchota, 612-673-5467

Date Application Deemed Complete: May 18, 2011

Publication Date: May 24, 2011

Public Hearing: June 7, 2011

Appeal Period Expiration: June 17, 2011

Ward: Ward 6

Neighborhood Organization: Whittier Alliance

Concurrent Review: N/A

Attachments:

Attachment A: Materials submitted by CPED staff –

- 350' map (A-1)
- Minutes from April 4, 2011 HPC Concept Review (A-2- A-12)

Attachment B: Materials submitted by Applicant –

- Notification letter to Council Member and neighborhood organization (B-1 – B-2)
- Application Form (B-3 – B-4)
- Project narrative and required findings (B-5 – B-24)
- Plans and elevations (B-25 – B-36)
- Information on proposed window, door, hardware and block (B-37 – B-57)
- Color Photographs by Applicant (Pages un-numbered)

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**South (Front) Elevation of Property
Photo Submitted by Applicant**

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CLASSIFICATION:	
Local Historic District	Washburn-Fair Oaks Historic District
Period of Significance	1858- circa 1939
Criteria of significance	Broad patterns of development
Date of local designation	1976
Applicable Design Guidelines	Washburn-Fair Oaks Historic District Design Guidelines, Secretary of Interior Standards for Treatment of Historic Properties

PROPERTY INFORMATION	
Current name	Minneapolis College of Art and Design Morrison Building
Historic Name	Minneapolis College of Art and Design Morrison Building
Current Address	2501 Stevens Avenue S
Historic Address	2501 Stevens Avenue S
Original Construction Date	Circa 1916 ¹
Original Contractor	Unknown
Original Architect	Unknown
Historic Use	Institutional
Current Use	Institutional
Proposed Use	Institutional

¹ The building permit records for properties at MCAD and the Minneapolis Institute of Arts (MIA) often have more than one building tied to an address, making it difficult to discern which permits are tied to each building. This makes it difficult to discern the date of construction, architect, and other details for individual buildings.

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BACKGROUND:

The subject property is a 2 story stucco veneered building constructed around 1916. The building is considered a contributing resource within the Washburn Fair Oaks Historic District.

MCAD has experienced a number of issues with water infiltration in three areas of the basement level of the Morrison Building which have led to flooding, including 2 such incidents in the summer of 2010. According to the Applicant, it appears that the grade at the rear of the building has been altered significantly since its original construction. An entry and windows that were once at-grade are now below grade due to site alterations over time. In heavy rain events, water runs down the stairwell and enters the building through the doorway. There are also water infiltration issues at a front entry to the 1973 addition to the building, through various windows around the building, and through another below grade entry at the rear of the building.

The Applicants requested a concept review of their proposed treatments with the Heritage Preservation Commission. The concept review was done at the April 4, 2011 heritage Preservation Commission meeting. Minutes from that meeting are attached in Appendix A-2 – A-12.

SUMMARY OF APPLICANT'S PROPOSAL:

The Applicant is proposing a number of alterations to the building intended to address the water infiltration problems. The Applicant has provided an extensive proposed scope of work. (See Appendix B-5 – B-17 for the full scope of work proposed by the Applicant.) The Applicant has identified four main areas of concern, which they refer to as "Problem Areas" in the scope of work, describing the specific issues at each and the proposed remedies. Proposed alterations include:

- Replacement of an existing sidewalk and entrance doors on the south elevation,
- Removal of a portion of sidewalk on the south side of the property,
- Removal of two below-grade entrances and related stairwells on the north side of the building,
- Re-grading areas on the north side of the building to direct water away from the building,
- Replacement of the concrete pad under the mechanical equipment on the north side of the building,
- Restoration of five windows and wells on the north side of the building,
- Removal of two windows on the north side of the building.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

No public comments had been received by the time of publication.

CETIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS: Certificate of Appropriateness for building and site modifications at the Morrison Building.

Findings as required by the Minneapolis Preservation Code:

The Planning Division of the Minneapolis Community Planning and Economic Development Department has analyzed the application based on the findings required by the Minneapolis Preservation Ordinance. 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.*

The Washburn-Fair Oaks Historic District is significant for its collection of late nineteenth and early twentieth century residential structures, ranging from mansions to more modest dwellings to multi-family housing. The district is also recognized for its identification with two art institutions, including MCAD.

The Morrison Building is not a grand residential structure, which is what the Washburn-Fair Oaks Historic District is primarily designated for. None of the alterations would be visible from other contributing resources within the district, and they are proposed in a manner that is sensitive and compatible with the design of the building. The alterations would be compatible with and continue to support the criteria and period of significance for which the 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 portions of the subject property contribute to the Washburn-Fair Oaks Historic District's significance. This is due primarily to the fact that it was constructed during the period of significance and that the MCAD complex provides context to the surrounding residential structures, the primary focus of the district.

The proposed work would have a minor impact on the overall design of the building, while helping to secure it against water infiltration which, if left untreated, could threaten the long-term stability of the building.

The proposed changes would not lessen the building's contribution as an institutional structure in a district significant for its collection of late nineteenth and early twentieth century residential structures. The alteration is compatible with and supports 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 would impact but not impair the integrity of the contributing resource.

Location: The Applicant is not proposing to change the contributing resource's location, thus the project will not impair the contributing resource's integrity of location.

Design: The aspect of design is likely to be the most greatly impacted by the proposed changes.

The Applicant is proposing to replace the door on the northeast side of the building with a window matching others found on that elevation. (See Appendix B-33.) On the northwest side, an existing window over the doorway would be left in place. (See Appendix B-32.) In both cases, the stairwells would be removed and filled, brining the grade up to match the surrounding area. These doorways are not considered character defining features of the building. Their removal would impact but not impair the integrity of design.

The proposed removal of two below grade windows on the west side of the building (see Appendix B-27 & B-31) would have a negligible impact on the integrity of design. As shown in the photos labeled W-9 – W-12 in the material provided by the Applicant, the windows are fully below grade, with only a small window well being visible. Removal of these windows and wells would not have an appreciable impact on the integrity of design.

Setting: The alterations being proposed by the applicant would be confined to the rear elevation of the building, much of it below grade. Other work is proposed to or adjacent to a modern addition to the building. The proposed work would have limited or no visibility from outside the campus. The proposed work would not have an impact on the integrity of setting.

Materials: The Applicant is proposing to remove two entrances that are likely original, though it is not known if the existing doors and related hardware are themselves original. The Applicant is also proposing to remove two existing windows, which are likely original. (See Appendix B-31.) Staff is recommending that these windows be salvaged and saved for re-use on the site in the future in the case that other similar windows become damaged or deteriorated beyond the point of repair. On the northeast elevation, the Applicant is proposing to move an existing window which is located behind mechanical equipment and place it in the location of the door and install a new aluminum window in the location behind the equipment. The overall impact on the integrity of materials would be limited, and would not be substantial enough to impair the integrity of materials.

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Workmanship: The Applicant is proposing to remove two original existing doorways and windows, while repairing and restoring five existing windows. None of the doors or windows proposed for removal are examples of fine craftsmanship- they are standard and utilitarian. The proposed work would not impact the integrity of workmanship.

Feeling: It is not known if the entrances are original, though it is likely. The Applicant has stated that the adjacent grading has been altered over time, which has led to the runoff problems. The doors and windows proposed for removal are on the rear of the building, facing an interior courtyard and open space. None of the proposed alterations would impact the integrity of feeling for the property or the district.

Association: 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 applicable design guidelines for this project are the Washburn-Fair Oaks Historic District Design Guidelines, which were adopted by the Heritage Preservation Commission on July 30, 1976. (Commissioners can find the guidelines on pages 5.10.1- 5.10.5 of their Preservation Resource Binders.)

Regarding windows, the Washburn-Fair Oaks Historic District Design Guidelines state: "Existing windows need to be replaced, use wooden, a suitable colored or anodized metal or other materials that blend with and not detract from the building." The Applicant is proposing to install one new aluminum window on the building, in a location behind existing mechanical equipment where an existing window would be removed and moved to the location of one of the removed doors. (See Appendix B-33). The window would have an anodized dark bronze finish to match the existing non-original windows on this elevation. (A material sample will be available at the public hearing.) The proposed aluminum replacement window would be in keeping with this guideline.

The Washburn-Fair Oaks Historic District Design Guidelines also state: "The fenestration, doorway openings, and ornamentation if intrinsic to the building design should be retained or replaced to evoke the original." The two doorways proposed for removal are below grade and on the rear of the building. Neither is considered to be "intrinsic to the building design", thus their removal would not be in violation of this guideline.

- (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 Guidelines for windows in the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation are most applicable to the proposed project.

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Standard #2 states: "The historic character of a property shall be retained and preserved. The removal of historic materials or alteration of features and spaces that characterize a property shall be avoided." The majority of the proposed alterations are on the rear face of the building. Much of the proposed work, including the removal of two entries and two original windows, are on portions of the building that are below grade. The work on the front elevation of the building is proposed on an addition constructed outside the period of significance. None of the material proposed for removal are considered character defining features, and no character defining features would be impacted through the work. The proposed alterations are in keeping with this standard.

- (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.***

The proposed alterations are considered a major alteration and require a Certificate of Appropriateness application.

As proposed, the project would conform to policy 8.1.1 of The Minneapolis Plan, which states: "Protect historic resources from modifications that are not sensitive to their historic significance." The proposed work would be primarily on the rear elevation, meets the applicable local design guidelines and would not have a significant impact on the integrity of the structure or the district.

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) *Adequate consideration of the description and statement of significance in the original nomination upon which designation of the landmark or historic district was based.***

The Applicant submitted a document addressing the 12 required findings (see Appendix B-18 – B-24). The Applicant believes that the proposed project meets this finding because the proposed work would not be visible from any properties within the district outside of the MCAD/MIA campus and would primarily be visible from modern, non-contributing structures.

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

The proposed work does require site plan review.

(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.*

The proposed work falls under the scope of rehabilitation. The Applicant has stated that they believe the proposed work is in keeping with the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation because none of the features being altered are important in defining the character of the building. (See Appendix B-22). Staff agrees with this statement.

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 proposed work is limited primarily to the rear elevation of the building, which is not visible from any of the residential structures for which the district is primarily designated. The proposed work is intended to alleviate problems with water infiltration into the building, which threaten to undermine the structural integrity of the building as well as its long-term use as office and classroom space. The proposed changes would have minimal impact on the overall design of the building. The proposed alterations are compatible with and will ensure continued significance and integrity for all contributing properties in the district based on the period of significance.

(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 building is located on the interior of the MCAD campus with very little visibility from other contributing resources in the district or the public right-of-way. The proposed work is primarily on the rear side of the building, and much of it is below-grade, further limiting the visible impact of the work. The proposed work would be in keeping with the spirit and intent of the ordinance and would not negatively alter the essential character of the Washburn Fair-Oaks Historic District.

The proposed work is also in keeping with sections 599.650- Duty to Maintain and 599.660- Prevention of Deterioration in the Preservation Ordinance. The proposed work is intended to prevent water infiltration into the building, which could threaten the long-term stability of the structure. Mitigating these issues will help maintain the structural integrity of the building and ensure its continued viability for use as office and classroom space.

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- (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 Morrison Building is centrally located on the MCAD/MIA campus, with no frontage on a public street. The proposed alterations are primarily limited to the rear elevation of the building, and will have a minimal impact on the overall design of the building. The certificate of appropriateness will not be injurious to the significance and integrity of other resources in the district and will not impede the normal and orderly preservation of surrounding resources as allowed by the preservation ordinance.

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STAFF RECOMMENDATION

CPED-Planning staff recommends that the Heritage Preservation Commission **adopt** staff findings and **approve** the Certificate of Appropriateness for building and site modifications at the Morrison Building with the following condition(s):

1. CPED-Planning reviews and approves final site plan, floor plans, and elevations.
2. Windows removed on the west elevation shall be salvaged and stored on site for use in replacement or repair of other original windows remaining on the building.
3. All workmanship must be completed in conformance with the Secretary of Interior Standards, see: <http://www.nps.gov/history/hps/tps/standguide/>
4. The Applicant shall obtain all other necessary City approvals prior to the commencement of work.
5. The Certificate of Appropriateness approvals shall expire if not acted upon within one year of approval, unless extended by the Planning Director in writing prior to the one-year anniversary date of the approvals.

Attachment A: Submitted by CPED staff

Attachment B: Materials submitted by Applicant