

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

FILE NAME: Resler Building (Nate's Clothing)

ADDRESS: 401 1st Avenue North (27 North 4th Street)

DATE OF APPLICATION: May 19, 2008

APPLICANT: Daniel Green, Miller and Dunwiddie (612) 278-7754

DATE OF HEARING: July 15, 2008

EXPIRATION OF APPEAL PERIOD: July 25, 2008

HPC SITE/DISTRICT: North Loop Warehouse Historic District; Minneapolis Warehouse Historic District

CATEGORY: Contributing

CLASSIFICATION: Certificate of Appropriateness

STAFF INVESTIGATION AND REPORT: Carol Ahlgren (612) 673-2847

DATE: July 3, 2008

A. SITE DESCRIPTION AND BACKGROUND:

Constructed in 1913, the Resler Building is a large brick five story rectangular shaped Commercial style building located at the northwest corner of 1st Avenue North and 4th Street North. Commonly known as Nate's Clothing for a long-term tenant, the building is contributing to the City of Minneapolis North Loop Warehouse Historic District is also contributing to the National Register of Historic Places Minneapolis Warehouse Historic District. The building has simple ornamentation typical of the Commercial style consisting of three part Chicago Commercial style windows on the first and second floors, a stone belt course separating the first and second floors, concrete sills, and simple brackets that support the flat, projecting cornice. The building most recently housed Nate's Clothing on the first floor; a projecting vertical neon sign with the words "Nate's Clothing" is located on the North 4th Street façade. An additional painted sign with the words "Nate's Clothing" is located at the cornice line on the adjacent building to the east.

The rectangular shaped building is built to the property line on each of its principal facades; adjacent buildings to the west along 1st Avenue North are similar in materials, scale and massing; along 4th Street North, however, is a surface parking lot and two, three, and seven story buildings. The 1st Avenue north façade of the Rensler building features nine bays with Chicago Commercial style three part windows on the first and second floors. A recessed entrance is located in the bay immediately south of the central bay. Lower level windows have non-historic glass block in-fill. The north or 4th Street North façade features a recessed entrance and is three bays with Chicago Commercial style three part windows on the first and second floors, and lower level glass block in-fill. Immediately south of the Rensler building is the 5 story Robitshek building; the remainder of the block has 2, two story buildings. Opposite the Rensler building at the intersection of 4th Street North and 1st Avenue North is a surface parking lot.

B. PROPOSED CHANGES:

The applicant is proposing to make interior and exterior modifications for the building's continued use as office space and first floor retail. The project calls for rehabilitation, restoration, and new construction.

Windows: The lower or garden level glass block in-fill located on the north and west facades will be replaced with new windows with a mullion pattern to match those shown in historic photographs. The replacement glass will be translucent.

Entrances: The existing entrance on 4th street will be retained. A new recessed entrance will be created in the center of the North 1st Avenue façade, utilizing an existing bay; the windows will be retained.

Interior modifications. A new elevator shaft in line with the central corridor will connect all floors including the new proposed 6th and 7th levels. The existing south stairwell will be upgraded and will be extended to the new 6th and 7th levels. The existing stairs from the lower level to the first level will be replaced. In addition to replacement of the non-historic glass block windows on the lower level, the north half of the floor will be converted to commercial use. A new code compliant stairway will be cut into a center bay of the floor above for access to the first level.

New construction: The applicant proposes to add two new levels on the existing rooftop, set back one structural bay from the west and north facades. Each of the proposed new stories will be 12 feet in height. The addition will be constructed of steel panels with three part windows that will mimic the Chicago style Commercial windows on the first and second levels. The addition will also include the elevator penthouse and mechanical units.

The Rensler building is currently undergoing a Certified Restoration for tax credits through the Minnesota State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) and the National Park Service (See Attachment B, pages 11-12).

**C. APPLICABLE REGULATION, POLICIES, AND GUIDELINES:
WAREHOUSE HISTORIC DISTRICT GUIDELINES
Minneapolis Heritage Preservation Commission
1978**

II. Guidelines For Rehabilitation of Buildings

2. Storefronts.

- A. Wherever existing storefronts remain, critical details shall be retained, e.g., cast iron columns, wood molding, trim, terra cotta ornament.
- B. Modifications to entries shall be permitted as required for the adaptive reuse of the buildings. Modifications shall be constructed with materials to match original storefronts.
- C. Handicap accessibility shall be done within the building where ramping with guard rails is required on street facades. Appropriate modifications to the facade will be permitted for on-grade access.

3. Window replacement.

- A. Windows which have unique architectural or historically significant details which cannot be duplicated must be retained.

- B. Window replacement other than item A shall be permitted if original windows are badly deteriorated or provide inadequate thermal performance. (Use of interior storm windows shall be encouraged.)
- C. Replacement windows may be wood or aluminum. Window paning shall be provided to replicate existing wood moldings.
- D. Replacement windows must have a true offset, single- or double-hung operation. (They need not be operable.)
- E. Replacement windows will have a paint finish. (Anodized windows will not be permitted.)
- F. Replacement windows shall have clear glass unless historical documentation suggests otherwise.

4. Roofing.

- A. Modern roofing materials will be permitted on flat roofs.
- B. Original copings on street facings shall be retained or replaced. Metal coping with a paint finish will be permitted as replacement for brick copings on common walls.
- C. Roof top additions which project above parapet walls such as deck, skylights, penthouses, and mechanical equipment shall be set back from the primary building or street facades at least one structural bay.

5. Health and safety code requirements.

Exterior alterations required by health and safety codes also require HPC review. When necessary, the HPC can argue for exceptions to the building code when life safety issues are not involved.

III. Guidelines For Infill Construction

1. Decision intent.

- A. The intent of these guidelines is for infill construction which characterize a masonry loading bearing building and not a contemporary curtain wall structure. The existing warehouse buildings followed early commercial ideas for tall buildings which emulate the classic column with a defined base shaft and capital. Creative design concepts are not discouraged.

2. Building massing (General footprinting and shape).

- A. Building outline.
 - a. New construction shall be built out to the property line on street frontage.
 - b. Corner lots: The building shall be built out to both property lines on street frontage.

- c. Buildings which do not require a footprint as large as the site may utilize courtyards or atrium on the interior of the lot.
 - B. Building shape.
 - a. The building shall be rectangular in shape and volume. Step backs at the upper floors on street facades will not be allowed.
 - C. Building height.
 - a. Minimum height: 2 stories.
 - b. Maximum height: 10 stories.
 - c. A story shall be defined as follows:
 - (1) First story: 14-18'0" floor to floor.
 - (2) 2-10 story: 10-12'0" floor to floor.Deviation in story height will not allow additional stories.
- 3. Street facade.
 - C. Windows.
 - a. Windows shall be a series of rectilinear openings separated by masonry piers. Window openings shall not exceed a single structural bay in width. These may be single or pairs of windows separated by masonry piers.
 - b. Continuous horizontal or vertical bands of windows will not be permitted.
 - c. Window height shall be three times its width as applied to a single window unit.
 - d. Window frames shall have a paint finish.
 - e. Window glass shall be clear.
 - f. Windows shall be true single- or double-hung. (Operable windows are not required.)
 - g. Windows will be set back from the brick face a minimum of one brick width.
 - D. Building entrances.
 - a. Building entrances shall be incorporated into storefronts or may be a special design feature such as Butler Square.
- 5. Elevators.
 - A. Exterior glass enclosed elevators or other high tech design elements will not be permitted.
- 6. Roofs.

- A. The roof shall be flat with parapet walls.
- B. Roof top mechanical equipment shall be set back from front exterior walls a minimum of one structural bay.
- C. Penthouses and stairtowers will be set back one structural bay from a street facade.

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.

Roofs

Recommended:

-Identifying, retaining, and preserving roofs - and their functional and decorative features - that are important in defining the overall historic character of the building. This includes the roof's shape, such as hipped, gambrel, and mansard; decorative features such as cupolas, cresting, chimneys, and weathervanes; and roofing material such as slate, wood, clay tile, and metal, as well as its size, color, and patterning.

Alterations/Additions for the New Use

-Installing mechanical and service equipment on the roof such as air conditioning, transformers, or solar collectors when required for the new use so that they are inconspicuous from the public right-of-way and do not damage or obscure character-defining features.

-Designing additions to roofs such as residential, office, or storage spaces; elevator housing; decks and terraces; or dormers or skylights when required by the new use so that they are inconspicuous from the public right-of-way and do not damage or obscure character-defining features.

Not Recommended:

-Introducing a new roof feature that is incompatible in size, scale, material, and color.

-Radically changing a character-defining roof shape or damaging or destroying character-defining roofing material as a result of incompatible design or improper installation techniques.

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.

Design for Missing Historic Features

-Designing and installing new windows when the historic windows (frame, sash and glazing) are completely missing. The replacement windows may be an accurate restoration using historical, pictorial, and physical documentation; or be a new design that is compatible with the window openings and the historic character of the building.

Entrances and Porches

Recommended:

-Identifying, retaining, and preserving entrances - and their functional and decorative features - that are important in defining the overall historic character of the building such as doors, fanlights, sidelights, pilasters, entablatures, columns, balustrades, and stairs.

Alterations/Additions for the New Use

-Designing and installing additional entrances or porches when required for the new use in a manner that preserves the historic character of the building, i.e., limiting such alteration to non-character-defining elevations.

Storefronts

Recommended:

-Identifying, retaining, and preserving storefronts - and their functional and decorative features - that are important in defining the overall historic character of the building such as display windows, signs, doors, transoms, kick plates, corner posts, and entablatures.

Building Interior

Structural System

Recommended:

-Identifying, retaining, and preserving structural systems - and individual features of systems - that are important in defining the overall historic character of the building, such as post and beam systems, trusses, summer beams, vigas, cast iron columns, above-grade stone foundation walls, or loadbearing brick or stone walls.

-Examining and evaluating the physical condition of the structural system and its individual features using non-destructive techniques such as X-ray photography.

-Repairing the structural system by augmenting or upgrading individual parts or features. For example, weakened structural members such as floor framing can be spliced, braced, or otherwise supplemented and reinforced.

-Replacing in kind - or with substitute material - those portions or features of the structural system that are either extensively deteriorated or are missing when there are surviving prototypes such as cast iron columns, roof rafters or trusses, or sections of load bearing walls. Substitute material should convey the same form, design, and overall visual appearance as the historic feature; and, at a minimum, be equal to its load bearing capabilities.

Alterations/Additions for the New Use

-Designing and installing new mechanical or electrical systems when required for the new use which minimize the number of cutouts or holes in structural members.

Interior: Spaces, Features, and Finishes

Recommended:

-Identifying, retaining, and preserving a floor plan or interior spaces that are important in defining the overall historic character of the building. This includes the size, configuration, proportion, and relationship of rooms and corridors; the relationship of features to spaces; and the spaces themselves such as lobbies, reception halls, entrance halls, double parlors, theaters, auditoriums, and important industrial or commercial use spaces.

Alterations/Additions for the New Use

-Accommodating service functions such as bathrooms, mechanical equipment, and office machines required by the building's new use in secondary spaces such as first floor service areas or on upper floors.

-Enclosing an interior stairway where required by code so that its character is retained. In many cases, glazed fire-rated walls may be used.

-Placing new code-required stairways or elevators in secondary and service areas of the historic building.

Mechanical Systems: Heating, Air Conditioning, Electrical, and Plumbing

Recommended:

-Identifying, retaining, and preserving visible features of early mechanical systems that are important in defining the overall historic character of the building, such as radiators, vents, fans, grilles, plumbing fixtures, switch plates, and lights.

Alterations/Additions for the New Use

-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 historic building material.

-Installing the vertical runs of ducts, pipes, and cables in closets, service rooms, and wall cavities.

Building Site

Recommended:

-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.

Alterations/Additions for the New Use

-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.

Alterations/Additions for the New Use

-Introducing new construction onto the building site which is visually incompatible in terms of size, scale, design, materials, color and texture or which destroys historic relationships on the site.

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.

Alterations/Additions for the New Use

-Designing and constructing new additions to historic buildings when required by the new use. New work should be compatible with the historic character of the district or neighborhood in terms of size, scale, design, material, color, and texture.

Health and Safety Code Requirements

Recommended:

-Identifying the historic building's character-defining spaces, features, and finishes so that code-required work will not result in their damage or loss.

-Complying with health and safety code, including seismic codes and barrier-free access requirements, in such a manner that character-defining spaces, features, and finishes are preserved.

-Upgrading historic stairways and elevators to meet health and safety codes in a manner that assures their preservation, i.e., so that they are not damaged or obscured.

-Adding a new stairway or elevator to meet health and safety codes in a manner that preserves adjacent character-defining features and spaces.

Building Site

New Additions to Historic Buildings

Recommended:

-Designing new additions in a manner that makes clear what is historic and what is new.

-Considering the attached exterior addition both in terms of the new use and the appearance of other buildings in the historic district or neighborhood. Design for the new work may be contemporary or may reference design motifs from the historic building. In either case, it should always be clearly differentiated from the historic building and be compatible in terms of mass, materials, relationship of solids to voids, and color.

-Designing additional stories, when required for the new use, that are set back from the wall plane and are as inconspicuous as possible when viewed from the street.

Not Recommended:

-Designing a new addition so that its size and scale in relation to the historic building are out of proportion, thus diminishing the historic character.

-Designing and constructing new additions that result in the diminution or loss of the historic character of the resource, including its design, materials, workmanship, location, or setting.

-Constructing additional stories so that the historic appearance of the building is radically changed.

D. ANALYSIS

The Rensler building, a five story rectangular shaped building with facades and entrance facing 1st Avenue North and 4th street North is located on a prominent corner in the City of Minneapolis North Loop Warehouse Historic District and the National Register Minneapolis Warehouse Historic District. The Rensler building occupies a prominent intersection in the districts and faces three 7 story buildings

to the north along 1st Avenue North. The proposed two story rooftop addition would not be visible from the street in front of these buildings. Other properties in the area however, include 2, 3, and 7 story buildings on the north side of 4th Street North, and 5 and 2 story buildings immediately south along 4th Street North. The area also includes surface parking lots, the most prominent located at the north side of the intersection of 1st Avenue North and 4th Street North. Surface parking is also located on 4th Street North at on the south half of the block. As part of the certified restoration application submitted to the National Park Service and the Minnesota SHPO, the applicant provided a mock-up visibility overlay showing existing views of the Rensler building, and a mock-up of the proposed two story addition (Attachment C). The applicant stated that the addition would not be visible from the ground level in the hatched area indicated on the mock-up (Attachment C, page 2). The proposed two story roof-top addition meets the District guidelines in terms of new construction for height--12 feet-- for each floor.

The rooftop addition is nonetheless inappropriate for the Warehouse District in that it is two stories; this height has not previously been approved in the district. Further, the proposed steel siding and large windows are not compatible with the size, scale, color, and material of the existing building (Attachment D, Interpreting the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation). Further, the Rensler building is located in an area of the Warehouse District which includes buildings of multiple stories and surface parking. As indicated by the mock-up visibility overlay submitted by the applicant, the addition would be visible from several areas along 1st Avenue North and from 4th Street North.

E. FINDINGS

1. The Rensler Building is a contributing resource in the City of Minneapolis North Loop Warehouse Historic District and is also contributing to the National Register of Historic Places Minneapolis Warehouse Historic District.
2. The proposed two story rooftop addition will be located in an area of the Warehouse District that includes two, three, five and seven story buildings and surface parking lots.
3. The proposed replacement of the existing lower level glass block in-fill windows with translucent glass and mullions to match those in historic photographs is appropriate and will meet the district guidelines and the Secretary of the Interior's standards for rehabilitation.
4. The proposed interior modifications including code compliant stairways and renovation for commercial space will not significantly impact the exterior of the building and will meet the district guidelines and the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation.
5. The proposed replacement of the non-historic glass block infill at the sub level windows with translucent glass and muntins pattern based on historic photographs meets the District guidelines and the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation.
6. The proposed new entrance on the 1st Avenue North façade will utilize an existing bay, will be recessed, and will retain the existing windows; the entrance will meet the District guidelines and the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation.
7. The proposed two story rooftop addition will be set back one structural bay from the north and west facades of the building in keeping with the District guidelines.
8. Each floor of the proposed two story rooftop addition will be 12 feet in height, in keeping with the District guidelines.

9. The proposed steel siding and large windows of the proposed two story rooftop addition is incompatible to the scale, massing, and materials of adjacent District buildings.

10. Two story rooftop additions have not been previously approved in the District; granting this addition will set a precedent that will diminish the integrity of the Rensler building and may diminish the integrity of the District as a whole.

F. STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

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

1. The two story rooftop addition is not approved.
2. A one story addition, not to exceed 12 feet in height, set back one structural bay from each primary facades is allowed. A one story addition is subject to review and approval by CPED Preservation Planning staff.
3. The applicant is encouraged to retain, or find an appropriate new location for the existing vertical projecting neon Nate's Clothing sign.
4. All final elevations and site plans are subject to approval by CPED Preservation Planning staff.

Attachments:

- A. Map of North Loop Warehouse Historic District.
- B. Certificate of Appropriateness application, June 9, 2008.
- C. Supplement material regarding rooftop sight line test, June 2, 2008.
- D. Interpreting the Secretary of the Interior's Standards (ITS) Number 36: Rooftop Additions, June, 2006.