

**CITY OF MINNEAPOLIS
CPED PLANNING DIVISION
HERITAGE PRESERVATION COMMISSION STAFF REPORT
BZH #25905**

FILE NAME: 2115 Stevens Ave S
CATEGORY/DISTRICT: Washburn-Fair Oaks Historic District
CLASSIFICATION: Certificate of Appropriateness
APPLICANT: Sheila Lind, American Association of University Women, 612-870-1661
DATE OF APPLICATION: June 5, 2009
PUBLICATION DATE: June 30, 2009
DATE OF HEARING: July 7, 2009
APPEAL PERIOD EXPIRATION: July 17, 2009
STAFF INVESTIGATION AND REPORT: John Smoley, Ph.D., (612) 673-2830
REQUEST: Construct an elevator addition

A. SITE DESCRIPTION AND BACKGROUND:

The Edward C. Gale Mansion (2115 Stevens Avenue) is a contributing resource in the Washburn-Fair Oaks Mansion (National Register) Historic District & Washburn-Fair Oaks (Minneapolis) Historic District. Located at the northeastern corner of Stevens Avenue and 22nd Street E, the building is a two-story Bedford limestone building designed in the Italian Renaissance Revival style. Originally used as a residence, the building now houses a non-profit organization: the American Association of University Women.

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 Gale Mansion is a contributing property in this district as an excellent example of Italian Renaissance Revival architecture in a very large residence, and due to its associations with prominent Minneapolitans Edward Gale, Sarah Pillsbury, and Ernest Kennedy.

B. PROPOSED CHANGES:

The property owner has applied for a Certificate of Appropriateness to construct an elevator addition on the northern side of the building (see pages B11 and B12). The addition will be placed atop and within a 1962 addition that does not contribute to the building's significance.

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 Gale Mansion is a contributing property in this district as an excellent example of Italian Renaissance Revival architecture in a very large residence.

The exterior portions of the residence at 2115 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 an elevator addition. This addition will primarily alter and be encased by a 1962 addition to the building which does not communicate its historical significance. Alterations to the main building itself are complementary yet do not communicate a false sense of history. 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 construct an addition to make the building accessible to persons of all abilities. This addition will primarily alter and be encased by a 1962 addition to the building which does not communicate its historical significance.

Alterations to the main building itself are complementary yet do not communicate a false sense of history. The addition will be placed on the side of the building and be partially screened from exterior view along a one way street where drivers would have to turn around to see the addition. The project will not impair the contributing resource'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 clad the addition in cast stone in a color similar to the existing Bedford limestone on the building. Proposed rectangular wood-clad windows arranged in a 2/2 pattern will complement, while appearing distinct from, the existing wood-framed windows on the building. The project will not impair the contributing resource's integrity of materials.

Workmanship: The Applicant proposes changes to the contributing resource's workmanship in a very limited space above a 1962 addition to the building. Original materials such as wood French doors, wood windows, and iron balustrades will be salvaged and returned to the building owner for possible use in the future. The existing cornice displaced by the elevator will be moved and reused on the proposed addition. The project will not impair the contributing resource's integrity of workmanship.

Feeling: The Applicant proposes to construct an addition to make the building accessible to persons of all abilities. This addition will primarily alter and be encased by a 1962 addition to the building which does not communicate its historical significance. Alterations to the main building itself are complementary yet do not communicate a false sense of history. The addition will be placed on the side of the building and be partially screened from exterior view along a one way street where drivers would have to turn around to see the addition. The project will not impair the property's integrity of feeling.

Association: The Applicant proposes no changes that would break the residence's association with Edward Gale, Sarah Pillsbury, Ernest Kennedy, or 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. The guidelines require:

1. The height, width, and depth of additions take into consideration the directionality of adjacent and nearby structures;
2. The scale of additions be consistent with the existing pattern in the neighborhood;
3. New materials be compatible with the existing;

4. The use of real stone or alternate materials that would provide a harmonious appearance, especially in terms of color;
5. The avoidance of fake brick or stone, asphalt or asbestos siding;
6. The use of replacement windows that are wood, a suitable colored or anodized metal, or other materials that blend with and not detract from the building;
7. The use of paint on aluminum windows;
8. The retention of open porches;
9. The retention of architectural details such as columns, moldings, cornice projects on open and closed porches and porticoes; and
10. The retention or appropriate replacement of fenestration, doorway openings, and ornamentation.

The Applicant proposes to construct an addition to make the building accessible to persons of all abilities. This addition will primarily alter and be encased by a 1962 addition to the building which does not communicate its historical significance. Alterations to the main building itself are complementary yet do not communicate a false sense of history. The addition will be placed on the side of the building within an existing projection and be partially screened from exterior view along a one way street where drivers would have to turn around to see the addition. The addition will not project out or above the existing opening. The Applicant proposes to clad the addition in cast stone in a color similar to the existing Bedford limestone on the building. These alternate materials will provide a harmonious appearance, especially in terms of color. Proposed rectangular wood-clad windows (clad with extruded aluminum painted gray) arranged in a 2/2 pattern will complement, while appearing distinct from, the existing wood-framed windows on the building. Original materials such as wood French doors, wood windows, and iron balustrades will be salvaged and returned to the building owner for possible use in the future. The existing cornice displaced by the elevator will be moved and reused on the proposed addition. 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 Applicant is conducting a rehabilitation of the subject property.

The Applicant proposes to construct an elevator addition within and on top of a 1962 addition to the building.

The 1962 addition to the building does not communicate its historical significance. Original materials such as wood French doors, wood windows, and iron balustrades will be salvaged and returned to the building owner for possible use in the future. The existing cornice displaced by the elevator will be moved and reused on the proposed addition. The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation ("New Additions to Historic Buildings") recommend constructing a new addition so that there is the least possible loss of historic materials and so that character-defining features are not obscured, damaged, or destroyed.

The addition will be placed on the side of the building within an existing projection and be partially screened from exterior view along a one way street where drivers would have to turn around to see the addition. The addition will not project out or above the existing opening. The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation ("New Additions to Historic Buildings") recommend locating the attached exterior addition at the rear or on an inconspicuous side of a historic building; and limiting its size and scale in relationship to the historic building. Additionally, they recommend placing new additions on non-character-defining elevations and limiting the size and scale in relationship to the historic building.

The Applicant proposes to clad the addition in cast stone in a color similar to the existing Bedford limestone on the building. These alternate materials will provide a harmonious appearance, especially in terms of color. Proposed rectangular wood-clad windows (clad with extruded aluminum painted gray) arranged in a 2/2 pattern will complement, while appearing distinct from, the existing wood-framed windows on the building. The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation ("New Additions to Historic Buildings") recommend designing new additions in a manner that makes clear what is historic and what is new.

(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." Action item 8.1.2 of the City of Minneapolis' comprehensive plan states, "Require new construction in historic districts to be compatible with the historic fabric." As conditioned, the project complies with *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties*.

2115 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 exterior portion of this building, not its interior, communicates its historical significance. The applicant is requesting approval of an elevator addition. This addition will primarily alter and be encased by a 1962 addition to the building which does not communicate its historical significance. Alterations to the main building itself are

complementary yet do not communicate a false sense of history. The alterations are compatible with and support the exterior designation in which the property was designated.

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

The Applicant has made adequate consideration of Title 20 of the Minneapolis Code of Ordinances, Zoning Code, Chapter 530, Site Plan Review. The addition remains within the existing building footprint and does not project above the existing roofline.

(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*.

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 proposes to construct an addition to make the building accessible to persons of all abilities. This addition will primarily alter and be encased by a 1962 addition to the building which does not communicate its historical significance. Alterations to the main building itself are complementary yet do not communicate a false sense of history. The addition will be placed on the side of the building and be partially screened from exterior view along a one way street where drivers would have to turn around to see the addition. The project complies with *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties*. The proposal is sensitive to the historic portions of the property and district.

(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. Public assets that communicate a community's shared heritage need to be made accessible to persons of all abilities. The Applicant proposes to construct an accessible elevator addition. This addition will primarily alter and be encased by a 1962 addition to the building which does not communicate its historical significance. Alterations to the main building itself are complementary yet do not communicate a false sense of history. The addition will be placed on

the side of the building and be partially screened from exterior view along a one way street where drivers would have to turn around to see the addition, though street directions can change and pedestrians will be able to see the addition. The project complies with *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties*. The proposal is in keeping with the spirit and intent of the Heritage Preservation Regulations and will not negatively alter the essential character of the historic district.

(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 proposes to construct an addition to make the building accessible to persons of all abilities. This addition will primarily alter and be encased by a 1962 addition to the building which does not communicate its historical significance. Alterations to the main building itself are complementary yet do not communicate a false sense of history. The addition will be placed on the side of the building and be partially screened from exterior view along a one way street where drivers would have to turn around to see the addition. The project complies with *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties*. No off-site work will occur. Regardless of what changes are made to the subject property, the district 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 above), 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. CPED-Planning Preservation Staff shall review and approve the final plans and elevations prior to building permit issuance.

Attachments

- A. Vicinity Maps (prepared by Staff)
- B. Application (submitted by Applicant)
- C. Plans (submitted by Applicant)
- D. Letter to Councilmember and Neighborhood Group (submitted by Applicant)
- E. Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties (Rehabilitation Standards, included by Staff)