

**CITY OF MINNEAPOLIS
CPED PLANNING DIVISION
HERITAGE PRESERVATION COMMISSION STAFF REPORT
BZH-26353**

FILE NAME: 2841 East Lake of the Isles Parkway
DATE OF APPLICATION: March 22, 2010
APPLICANT: Saleem Karmaliani
PUBLICATION OF STAFF REPORT: April 27, 2010
DATE OF HEARING: May 4, 2010
APPEAL PERIOD EXPIRATION: May 14, 2010
CATEGORY: Historic Resource
CLASSIFICATION: Demolition of a Historic Resource
STAFF INVESTIGATION AND REPORT: John Smoley, Ph.D., 612-673-2830
DATE: April 27, 2010

A. BACKGROUND

On March 22, 2010, the Applicant submitted a Demolition of a Historic Resource application for the subject property. The Applicant intends to replace the residence currently onsite with a new single family residence.

The subject property lies within the Lake of the Isles potential historic district and immediately adjacent to the Grand Rounds historic district.

In April 1984 Muriel Nord of the City's Heritage Preservation Commission nominated the Lake of the Isles Historic District to the National Register of Historic Places. The proposed district consisted of the Lake of the Isles; the 116 residences and 1 church surrounding the lake; the parkway around the lake; and the Kenilworth lagoon and park land immediately west of the lake. The proposed district was not listed in the National Register.¹

In Mead and Hunt's July 2006 *Historic Resources Inventory Portions of Calhoun-Isles Area, City of Minneapolis* the evaluators conducted a reconnaissance survey of the subject property and its surroundings. The evaluators recommended 2841 East Lake of the Isles be considered a noncontributing property in the Lake of the Isles potential historic district, "...due to significant alterations and loss of character."²

The subject property lies immediately adjacent to a portion of the Grand Rounds, the linear parkway that circles the City of Minneapolis. In the recently completed evaluation of the Grand

¹ Muriel Nord, National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form, "Lake of the Isles Historic District," Potential Historic Resource Files, Planning Division, Community Planning and Economic Development Department, Minneapolis, MN.

² Mead & Hunt, *Historic Resources Inventory Portions of Calhoun-Isles Area, City of Minneapolis* Reconnaissance Survey Files, Planning Division, Community Planning and Economic Development Department, Minneapolis, MN.

Rounds, the State Historic Preservation Officer concurred in the determination that residences were not a park of this National Register eligible historic district.

B. DESCRIPTION

The residence at 2841 East Lake of the Isles Parkway (see photo below) is a 2.5-story building designed in a vernacular manner with elements of the American Foursquare (Prairie) style. The building is laid out in a simple, four square plan. A hipped roof with medium width eaves and exposed rafter tails caps the building. Hipped dormers sprout from the front and rear slopes of the roof, while a brick chimney and television antenna rise from the southern side. Fenestration consists primarily of 1/1 double hung windows. Notable exceptions include fixed, leaded glass windows on one side of the building and oriel windows on the front (second story) and side (first story) of the building. Stucco clads the walls. A single story front porch and two-story rear porch bookend the building.



2841 East Lake of the Isles Parkway, 2010, photo submitted by Applicant

C. PROPOSED CHANGES

The Applicant intends to replace the residence currently onsite with a new single family residence.

D. NECESSITY OF DEMOLITION

The Minneapolis Code of Ordinances, Title 23, Heritage Preservation, Chapter 599 Heritage Preservation Regulations states that before approving the demolition of a property determined to be an historic resource, the commission shall make findings that the demolition is necessary to correct an unsafe or dangerous condition on the property, or that there are no reasonable alternatives to the demolition. In determining whether reasonable alternatives exist, the commission shall consider, but not be limited to the significance of the property, the integrity of the property and the economic value or usefulness of the existing structure, including its current use, costs of renovation and feasible alternative uses. The commission may delay a final decision for up to one hundred-eighty (180) days to allow parties interested in preserving the historic resource a reasonable opportunity to act to protect it.

D1. UNSAFE OR DANGEROUS CONDITION

The Applicant does not contend that the demolition of the subject property is necessary to correct an unsafe or dangerous condition. A March 2010 structural assessment by the engineering firm Ulteig concluded that the residence is structurally stable in its current condition, but that a major remodel as is required to correct deficiencies within the property would create structural concerns.

D2. REASONABLE ALTERNATIVES TO DEMOLITION

Reasonable alternatives to demolition exist. The home can continue to be used as a residence: a permitted use in the property's R-1 zoning district. The home, however, is in need of work, as evident in photos submitted by the Applicant (Attachments B38-B62). The Applicant requested an estimate of remodeling costs from Authentic Construction. This firm estimated that it would cost between \$350 per presently finished square foot and \$400 per presently unfinished square foot to remodel this home (Attachments B75-B76). The application notes the home currently possesses 1882 square feet and that converting all unfinished area to habitable space would result in 2350 square feet of space, meaning 468 square feet of space within the dwelling is currently not considered habitable space. Remodeling the home per these estimates would result in a cost of \$658,700 for presently finished areas and \$187,200 for unfinished areas for a total cost of \$845,900. The estimated cost to demolish the existing home and construct a new residence (\$735,000, as estimated by J&N Contracting) is only 13% less.

D2a. SIGNIFICANCE

The subject property does not appear eligible for designation as a landmark.

Criterion 1. The property is associated with significant events or with periods that exemplify broad patterns of cultural, political, economic or social history.

The property does not appear significant under criterion 1. From 1906-1907 John Engquist constructed homes at 2841 and 2845 (now 2847) East Lake of the Isles Parkway as speculative developments, living at the latter address for roughly one year

before moving.³ The subject property is not known to have been the site of significant historical events. A 1907 *Minneapolis Tribune* column with brief city news items notes that Mr. Engquist had his tools stolen from the barn onsite in May 1907, but this event is not significant enough to warrant designation of the building.⁴

Criterion 2. The property is associated with the lives of significant persons or groups.

The property does not appear significant under criterion 2. The original owner and builder of the property, John Engquist, was a Swedish immigrant and successful Minneapolis businessman, but he never lived at this house and constructed many buildings in the City.

John Engquist was born in Sweden in June of 1863. In 1884 he immigrated to the United States, married a woman named Ida, and had five sons.⁵ Engquist first merited mention in local newspapers for his homebuilding. Around the turn of the twentieth century, the *Minneapolis Tribune* published columns listing new construction within the city. The paper noted that John Engquist constructed numerous buildings within the city.⁶ His success was sufficient enough to afford a servant for his household, and he parlayed this success into other ventures.⁷ From 1907 to 1913 Minneapolis city directories listed him as president of Builders Cement Block and Tile Company, vice president of Builder's Hardware Company, vice president of Lake Amusement Company, and president of American Realty and Building Company.⁸ But his work attracted little attention from the City's newspaper of record beyond brief building notes and paid advertisements. A 1909 *Minneapolis Tribune* advertisement called the new American Realty and Building Company building at Lake Street and Nicollet Avenue "attractive" and a "boon to that section of the city." A 1913 advertisement in the *Minneapolis Tribune* touted Engquist's impact upon Lake Street, citing this building and

³ City of Minneapolis Building Permit #B69733, 2841 Lake of the Isles Boulevard; City of Minneapolis Building Permit #B70856, 2845 Lake of the Isles Boulevard; Minneapolis City Directory, 1906-1908; R.L. Polk & Company, The Dual City Blue Book, Minneapolis and St. Paul, 1907-1908, 1909-1910 (Minneapolis: R.L. Polk & Company).

⁴ "City Briefs," *Minneapolis Tribune*, 5 May 1907, 7.

⁵ Ancestry.com, 1900 United States Federal Census [database on-line], Provo, UT, (USA: Ancestry.com Operations Inc, 2004), Original data: United States of America, Bureau of the Census, Twelfth Census of the United States, 1900 (Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, 1900) T623, 1854 rolls.

⁶ "Building and Realty," *Minneapolis Tribune*, 23 December 1900, 12; "Building News of the Past Week," *Minneapolis Tribune*, 26 March 1905, 5. [NOTE: During the first decade of the twentieth century Minneapolis city directories list several men named John Engquist. Two were identified as builders/carpenters. John Engquist, husband of Amie, was a slightly younger, less prominent carpenter who, though he owned his own home in 1910, was a worker in a sash and door factory, according to the 1910 Federal Census. The other builder/carpenter named John Engquist built the subject property.]

⁷ Ancestry.com, 1900 United States Federal Census [database on-line], Provo, UT, (USA: Ancestry.com Operations Inc, 2004), Original data: United States of America, Bureau of the Census, Twelfth Census of the United States, 1900 (Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, 1900) T623, 1854 rolls.

⁸ Minneapolis City Directory, 1907-1913.

the Lake Theater as prime examples.⁹ A 1916 *Minneapolis Tribune* advertisement highlighted the success of the Lake Amusement Company in building Twin Cities theaters and notes the role of Engquist as the firm's architect.¹⁰

Despite his success, John Engquist did merit mention in either Larry Millet's *AIA Guide to the Twin Cities* or David Kenny's *Twin Cities Picture Show*, arguably the most comprehensive guides to Twin Cities' architecture and theaters. While further research is needed to determine Engquist's place within the context of Minneapolis' immigrant and real estate development history, it is clear that Engquist's connection to the subject property is fleeting at best. Engquist constructed many Minneapolis buildings, and he never lived at this residence, choosing instead to live next door at 2845 (now 2847) East Lake of the Isles Parkway for roughly one year.¹¹

Criterion 3. The property contains or is associated with distinctive elements of city or neighborhood identity.

The property does not appear significant under criterion 3. According to the 1984 district nomination form, the Lake of the Isles potential historic district is significant for its association with Minneapolis' park development. The study found that the residences in the district were designed for use by the upper class of the early twentieth century around the new lake, previously created by heavy dredging.¹² The residence in question does not appear to be designed for especially affluent people. At an estimated cost of \$3000, the subject property was of moderate expense, and constructed by Mr. Engquist with no particular buyer in mind. Initial residents of the address apparently did not find the residence prestigious enough to remain in place for long. The 1908 city directory lists one EL Bergquist residing at 2841 East Lake of the Isles Parkway. The 1909 city directory lists a Dexter Bacon residing at the address.¹³

Criterion 4. The property embodies the distinctive characteristics of an architectural or engineering type or style, or method of construction.

The subject property is a 2.5-story building designed in a vernacular manner with elements of the American Foursquare (Prairie) style. Highly characteristic features of the Prairie style that are missing from the building are enclosed, flat, wide eaves and massive square porch supports. Better remaining examples of the Prairie style, such as the Charles Backus House at 212 West 36th Street, have already been designated.

Criterion 5. The property exemplifies a landscape design or development pattern distinguished by innovation, rarity, uniqueness or quality of design or detail.

⁹ "Prominent in the Upbuilding of Lake Street," *Minneapolis Tribune*, 25 May 1913, 11.

¹⁰ "Beautiful Lake Theater Opens to Public," *Minneapolis Tribune*, 2 April 1916, A8.

¹¹ *Minneapolis City Directory, 1906-1908*; R.L. Polk & Company, *The Dual City Blue Book, Minneapolis and St. Paul, 1907-1908, 1909-1910* (Minneapolis: R.L. Polk & Company).

¹² Muriel Nord, National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form, "Lake of the Isles Historic District," Potential Historic Resource Files, Planning Division, Community Planning and Economic Development Department, Minneapolis, MN.

¹³ *Minneapolis City Directory, 1908-1909*.

The lot in question possesses commonplace retaining walls, trees, and grass. These elements are not part of a unified landscape design and are not historically significant.

Criterion 6. The property exemplifies works of master builders, engineers, designers, artists, craftsmen or architects.

Further research is necessary to determine whether John Engquist was a master builder. In any event, the subject property does not exemplify the work of a master builder. The subject property has few architectural flairs, the most notable being leaded glass windows. No evidence exists that would suggest that the builder, John Engquist, made those windows.

Criterion 7. The property has yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Although the property lies across the street from a known water source, the character of water source was altered dramatically with severe dredging in the late 1800s. Chances of significant archaeological remains being on site are not high enough to warrant an archaeological survey of the site.

D2b. INTEGRITY

The subject property possesses integrity, as evident in its retention of five aspects of integrity.

Location: The building remains in its original location, indicating the building maintains integrity of location.

Design: The building's design has been altered since its date of construction. In 1909 the owner placed an addition on the building. The owner constructed a garage in 1926. These are not sufficient to destroy the property's integrity of design, however.

Setting: The property's integrity of setting remains intact. The building continues to operate among other residences clustered around the lake, as it has done throughout its history.

Materials: Many of the building's original materials are no longer extant. A 1917 fire in the building required \$800 in unspecified repairs. Stucco replaced the original siding in 1938. Extensive plumbing and electrical alterations changed the property over time. Other alterations in 1926, 1941, and 1992 changed the property further. Some window alterations are also evident.

Workmanship: Integrity of workmanship is evident in the existing leaded glass windows and interior woodwork.

Feeling: Despite changes of many materials, the building retains its basic design and continues to look like a turn-of-the-century residence along Lake of the Isles, thus the building retains integrity of feeling.

Association: The building lost its association with John Engquist long ago.

D2c. ECONOMIC VALUE OR USEFULNESS OF THE EXISTING STRUCTURE

The Applicant has not demonstrated that the building in question has no economic value or usefulness. The estimated cost to demolish the existing home and construct a new residence onsite is only 13% less than the cost of repairing the existing home, as discussed in section D2 of this staff report.

E. PUBLIC COMMENT

As of the date of publication of this staff report, staff has received two comment letters regarding the project. One expressed Councilmember Tuthill's support of the project. The other expressed the neighborhood group's support of the project, although this support is contingent upon approval of the demolition plan by potentially affected neighbors. While the Applicant has not confirmed the support of his neighbors for a demolition plan, he has enclosed a letter from the demolition contractor who pledges to "...tear the house down gently..." Both letters are found in Attachment C.

F. APPLICABLE ORDINANCES

Chapter 599. Heritage Preservation Regulations

ARTICLE V. DESIGNATION

599.210. Designation criteria. The following criteria shall be considered in determining whether a property is worthy of designation as a landmark or historic district because of its historical, cultural, architectural, archaeological or engineering significance:

- (1) The property is associated with significant events or with periods that exemplify broad patterns of cultural, political, economic or social history.
- (2) The property is associated with the lives of significant persons or groups.
- (3) The property contains or is associated with distinctive elements of city or neighborhood identity.
- (4) The property embodies the distinctive characteristics of an architectural or engineering type or style, or method of construction.
- (5) The property exemplifies a landscape design or development pattern distinguished by innovation, rarity, uniqueness or quality of design or detail.
- (6) The property exemplifies works of master builders, engineers, designers, artists, craftsmen or architects.
- (7) The property has yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

599.230. Commission decision on nomination. The commission shall review all complete nomination applications. If the commission determines that a nominated property appears to meet at least one of the criteria for designation contained in section 599.210, the commission may direct the planning director to prepare or cause to be prepared a designation study of the property. In cases where an application for demolition is initiated by the property owner, the planning director may determine that the property owner bears the full financial responsibility of conducting the designation study. In all cases, the planning director shall define the scope of services for a designation study, review qualifications of agent conducting study and make a determination of what constitutes a final submission upon completion.

599.240. Interim protection. (a) Purpose. Interim protection is established to protect a nominated property from destruction or inappropriate alteration during the designation process.

(b) *Effective date.* Interim protection shall be in effect from the date of the commission's decision to commence a designation study of a nominated property until the city council makes a decision regarding the designation of the property, or for twelve (12) months, whichever comes first. Interim protection may be extended for such additional periods as the commission may deem appropriate and necessary to protect the designation process, not exceeding a total additional period of eighteen (18) months. The commission shall hold a public hearing on a proposed extension of interim protection as provided in section 599.170.

(c) *Scope of restrictions.* During the interim protection period, no alteration or minor alteration of a nominated property shall be allowed except where authorized by a certificate of appropriateness or a certificate of no change, as provided in this chapter. (2001-Or-029, § 1, 3-2-01)

ARTICLE VIII. HISTORIC RESOURCES

599.440. Purpose. This article is established to protect historic resources from destruction by providing the planning director with authority to identify historic resources and to review and approve or deny all proposed demolitions of property.

599.450. Identification of historic resources. The planning director shall identify properties that are believed to meet at least one of the criteria for designation contained in section 599.210, but that have not been designated. In determining whether a property is an historic resource, the planning director may refer to building permits and other property information regularly maintained by the director of inspections, property inventories prepared by or directed to be prepared by the planning director, observations of the property by the planning director or any other source of information reasonably believed to be relevant to such determination.

599.460. Review of demolitions. The planning director shall review all building permit applications that meet the definition for demolition to determine whether the affected property is an historic resource. If the planning director determines that the property is not an historic resource, the building permit shall be approved. If the planning director determines that the property is an historic resource, the building permit shall not be issued without review and approval by the commission following a public hearing as provided in section 599.170.

599.470. Application for demolition of historic resource. An application for demolition of an historic resource shall be filed on a form approved by the planning director and shall be accompanied by all required supporting information, as specified in section 599.160.

599.480. Commission decision. (a) *In general.* If the commission determines that the property is not an historic resource, the commission shall approve the demolition permit. If the commission determines that the property is an historic resource, the commission shall deny the demolition permit and direct the planning director to prepare or cause to be prepared a designation study of the property, as provided in section 599.230, or shall approve the demolition permit as provided in this section.

(b) *Destruction of historic resource.* Before approving the demolition of a property determined to be an historic resource, the commission shall make findings that the demolition is necessary to correct an unsafe or dangerous condition on the property, or that there are no reasonable alternatives to the demolition. In determining whether reasonable alternatives exist, the commission shall consider, but not be limited to, the significance of the property, the integrity of the property and the economic value or usefulness of the existing structure, including its current use, costs of renovation and feasible alternative uses. The commission may delay a final decision for up to one hundred-eighty (180) days to allow parties interested in preserving the historic resource a reasonable opportunity to act to protect it.

(c) *Mitigation plan.* The commission may require a mitigation plan as a condition of any approval for demolition of an historic resource. Such plan may include the documentation of the property by measured drawings, photographic recording, historical research or other means appropriate to the significance of the property. Such plan also may include the salvage and preservation of specified building materials, architectural details, ornaments, fixtures and similar items for use in restoration elsewhere.

(d) *Demolition Delay.* The commission may stay the release of the building, wrecking or demolition permit for up to one hundred-eighty (180) days as a condition of approval for a demolition of an historic resource if the resource has been found to contribute to a potential historic district to allow parties interested in preserving the historic resource a reasonable opportunity to act to protect it. The release of the permit may be allowed for emergency exception as required in section 599.50(b).

G. FINDINGS

1. The property has not been designated and does not appear to meet any of the designation criteria listed in section 599.210, thus the subject property does not appear to be eligible for individual designation as a local landmark.
2. The demolition is not necessary to correct an unsafe or dangerous condition on the property.
3. Reasonable alternatives to demolition exist.
4. The building retains integrity.

5. The Applicant has not demonstrated that the building in question has no economic value or usefulness.
6. The commission may delay a final decision for up to 180 days to allow parties interested in preserving the historic resource a reasonable opportunity to act to protect it.

H. STAFF RECOMMENDATION

CPED recommends that the Heritage Preservation Commission **adopt** staff findings and **approve** the demolition application of the property at 2841 East Lake of the Isles Parkway.

ATTACHMENTS

- A. Materials submitted by CPED staff – A1-A2
 - a. Location map – A1
 - b. 350' map – A2
- B. Materials Submitted by Applicant – B1-B78
 - a. Letter to councilmember and neighborhood group – B1-B9
 - b. Application form – B10-B11
 - c. Applicant's analysis of property – B12-B37
 - d. Photos of subject property – B38-B62
 - e. Project plans – B63-B68
 - f. Structural analysis – B69-B73
 - g. Demolition and new construction estimate – B74
 - h. Rehabilitation estimate – B75-B77
 - i. Wrecking contractor letter – B78
- C. Materials Submitted by Other Parties – C1-C2
 - a. Councilmember letter – C1
 - b. Neighborhood group letter – C2