

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

FILE NAME: 2538 2nd Avenue South (BZH 25898)

CATEGORY/DISTRICT: Contributing Building to the Washburn-Fair Oaks Historic District.

APPLICATION: Certificate of Appropriateness

APPLICANT: Meyer Scherer and Rockcastle (Jeffrey Mandyck) on behalf of Minneapolis College of Art and Design

COMPLETE APPLICATION: June 10, 2009

PUBLICATION DATE: June 30, 2009

DATE OF HEARING: July 7, 2009

APPEAL PERIOD EXPIRATION : July 17, 2009

STAFF INVESTIGATION AND REPORT: Aaron Hanauer (612) 673-2494

REQUEST: Certificate of Appropriateness to allow for the moving/demolition of the house at 2538 2nd Avenue South

SITE DESCRIPTION

District/Area Information	
Historic District	Washburn-Fair Oaks Historic District
Period of Significance	1858-circa 1939
Neighborhood	Whittier
Historic Property Information	
Address	2538 2 nd Avenue South
Construction Date	Prior to 1895
Original Contractor	Unknown
Original Architect	Unknown
Historical Use	Residential
Current Use	Residential

District

The Washburn Fair-Oaks Historic District is an approximately 18-block area that was locally designated in 1976 (see Attachment B3). Washburn-Fair Oaks Park is centrally located and provides a nucleus for the district. 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. The district's period of significance is from 1858 to circa 1939.

The Washburn-Fair Oaks Historic 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 district contains prominent art buildings and infill development. In 1915, the original Minneapolis Institute of Arts (MIA) Building, designed by McKim, Mead, and White, was completed. In 1916, the Julia Morrison Building, which was an addition to the Minneapolis Institute of Arts and new home to the Minneapolis School of Fine Arts was constructed (see Attachment A3). The district also contains MCAD's 1974 college building designed by world renowned architect Kenzo Tange, modern apartment buildings, and surface parking lots (see Attachment A3 and A4).

Besides Washburn-Fair Oaks Park, open space amenities include the tree-lined boulevards which provide a pleasant foil to the area's structures (Washburn-Fair Oaks: A Study for Preservation).

Washburn Fair Oaks: Blocks 11-13:

Today, Blocks 11-13 of the Washburn-Fair Oaks Historic District primarily consist of the MIA, Children's Theater Company (CTC), MCAD, and residential structures (see Attachment B3.1 and B8).

The 1913 Minneapolis Institute of Arts Building, which was designed by McKim, Mead, and White, and the 1916 Julia Morrison Building are located on Block 11. They were positioned and designed in a way that an axial relationship is formed with 2nd Avenue South (see Attachment B11).

From 1916, when the Julia Morrison Building was constructed, to the early 1970's, Blocks 11-13 went primarily unchanged (see Attachment B3.2). In 1974, a \$26 million dollar expansion took place which added to the arts complex the Children's Theatre Company auditorium, an expansion to the MIA, a new arts building, a bus parking lot, and the 3rd Avenue parking ramp (see Attachment B19). This area was dubbed the Minneapolis Society of Fine Arts Park. For this expansion, approximately 32 houses were demolished, however, plans that would have demolished an additional 24 houses for a surface parking lot were denied by the City Council in 1975 (see Attachment B20).

The 1974 MIA expansion and the new arts school building were designed by world renowned architect, Kenzo Tange (see Attachment B13-B18). Mr. Tange designed only one other building in the United States (The American Medical Association in Chicago, Illinois). Although the Tange Art School Building is not designated, it is a City of Minneapolis historic landmark.

The Tange Building located on the western side of 2nd Avenue South was built in a manner to respect the urban fabric that existed in the neighborhood. MCAD and the Minneapolis Society of Fine Arts in 1974 stated that one of the key reasons that Kenzo Tange was selected as the architect of the expansion was the, "Mutual concern for the interrelationship of buildings and their functions with the total fabric of an urban environment (see Attachment D1)."

Mr. Tange provides additional details on his design philosophy:

"The city must serve as a place to live, a place to work, a place to play, and a place for traffic involved in these three activities. In all probability, the most important factor in making a city an organic entity is its core. However, equally important is a comprehensive method of linking all the various functions that comprise the whole city. The house, the street, the institution, the neighborhood, the district—these various levels of the community are the elements of which the city is comprised. Each element must have a certain degree of unity and perfection, and at the same time each must open onto a higher level and help create a system for a larger entity. We must consider the problem of preserving identity at each level, and at the same time we must find some way of making the meaning and value of each element comprehensible within the total system (see Attachment D2)."

In addition to respecting the residential fabric of the Washburn-Fair Oaks District, it is apparent that Tange's Art Building orientation and location respected the axial relationship the 1913 and 1916 arts buildings have with 2nd Avenue South (see Attachment 8.5 and 8.6).

Until 1987, the MIA, MCAD, and the CTC were collectively known as the Minneapolis Society of Fine Arts and overseen by one board of trustees). In 1987, a reorganization took place that separated the entities.

The southern portion of Blocks 12 and 13 have and continue to be primarily residential (see Attachment A9). Currently there are nine structures south of the Kenzo Tange art school building on Blocks 12 and 13, eight are residential structures and six are contributing to the Washburn-Fair Oaks Historic District (see Appendix B3.1 and B7). The southern portion of Blocks 12 and 13 did have a greater concentration of contributing structures to the Washburn-Fair Oaks Historic District (see Attachment B3.1 and B6.1). However since 1988, MCAD has demolished five structures without providing infill development in their places (see Appendix B36 and B8).

- 2544 2nd Avenue South (1988)
- 2546 2nd Avenue South (circa 1988)
- 128 East 26th Street (circa 1989)
- 122 East 26th Street (1995)
- 2535 2nd Avenue South (2002)

2538 2nd Avenue South

The subject property, 2538 2nd Avenue South, is a vernacular style two-story residential structure located just to the south of the 1974 Kenzo Tange Arts Building (see Attachment B3.3 and B3.4). It is currently a duplex, but it was likely originally built as a single-family residence. The structure has been at this site since 1894 (Note: the previous staff report stated that this property was moved to this site in 1894, however, after re-reviewing the building index card this is inconclusive). The property appears to have had few alterations in the 115 years. The subject property compared to the other modest structures within the Washburn-Fair Oaks District is in better condition and has had fewer alterations.

The subject building contains a normal-pitched, front gabled roof. The roof contains a slight eave overhangs and the chimney was built within the roof's ridge. The exterior walls contain wood clapboard siding. The fenestration on the front and side elevations is asymmetrical. The window openings appear to be original and windows may also be original. The original porch, which spanned the front elevation, was removed and a covered entry with pilasters and pediment was built in its place (see Appendix A49 and A50 for more details on house history submitted by applicant).

The garage is also a contributing structure to the Washburn-Fair Oaks Historic District. It was built in 1932 which is within the period of significance.

BACKGROUND

At the February 10, 2009 Heritage Preservation Commission meeting, the HPC denied a Certificate of Appropriateness to allow for the demolition of 2538 2nd Avenue South (BZH 25748). At this meeting, the Commission also denied a Certificate of Appropriateness to allow for the construction of a new surface parking lot (BZH 25747). The applicant appealed both decisions to the Zoning and Planning Committee of the City Council but withdrew the applications prior to the public hearing.

PROPOSED WORK

The applicant has revised their plans since the February 10, 2009 HPC meeting (see Appendix A). The applicant has now proposed to relocate the house at 2538 2nd Avenue South to 3245 Nicollet Avenue South and demolish the subject property garage. In addition, the applicant proposes to construct a 107-space surface parking lot, Gateway Garden, and Gateway sign on the lots of 2527-2546 2nd Avenue South and 2531 Stevens Avenue South (see BZH 25899 and 25932 for details for the proposed new construction).

CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS: DEMOLITION OF CONTRIBUTING STRUCTURE

The City Council on March 27, 2009 approved the amendments to the Heritage Preservation regulations that define demolition as:

The act of moving or razing a building including the removal or enclosure of sixty (60) percent or more of the structure (599.110).

Provision 599.350 (b) of the Heritage Preservation regulations describes the required findings to approve a demolition of a property within a historic district

Before approving a certificate of appropriateness that involves the destruction, in whole or in part, of any landmark, property in an historic district or nominated property under interim protection, the commission shall make findings that the destruction is necessary to correct an unsafe or dangerous condition on the property, or that there are no reasonable alternatives to the destruction. 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 a reasonable period of time to allow parties interested in preserving the property a reasonable opportunity to act to protect it.

The following is an assessment of the applicant's proposal per 599.350(b).

Unsafe or Dangerous Condition:

The demolition is not necessary to correct an unsafe or dangerous condition on the property. The applicant has not claimed that the subject property is in unsafe or dangerous condition. Instead the applicant states the reason for moving/demolition is that the property is functionally obsolete and diverts funds from MCAD's Art Education Mission (see Attachment A18).

Reasonable Alternatives to Demolition

The applicant states that no reasonable alternatives to the destruction of 2538 2nd Avenue exist because the property is functionally obsolete and not suitable for the College's use in its current configuration (see Attachment A18). MCAD has proposed to relocate the property to 3245 Nicollet Avenue South and build a surface parking lot that would accommodate 107 vehicles in its place (see Appendix A19-A21 and A51). The proposed relocation site is in a residential area, but located outside of the Washburn-Fair Oaks Historic District (see Appendix A79-A86).

The City of Minneapolis Zoning Code requires residential and nonresidential uses to provide off-street parking. The applicant's required off-street parking requirement is 98 spaces based on the 1963 zoning code and a 1999 conditional use permit.

At this time, the applicant shows they have 42 off-street parking spaces on campus (see Appendix A46). In addition to these 42 off-street parking spaces, MCAD has leased 140 parking spaces in the 3rd Avenue parking ramp. Therefore, they have had access to 182 off-street parking spaces. The applicant, however, has indicated that MIA is terminating MCAD's lease for parking in the MIA ramp. If MCAD is unable to continue the shared-parking agreement with the MIA they will be required to provide an additional 56 off-street parking spaces to be in compliance with the Minneapolis Zoning Code.

The applicant has proposed a 107-space surface parking lot to replace the house at 2538 2nd Avenue South (see Appendix A51) and predominately green space on the other lots. If constructed this would provide MCAD 149 off-street parking spaces.

There are at least three alternatives that exist that would allow for the Blue House at 2538 2nd Avenue South to continue to be retained and the campus to be in compliance with its parking requirement.

1. Continue a shared-parking agreement with the MIA. MCAD has leased 140 parking spaces in the 3rd Avenue parking ramp. The applicant, however, has indicated that MIA is terminating MCAD's lease for parking in the MIA ramp.
2. Design a parking lot that adds enough parking to meet the zoning code and retains the Blue House. MCAD currently shows that they have 42 off-street parking spaces on their campus. They are legally required to provide 98 spaces. Therefore, if a shared-parking agreement can not be reached with MIA, the applicant will likely only be required to provide an additional 56 off-street parking spaces rather than 107 off-street parking spaces proposed. CPED believes the applicant would be able to design a parking facility (structure or underground) or surface parking lot that comes close to meeting their off-street parking requirement, is sensitive to the Washburn-Fair Oaks Historic District, and allows them to construct the proposed Gateway Garden.

MCAD owns 2531 Stevens Avenue South and the properties between 2527-2546 2nd Avenue South. The combined square footage of these parcels is approximately 61,596 square feet (1.4 acres). Since October 2007, when MCAD made the City of Minneapolis aware of future plans, MCAD has shown numerous parking proposal plans that include structured parking, underground parking, and a surface parking lot which retains the Blue House (see Appendix B28-B33). Although, these plans may not be the completely sensitive to the historic district, they do show that alternatives to demolition exist.

3. Seek a historic variance to reduce some of the campus's off-street parking requirements.
Provision 599.490 outlays the purpose of a historic variance
Established to encourage the preservation and reuse of landmarks and properties in historic districts by providing the commission with authority to recommend departure from the literal requirements of any of the applicable zoning regulations.

Furthermore, there are at least two reasonable alternatives that exist outside of demolition and/or moving of 2538 2nd Avenue South to another address.

1. The two-unit, three-bedroom building could continue to serve as a residential structure. The subject property has provided housing for six students.
2. The subject property, which is Zoned OR3/Institutional Office Residential, could be converted to a nonresidential use such as studio space, commercial use, or office use. The following is a partial list of other uses that could occupy the subject property: coffee shop (limited 30 seats), bookstore, restaurant (limited to 30 seats), early childhood learning center, community center, development and achievement center, museum, office, and/or child care center.

Significance

The subject property, 2538 2nd Avenue South, is significant for at least four reasons.

1. It is a contributing structure to the Washburn-Fair Oaks Historic District. The property, which is a modest residential structure, is consistent with other late 19th century and early 20th century modest structures within the district in the property's scale, size, and massing. The subject property has had few alterations outside of the district's period of significance and retains its integrity.
2. It helps define the southern boundary of the Washburn-Fair Oaks District. The subject property along with seven contributing structures along 26th Street East serve as the southern boundary of the Washburn-Fair Oaks Historic District (see Appendix B3 and B6.1). Even though the property is not located directly on the southern border it helps provide residential context and improves the setting of the residential structures to the east and west of the property.
3. It helps define the original axial relationship of the 1913 MIA Building and the 1916 arts building with 2nd Avenue South (see Attachment 8.5). 2nd Avenue South is an important street for the Washburn-Fair Oaks Historic District and the iconic arts buildings. The subject property, which is the only property that addresses onto 2nd Avenue between 25th Street and 26th Street, helps strengthen this axial relationship and the purpose of 2nd Avenue South (see Attachment 8.5 and 8.6).
4. It provides context for the Kenzo Tange's 1974 Arts Building. The Tange Building is currently not designated; however, it is a City of Minneapolis historic landmark. The subject property is located directly to the south of the Tange Art Building. In 1974, MCAD stated or promoted the following about Mr. Tange taking into consideration the residential context of his art building:

“External urban design considerations such as the characteristics of the neighborhood greatly influenced Tange's concept for the complex (see Attachment D3).”

“At almost every turn in every building, a person can orient himself and his function to other people, other functions, other buildings and other parts of the neighborhood and the city (see Attachment D5).”

“The remarkable skill with which he has manipulated inside and outside spaces has enabled him to create a way, as he [Tange] puts it, to make the meaning and value of each element comprehensible within the total system, including the whole environment and that was a primary concern (Leonard Parker, associate architect to Mr. Tange see Attachment D5).”

Integrity

The structure is a contributing structure to the Washburn-Fair Oaks Historic District. The applicant's historic consultant, Charlene Roise, at the February 10, 2009 HPC meeting, stated that, “There have been some alterations, [but] I think it has fine integrity.” CPED staff agrees that the property retains its integrity. In an analysis of the eight aspects/qualities of integrity based on the National Register evaluation the only aspect of integrity that is unknown if the property still possesses is interior integrity.

Location: The property's integrity of location remains intact. The building permit records indicate that the subject property has been at this site since 1894. It is unsure if the building was built at this location prior to this date or moved to this location prior to this date. Even if the subject property was moved to its current location, the National Register would consider the property to retain its location integrity because it would have been moved in the district within the period of significance. The Washburn-Fair Oaks District's period of significance is from 1858 to approximately 1939.

Design: The property retains its design integrity. Few exterior alterations have been made to the subject property on the front and side elevations. The open front porch on the front elevation has been removed and replaced with a covered entrance. This, however, does not constitute a loss of integrity. An alteration to a front porch is one of the most common alterations and has continued the function of the subject property as a residential structure (Source: A Field Guide to American Houses, 1984, p 14).

Setting: As part of this proposal the applicant has made the case that the subject property does not retain its setting integrity. The applicant states that the, “Blue House is in an island in the middle of a college campus (see Appendix A22).” CPED disagrees with this assessment. Staff realizes that the property’s integrity of setting has been compromised with the removal of nearby contributing structures on 2nd Avenue and 26th Street East; however, the residential setting remains intact in that the subject property borders contributing structures along Stevens Avenue South and across the street from contributing structures at 200-210 East 26th Street (see Attachment B6.1 and B8).

In addition, the subject property helps support the axial relationship that exists with 2nd Avenue South and the historic art buildings: the 1913 MIA building and the 1916 Julia Morrison Building (see Appendix B5, B10, and B11).

Furthermore, CPED believes that if the Washburn-Fair Oaks Historic District southern boundary is analyzed in its entirety it shows that a cohesive group of residential and commercial structures retain their setting, and that the subject property plays an important role in retaining the southern boundary of the Washburn-Fair Oaks Historic District (see Attachment B3 and B6.1). Currently, seven of the twelve structures along East 26th Street are contributing structures to the district (see Attachment B6.1). Even though, the subject property is not along the southern boundary it is the structure closest to the southern boundary and links the eastern and western portion of the southern boundary.

Furthermore, it should be noted that it is MCAD that has lessened the residential integrity of Blocks 12 and 13 with the demolition of five contributing structures within the last 20 years without providing active-use infill development and/or expansion of the campus (see Appendix B8 and B36).

Materials: The building possess integrity of materials. The property appears to retains the original wood clapboard siding, chimney, window openings, and windows.

Workmanship: This building was built with few flourishes, but integrity of workmanship is still evident in the existing trim around a set of windows, the thin wood clapboard siding. In addition the massing and built form that are consistent with similar structures within the district.

Feeling: The building’s integrity of feeling remains. The subject property continues to serve its original function as a residential property at the border of a historic district. In addition, the subject property is a similar design, scale, size, and massing as the neighboring residential properties to the west along Stevens Avenue and the four-unit buildings to the southeast of the subject property. Even though the front elevation has been altered with the removal of an open front porch, the property’s expression of a particular period of time is evident.

Association: The property’s integrity of association remains. Even though neighboring residential properties have been razed the remaining neighboring properties provide enough evidence with the association of a residential area.

Interior Integrity: It is likely that the interior has been substantially altered with the likely conversion from a single-family dwelling to a duplex.

Economic Value or Usefulness of the Existing Structure

The applicant states that the property diverts funds from MCAD's Arts Education Mission and obstructs the historic development of the College (see Appendix A18). However, the applicant has not provided cost estimates for future renovation. From the exterior, it appears that MCAD has taken good care of the Blue House (see Appendix A49). MCAD listed the investments it has made in the property including window and floor updates (see Appendix A18).

CPED disagrees with the applicant's assessment that, "The Blue House obstructs the historic development of the College." At this time, MCAD is not proposing a building expansion in the location of the subject building; instead the applicant is proposing to construct a surface parking lot.

CPED believes the subject property possesses economic value and usefulness in the following ways:

1. **Residential Use:** This property is useful in that it provides and can continue to provide housing in close proximity of the school for six students/individuals. The subject building adds to creating a sustainable, vibrant, and safe campus in having living options near campus. The residential use at this location also supports the surrounding neighborhood businesses by providing patrons that live in the neighborhood.
2. **Nonresidential Use:** The property is useful in that if it does not provide a residential use, it could provide the opportunity to have additional commercial, office, and/or studio space in the neighborhood. The subject property is zoned OR3 which allows for numerous nonresidential uses such as studio, office, or commercial/retail space.
3. **Public Safety:** The subject property is useful in that it enhances the public safety by providing natural surveillance of portions of the campus and neighborhood. The subject property is in a location to provide natural surveillance or "Eyes on the Street" along 26th Street East and the interior portions along 2nd Avenue South (see Appendix B7 and B8). The natural surveillance is something that can not be replicated by the proposed surface parking lot even if it is built with crime prevention through environmental design principals in mind (CPTED). The subject building becomes additionally important in regards to public safety if the Gateway Garden as proposed in constructed since visual obstructions from the garden may not allow for clear natural surveillance from 26th Street East to areas of the surface parking lot (see Appendix A71-A78).
4. **Supports the Nicollet-Franklin Pedestrian Overlay District.** The Nicollet-Franklin Pedestrian Overlay District is located less than a block away from the subject property (see Appendix B3.3). Pedestrian overlay districts are established throughout the City of Minneapolis to "preserve and encourage the pedestrian character of commercial areas and to promote street life and activity by regulating building orientation and design and accessory parking facilities, and by prohibiting certain high impact and automobile-oriented uses." By allowing for the active use of the subject building to stay, it will help reinforce the nearby pedestrian overlay district's purpose of giving greater importance to pedestrians rather than vehicles.

PREVIOUS ACTIONS

Staff is unaware of the City of Minneapolis Heritage Preservation Commission approving a demolition of a contributing structure to a historic district or a city landmark for approval of a surface parking lot.

The following is a partial list of City Council and Heritage Preservation Commission decisions that have dealt with the demolition of contributing structures in the Washburn-Fair Oaks Historic District pertaining to the Minneapolis Society of Fine Arts and MCAD:

1. In 1974, a surface parking lot for the Minneapolis Society of Fine Arts was denied and the construction of the 3rd Avenue parking lot was required. The main reason the surface parking was denied was because it would have required the destruction of additional residential structures (see Attachment B20).
2. In 1988, the HPC approved the demolition of 2544 and 2546 2nd Avenue South with the condition that, “All external facades be documented including detail shots of significant features and streetscapes which show the buildings in context.” As part of the application, MCAD stated that the “College is in a transition/expansion period.” However, no plans for expansion have been implemented for these properties to this point.
3. On July 11, 1995, the HPC denied the demolition of 122 East 26th Street (see Appendix B36 for site plan and B49). MCAD appealed the HPC decision to the Zoning and Planning Committee meeting. At the Zoning and Planning Committee meeting, MCAD’s attorney, Bill Griffith, stated that MCAD plans to create a “heavily landscaped area” along East 26th Street that would provide “visual recognition of the college” coincidentally with the public streetscape project [of Nicollet Avenue (see Appendix B51-B56). The Nicollet Avenue streetscape project was completed in 1997; however, MCAD has not completed their entrance area with a heavily landscaped area. The applicant’s proposal for a Gateway Garden would likely honor the statements they made in 1995.
4. On March 12, 2002, MCAD proposed tearing down the house at 2535 2nd Avenue South for a surface parking lot. The Heritage Preservation Commission denied this request. MCAD appealed this decision to the Zoning and Planning Committee, and they were granted the appeal on April 23, 2002 to allow for the demolition. The house was torn down, but a surface parking lot was not constructed.
5. On February 10, 2009, MCAD proposed tearing down the house at 2538 2nd Avenue South and constructing a surface parking lot. The Heritage Preservation Commission denied these requests. The applicant appealed both decisions and withdrew the appeals prior to the scheduled Zoning and Planning Committee meeting.

APPLICABLE ORDINANCE AND POLICIES:

Ordinance

On January 9, 2009, The City of Minneapolis adopted a zoning code amendment that updated the city’s off-street parking standards and reduced the number of off-street parking required for most nonresidential uses (see Attachment B21 for press release). The revisions recognize the negative consequences associated with oversupplying parking. It has been shown that an overabundant supply of off-street parking has the following negative impacts:

1. Precludes a balanced transportation system of encouraging use of single-occupancy automobiles;
2. Sends excessive stormwater runoff into lakes, rivers, and streams;
3. Increases urban heat island effect;
4. Conflicts with the traditional urban character that the City’s policies seek to promote.

The 2009 revised off-street parking revisions also reduced the off-street parking requirement for nonresidential structures in historic districts (see provision 541.430 below). This reduced parking requirement was added in large part to prevent historic structures from being torn down for surface parking lots. Nationally, the most common reason for the demolition of historic structures was to create

a surface parking lots (Source: December 1993 American Planning Association Planning Advisory Service memo).

541.430. Landmarks and historic districts. The minimum off-street parking requirement for nonresidential uses located in designated landmarks or located in contributing structures in historic districts shall be seventy five (75) percent of the minimum requirement specified in Chapter 541, Off-Street Parking and Loading.

CPED has continued to support a shared-parking agreement between the MIA and MCAD. However, if this is not possible, CPED believes that the applicant can construct an off-street parking facility or a surface parking lot that is in compliance with the zoning code, does not significantly detract from the district, allows for the construction of the Gateway Garden (if approved), does not impede future development, and retains the subject property.

Comprehensive Plan Policies

The applicant highlights two comprehensive plan implementation steps for their proposed demolition/moving of 2538 2nd Avenue South (see Appendix A25):

1. 8.1.3: Encourage new developments to retain historic resources, including landscapes, incorporating them into new development rather than removal.
2. 8.7.4: Encourage relocation of historic resources as a last means of preservation for endangered properties.

CPED agrees with MCAD that the two highlighted implementation steps pertain to this Certificate of Appropriateness application for the demolition/moving of a contributing structure of a historic district. However, CPED disagrees with the assessment that the removal of 2538 2nd Avenue South from its current location is in compliance with the referenced implementation steps in the following ways:

1. In regards to the assessment being in line with 8.1.3. “Encourage new developments to retain historic resources, including landscapes, incorporating them into new development rather than removal.” The applicant is not proposing building expansion plans and does not have a definitive date on a building expansion for the MCAD campus. MCAD could continue to retain the subject building, construct the proposed Gateway Garden, and provide off-street parking that brings the campus in compliance with the zoning code.
2. In regards to the assessment being in line with 8.7.4. “Encourage relocation of historic resources as a last means of preservation for endangered properties.” The relocation of the subject building does not have to be a last means. There are alternatives to the demolition of the subject property such as constructing an underground parking facility or smaller surface parking lot.

CPED also believes that the following comprehensive plan policies and implementation steps are not consistent with the applicant’s proposal.

1. Policy 8.8: “Preserve neighborhood character by preserving the quality of the built environment.”

The applicant’s proposal of a 107-space surface parking lot does not add in a positive way to the Washburn-Fair Oaks Historic District nor the surrounding urban environment.

2. Policy 8.1 Preserve, maintain, and designate districts, landmarks, and historic resources which serve as reminders of the city's architecture, history, and culture. Implementation Step 8.1.1 of Policy 8.1 states “Require new construction in historic districts to be compatible with the historic fabric.”

The construction of the proposed surface parking lot that replaces a contributing structure to a historic district is not compatible with the historic fabric of the district nor neighborhood.

3. Policy 1.13 “Support high density development near transit stations in ways that encourage transit use and contribute to interesting and vibrant places. Implementation Step 1.13.3 of Policy 1.13 is: “Discourage uses that diminish the transit and pedestrian character of areas around transit stations, such as automobile services, surface parking lots, and drive-through facilities.”

The subject property is located one block outside of a pedestrian overlay district (see Appendix B33). In addition, the subject property and the MCAD campus is located two blocks from Nicollet Avenue. Nicollet Avenue provides some of the most frequent transit lines in the Twin Cities metropolitan area. Furthermore, there is additional bus service along 3rd Avenue from downtown.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

CPED notified property owners within 350 feet of the Demolition of Historic Resource application on January 27, 2009. As of February 2, 2009, the Whittier Alliance and one neighbor have submitted comments (see Attachments C).

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

CPED recommends that the Heritage Preservation Commission **adopt** staff findings and **deny** the demolition application of the property at 2538 2nd Avenue South.

APPENDIX

Appendix A: Application
Appendix B: CPED Information
Appendix C: Public Comments