

**Community Planning & Economic Development
Planning Division**

350 South 5th Street, Room 210
Minneapolis, MN 55415-1385



City of Minneapolis
*Department of Community Planning
& Economic Development - CPED*

MEMORANDUM

TO: Heritage Preservation Commission
FROM: Aaron Hanauer, Senior Planner (612) 673-2494
DATE: October 14, 2008
RE: Minneapolis College of Art and Design (MCAD) Campus Master Plan and Phase 1A:
Washburn-Fair Oaks Historic District

Executive Summary

The Minneapolis College of Art and Design (MCAD) is located in the south end of the Washburn Fair-Oaks Historic District. MCAD has submitted a Master Plan that outlines their vision for the next 100 years. The overall plan proposes to construct additional buildings on the western edge of the campus and expand further south to 26th Street East. This plan also shows the elimination of five contributing structures to the Washburn Fair-Oaks Historic District.

MCAD has requested to have as an informational item on the Heritage Preservation Commission agenda a discussion about Phase 1A of their proposed expansion in order to receive feedback. The CPED-Preservation and Design team believes it is also important to discuss the overall campus plan as part of the first phase. Phase 1A of the expansion includes the construction of a 200-car underground parking ramp, surface parking lot, and vacation of 2nd Avenue South; there is no proposed demolition or moving of contributing structures as part of this phase. Included in this memorandum are the following parts: background of the Washburn-Fair Oaks District, description of the campus master plan and Phase 1A, analysis of the campus master plan and Phase 1A, and a list of recommendations for the Heritage Preservation Commission to consider providing MCAD.

Washburn Fair Oaks Historic District

The Washburn Fair-Oaks Historic District is an approximately 18-block area that was locally designated in 1976. The district is bounded by Franklin Avenue on the north, Fourth Avenue and I-35W on the east, 26th Street on the south, and the alley between Nicollet and First Avenue on the west, including the northeasterly corner of 24th Street and Nicollet Avenue (see Appendix A for map). The district's period of significance is from 1858 to circa 1939. The Washburn Fair-Oaks District is significant for its concentration of residences built in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. These structures range from some of the city's most prestigious residential structures to modest framed houses, as well as constructed multifamily buildings. The architectural styles include small vernacular cottages, Queen Anne residences, American foursquares, brick rowhouses, apartment buildings, and stone mansions. The collection of

these structures adds to the visual cohesion of the area and describes the development period of the area at that time.

In addition to the residential structures, the arts are an important element of the district. The original Minneapolis Institute of Arts (MIA) building built in 1913, and the Julia Morrison Building built in 1916 for the Minneapolis School of Fine Arts (now MCAD) are built within the period of significance. The district also contains a number of infill development projects from the 1950's through the 1970's. This includes modern apartment buildings and MCAD's Kenzo Tange building which was completed in 1974 (see Appendix C2 for aerial image).

Washburn Fair Oaks: Blocks 12 and 13

The southern portion of Blocks 12 and 13 is the site of MCAD's proposed expansion (see Appendix D for map). This southern section of the block is predominately residential structures and green space that remains from residential structures that have been torn down (see Appendix B for Sanborn map and C for aerials). There are five remaining residential structures that are contributing to the Washburn Fair-Oaks Historic District within the area of MCAD's proposed expansion (see Appendix E for structure images). These structures are the following:

- 200-204 East 26th Street (Built in 1895: brick and stucco 4-unit building)
- 206-210 East 26th Street (Built in 1895: brick and stucco 4-unit building)
- 2538 2nd Avenue South (Built circa 1887: vernacular single-family residence)
- 2541 Stevens Avenue South (city records indicate built prior to 1900: vernacular single-family residence)
- 2543 Stevens Avenue South (Built circa 1887: narrow, Queen Anne)

MCAD owns all the contributing properties on Blocks 12 and 13 with the exception of 2541 Stevens Avenue South.

2nd Avenue South bisects Block 12 and 13, but dead ends near mid block. The street's main use is to serve as an access point to the campus. The street has not extended past 25th Street for over 100 years and it has been at its current configuration since the 1970's. The boulevard of 2nd Avenue South contains mature trees that frame the street and help contribute to the district (see Appendix E6).

MCAD Expansion Plan (100 Year Plan)

The MCAD Master Plan provides the vision for the campus for the next 100 years. The plan is divided into five parts. The overall plan proposes to construct additional buildings on the western edge of the campus and expand further south to 26th Street East. The 100-year plan includes the construction of 11 buildings (classroom and residential), an underground parking facility, and a surface parking lot. This plan also shows the elimination of five contributing structures to the Washburn Fair-Oaks Historic District.

Phase I Details

The primary goals of Phase I are to construct additional off-street parking and the first classroom expansion. Phase 1 does not entail altering, tearing down, moving, or rehabilitating any of the existing structures. MCAD has stated they need additional parking for two reasons: First, the Minneapolis Institute of Arts has decided to terminate the shared parking agreement between MIA and MCAD for the 3rd Avenue South parking ramp. The second reason is to accommodate the increased off-street parking needs of the campus expansion later phases.

MCAD has divided Phase 1 into two parts; 1A and 1B. Phase 1A includes the construction of a 200-car underground parking ramp located to the north of the four plexes at 200-210 26th Street East (see Appendix F for site plan and MCAD packet for details). This parking ramp is proposed to contain two-floors of underground parking and one floor of parking at grade. The exposed materials of the proposed parking ramp are not shown in current plans. MCAD states that the ramp will be designed for expansion or the possibility of having a green-roof. A surface parking lot is also proposed as part of Phase 1A. This would be located on the west side of 2nd Avenue and accommodate approximately 47 vehicles. It is MCAD's goal to complete this portion of the project within a year and a half. As part of this project, 2nd Avenue South would be vacated to allow access to the parking ramp and parking lot from 26th Street East.

Phase 1B includes the construction of an addition to the Tange Building and possible greening of the underground parking ramp (see MCAD's packet for details). It is estimated that this portion of the project would be completed within five to six years.

Staff Analysis: 100-Year Plan Impact:

The MCAD expansion has the potential to provide infill development, expand the arts community located in the Washburn Fair-Oaks Historic District, while respecting the historic district. The proposed 100-Year plan, however, would substantially alter the southern portions of Blocks 12 and 13 of the Washburn Fair Oaks Historic Districts by eliminating the five contributing structures in the district. Blocks 12 and 13 of the Washburn Fair Oaks Historic District contain modest sized houses and multifamily housing units that are of the same scale and massing as other structures built in the district. In addition, open space, green space, and trees that are an important element of the district would be reduced or eliminated.

Staff Analysis: Phase I Construction

The Washburn-Fair Oaks Historic District guidelines have limited guidance for infill construction, however, the guidelines do state that proposed new buildings [and new construction] shall not “materially impair the architectural or historic value of buildings on adjacent sites or in the immediate vicinity within the preservation district (see Appendix H for district guidelines).”

The proposed parking ramp and parking lot are also not in compliance with the following Secretary of Interior Standards for Rehabilitation: Building Site (see Appendix I for all Secretary of Interior guidelines for Building Site):

1. 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.
2. 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.
3. Designing new onsite parking, loading docks, or ramps when required by the new use so that they are as unobtrusive as possible and assure the preservation of character-defining features of the site.

The proposed parking ramp with exposed parking on the top floor would take away from the district and the relationship that exists between historic residential structures, historic art buildings, and open/green space. Even though the proposed parking ramp contains two floors of underground parking, the third floor of exposed parking would function similarly, from an aesthetic point of view, as a surface parking lot.

Currently, the district has three surface parking lots and one parking ramp near the proposed parking ramp and lot; they are owned by the MIA (see Appendix C3 for aerial). The combination of these parking facilities provide off-street parking for 392 vehicles (see Table 1). The addition of the proposed two additional parking facilities would provide parking for a total of 639 vehicles within a five block area (496 parking spaces at grade level). The addition of the proposed at-grade parking would substantially detract from the district.

Table 1: MIA Off-Street Parking

Parking Structure	Off-Street Parking Spaces
1. 3 rd Avenue Parking Ramp	140
2. 3 rd Avenue/25 th Street parking lot	101
3. 3 rd Avenue/24 th Street parking lot (west)	74
4. 3 rd Avenue/24 th Street parking lot (east)	77
Total	392

Additional off-street parking may be needed for a campus expansion; however, the current design fails to respect the character of the historic district structures, green space, and trees. If an additional parking facility is built, an underground parking facility incorporating a green roof in initial design would be keeping with the character of the area. A good example of an underground parking facility with a green roof is the Fair Oaks Apartments, built in 1939, located just east of the MCAD and MIA campuses (see Appendix C3 for aerial and D2 for building information).

The vacation of 2nd Avenue South in of itself would not substantially alter the district in a negative manner. 2nd Avenue South, between 25th Street East and 26th Street East, has been a dead-end street for

over 100 years, and it has been at its current length since the 1970's. However, staff does have concerns about the impact the proposed parking ramp and parking lot design/construction would have on the mature trees that line 2nd Avenue South and the near complete elimination of the street grid (see Appendix E6 for image).

Phase I Impact to Contributing Structures (200-210 East 26th Street)

In addition to the concern of additional surface parking facilities, staff is also concerned about the impact construction of an underground facility would have on the four plexes located at 200-204 East 26th Street and 206-210 East 26th Street (see Appendix E2 and E5 for images). MCAD has provided, at staff's request, a structural assessment of the multifamily buildings (see MCAD packet for details). The structural analysis provides an assessment of the building's limestone foundation. The report states that substantial settlement has taken place which makes the building uneven. The structural assessment provides three options for the leveling of the floors, but states this will be a costly procedure (no dollar figure was provided).

Staff in earlier meetings has encouraged MCAD to make necessary repairs to restore these buildings and maintain the structures as part of their master plan. Staff believes that not making the proper repairs to ensure the longevity of the buildings would go against the following Secretary of Interior Standards for Building Site:

1. Evaluating the overall condition of materials to determine whether more than protection and maintenance are required, that is, if repairs to building and site features will be necessary.
2. Repairing features of buildings and the site by reinforcing the historic materials. Repair will also generally include replacement in kind - with a compatible substitute material - of those extensively deteriorated or missing parts of features where there are surviving prototypes such as fencing and paving.

Previous HPC Actions

On March 12, 2002, MCAD proposed tearing down the house at 2535 2nd Avenue South for a surface parking lot (see Appendix G for staff report and image). The Heritage Preservation Commission denied this request (7 to 5 vote). MCAD appealed this decision to the Zoning and Planning Committee, and they granted the appeal to allow for the demolition. The house was torn down, but a surface parking lot was not constructed.

Staff Recommendation:

Staff encourages the HPC to recommend to MCAD the following direction/principles for the overall Master Plan and Phase 1A:

1. MCAD negotiate with the Minneapolis Arts Institute additional shared parking possibilities with the parking ramp or other existing off-street parking.
2. Any additional off-street parking that is part of MCAD's master plan or Phase 1A shall be an underground parking ramp with a green roof
3. Any additional off-street parking that is part of MCAD's master plan or Phase 1A shall not compromise the historic buildings of the Washburn Fair-Oaks Historic District.

4. MCAD submit a revised master plan that maintains to keep within the Washburn Fair Oaks District the following properties: 200-204 East 26th Street, 206-210 East 26th Street, 2538 2nd Avenue South, 2541 Stevens Avenue South, 2543 Stevens Avenue South
5. MCAD provides a preservation and restoration plan for the following properties as part of Phase IA: 200-204 East 26th Street, 206-210 East 26th Street, 2538 2nd Avenue South, 2541 Stevens Avenue South, 2543 Stevens Avenue South which show their plans to retain the structures.
6. MCAD submits a revised plan that maintains as many existing mature trees along 2nd Avenue South as possible.

Attachments

MCAD Application

|Appendix A: Washburn-Fair Oaks Historic District Map

Appendix B: Sanborn Maps

Appendix C: Aerials

Appendix D: Washburn-Fair Oaks: A Study for Preservation Information

Appendix E: Staff Images

Appendix F: MCAD Phase I Site Plan

Appendix G: 2535 2nd Avenue South Staff report and image

Appendix H: Washburn-Fair Oaks Historic District Guidelines

Appendix I: Secretary of Interior Guidelines