Department of Community Planning and Economic Development
Planning Division

Certificate of Appropriateness
BZH-26072

Date: September 1, 2009

Proposal: Master Sign Plan

Applicant: Charlene Roise of Hess, Roise, and Company, on behalf of the Vik Uppal,

Address of Property: 27 4th Street North

Project Name: Master Sign Plan including amendments to previously approved Canopy Design

Contact Person and Phone: Charlene Roise, 612.338.1987

Planning Staff and Phone: Brian Schaffer, 612.673.2670

Date Application Deemed Complete: August 3, 2009

Publication Date: August 25, 2009

Public Hearing: September 1, 2009

Appeal Period Expiration: September 11, 2009

Ward: Ward 7

Neighborhood Organization: Downtown Minneapolis Neighborhood Association

Concurrent Review: None

Attachments:

Attachment A: Materials submitted by CPED staff – page 14
1. Map of NRHP Minneapolis Warehouse District
2. Map of North Loop Warehouse District

Attachment B: Materials submitted by Applicant – page 17
1. Application
2. Email sent to Council Member & Neighborhood Group
3. Applicant's statement
4. Master Sign Plan
5. Plans for First Avenue North Canopy
6. Plans for Fourth Avenue North Canopy

Fourth Street North at intersection of First Avenue North looking east: 1930 MNHS

27 North Fourth Street: 2009 by CPED

CLASSIFICATION:	
Local Historic District	North Loop Warehouse Historic District & Interim Protection for the National Register of Historic Places Minneapolis Warehouse Historic District
Period of Significance	1865-1930
Criteria of significance	Architecture and Commerce
Date of local designation	1978
Applicable Design Guidelines	North Loop Warehouse District Guidelines, Design Guidelines for On-Premise Signs and Awnings

PROPERTY INFORMATION	
Current name	Nate's Building
Historic Name	Resler Building
Current Address	27 4th Street North
Original Construction Date	1913 and 1920
Original Contractor	J. Leck & Co./Fleisher
Original Architect	J.E. Nason
Historic Use	Warehouse
Current Use	Mixed use - Commercial
Proposed Use	Mixed use - Commercial

BACKGROUND:

27th Street North, also addressed by 401 1st Avenue North, is commonly known for its most recent tenant, Nate's Clothing. This five story structure has been subject to two Certificates of Appropriateness applications with the HPC.

On July 15, 2008 the HPC approved a Certificate of Appropriateness application to allow for rehabilitation of the building with the following conditions:

1. The two story rooftop addition is not approved.
2. The applicant is encouraged to retain, or find an appropriate new location, for the existing vertical projecting neon Nate's Clothing sign.
3. All final elevations and site plans are subject to approval by CPED Preservation Planning staff.

On September, 16, 2008 the HPC approved a Certificate of Appropriateness application to allow a one story rooftop addition and the installation of canopies to the building with the following conditions:

1. The canopies should be attached to the building through mortar joints and not masonry.
2. All final elevations, site, canopy and awning plans are subject to approval by CPED – Planning.

The project is seeking federal historic tax credits. As a result, the National Park Service has been reviewing the plans, which requires that the project meet the Secretary of the Interior's Standard for the Treatment of Historic Properties.

SUMMARY OF APPLICANT'S PROPOSAL:

Master Sign Plan
The applicant is proposing a master sign plan for the subject building. The master sign plan covers the extent of the proposed or anticipated signage on the building and will be used by CPED staff and the building owner to address future signage decisions.

The proposed master sign plan allows for four total signs on the building, two per each principal entrance.

Along Fourth Street North the applicant states that they will allow for two signs.

Sign One: Once canopy sign will be allowed consisting of two sections:

1. LED-lit acrylic letters pushed through routed openings incorporated in the horizontal canopy structure paralleling Fourth Street, and
2. A section projecting above the canopy in that location, supported by low tubes. This section will measure no more than 17 square feet in area, with a maximum height of 31 inches and will be centered on the canopy.

If the second section is replaced, it may be replaced in kind (the type of sign and the same square footage or less, with a maximum height of 31 inches) or with a wall sign, projecting sign, banner, or awning sign. The wall sign, projecting sign, banner or awning sign will conform to the Design Guidelines.

Sign Two: Wall, projecting, banner or awning sign that will conform to the requirements of the Design Guidelines for On-premise Signs or Awnings.

Along First Avenue North the applicant is proposing to allow two signs:
Sign One and Sign Two: Wall, projecting, banner or awning sign that will conform to the requirements of the Design Guidelines for On-premise Signs or Awnings.

In addition to the tenant signage along First Avenue North the applicant will include auxiliary addressing signage within the previously approved canopy. This location and type of signage was approved in September 2008 by the HPC. This signage does not count toward the maximum number of signs on the building.

Implementation of the Master Sign Plan
In conjunction with proposing the Master Sign Plan the applicant is showing proposed signage that will implement the sign plan for one of the two tenants of the first floor of the building.

The tenant appears to be the marquee tenant and is a restaurant. The tenant proposes two awning signs: one at each corner facing the intersection of First Avenue North and Fourth Street North. The tenant also proposed using the canopy over the Fourth Street principal entrance for signage. Signage will be integrated into the canopy as approved in September 2008 by the HPC. In addition to this sign band an internally illuminated sign will be mounted to the top of the canopy. The sign will be 17 square feet in area and 31 inches height.

Compliance with Previous Approvals or Adopted Guidelines
Three aspects of the proposed signage are not consistent with previous approvals or the Design Guidelines for On-Premise Signs. The applicant is proposing to expand the height of the horizontal members of September 2008 HPC approved canopy along Fourth Street. The width of the horizontal member was approved at 10 inches with six inch tall sign copy. The applicant is now proposing a 16 inch tall horizontal member with eight inch tall sign copy. Aside from the width of the horizontal members the applicant states that no other portions of the previously approved canopy will be modified.

The proposed 17 square foot sign mounted on top of the canopy is considered a canopy sign and is not explicitly allowed in the Design Guidelines for On-premise Signs or Awnings and could not be approved administratively. This signage requires approval by the Heritage Preservation Commission.

The way the applicant has allowed for the replacement of the signage mounted on top of the canopy could allow for three signs on the Fourth Street facade: the signage integrated into the canopy, the signage mounted on top of the canopy or its replacement which could be a wall, projecting or other allowed signage, and a separate wall, projecting, awning or other allowed signage. The Design Guidelines for On-Premise Signs and Awnings allows for two signs per

principal entrance on a facade. In this case the subject building would be allowed two signs along Fourth Street North and the two signs along First Avenue North. The proposed master plan could allow for three signs along Fourth Avenue North.

PUBLIC COMMENT:
None has been received as of August 24, 2009.

CETIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS: Certificate of Appropriateness to allow a Master Sign Plan including amendments to previously approved Canopy Design.

Findings as required by the Minneapolis Preservation Code:

The Planning Division of the Minneapolis Community Planning and Economic Development Department has analyzed the application based on the findings required by the Minneapolis Preservation Ordinance. 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.

The North Loop Warehouse District and the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) Minneapolis Warehouse District is significant for warehousing industries that shaped the patterns of development in Minneapolis. The district is also significant for the architecture represented by the warehouse and supporting industries. 27 4th Street North is a contributing building to the district. The period of significance for the district is 1865-1930.

Various forms of signage appear to have been installed on the building during the period of significance including canopy, wall and projecting signage. In general signage is compatible with the significance of the building and the district. In 2008 the applicant provided the HPC with historic photos of a canopy along 4th Street North. The 2008 approved canopy was based on the historical photo documentation. The canopy shows signage integrated within the horizontal members of the canopy and on the fins above. The height of the canopy's horizontal members appear to end below the transom windows.

(2) The alteration is compatible with and supports the interior and/or exterior designation in which the property was designated.

The property is designated for its association with the wholesale warehousing industry and for its architecture. In general the proposed signage will not interfere with the exterior designation of the building. The height of the horizontal portion of the canopy is based on the width of the transom between the transom windows and the entryway doors. Increasing the height six inches will alter the way the canopy feature is integrated with the design of the building and may not be compatible with architecture of the building and its exterior designation.

(3) The alteration is compatible with and will ensure continued integrity of the landmark or historic district for which the district was designated.

In general signage as outlined in the proposed master sign plan is compatible with the district and will ensure its integrity by meeting the adopted Design Guidelines for On-Premise Signs and Awnings. The proposed signage is in keeping with the types of signs present on the building during its period of significance.

The installation of canopies, based on historic documentation, that are in scale and proportion with the buildings within the district will ensure the district's integrity by reconstructing features that were present during the period of significance. The increased horizontal member height of the Fourth Street canopy does not appear to be in keeping with the design of the original canopy or the approved reconstruction of the canopy. Changing only this portion of the canopy changes the proportions of the entire canopy.

(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 proposed Master Sign Plan calls for awning, wall, canopy and projecting signs. All but one of the types of signs complies with the Design Guidelines for On-Premise Signs and Awnings. The canopy signage does not conform to the guidelines. The guidelines state that a Certificate of Appropriateness is required for sign or awning proposals that do not conform to the design guidelines. In determining whether to approve a Certificate of Appropriateness for a sign or awning proposal, the HPC will consider special situations including building condition, building orientation, historic precedence and exceptional design proposals.

The sign copy integrated into the previously approved Fourth Street canopy was based on historical photographs showing signage for 'Malroy Hat & Cap Company' on the horizontal member of the canopy and the on vertical blade or fin that rose above the canopy. (See Applicant's Submittal- Attachment X). The proposed canopy signage is based on historical documentation and precedence.

The proposed master sign plan allows for a sign to be mounted on top of the Fourth Street canopy in addition to the signage integrated into the canopy. In their materials the applicant show that this will be a17 square foot internally illuminated sign for the major tenant in the building, a restaurant named 'OM'. The historical photographs indicate that signage was mounted on top of the canopy in the fins and was part of the signage integrated into the canopy. This proposed signage mounted on top of the canopy is in keeping with the location of signage found in the historic pictorial evidence. However, the illumination and size of this signage differs from the pictorial evidence. This is compatible modern interpretation of the historical signage.

The proposed master plan allows for the replacement of the signage mounted on top of the canopy with an in kind replacement or a wall, projecting, banner or awning sign. The replacement of any other signage other than canopy signage, which complements signage integrated into the canopy, would essentially allow for three signs on the Fourth Street facade. While the pictorial evidence suggests that there were various types of signs located on the building allowing for an additional sign is not in keeping with the design guidelines for on premise signs and awnings. Allowing for signage integrated into the canopy, a wall or projecting sign and another sign that could be an awning or projecting sign could clutter the narrow building and detract from the integrity of the design of the building.

(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 Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation do not specifically address signage, but do state the following:

> New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction will not destroy historic materials, features, and spatial relationships that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and will be compatible with the historic materials, features, size, scale and proportion, and massing to protect the integrity of the property and its environment.

The proposed signage in the master sign plan and shown in the applicant's plans to implement the master sign plan are compatible with the building and the district. Staff is concerned that increasing the height of the horizontal member of the Fourth Street canopy will interfere with the spatial relationship of the transom of the windows and will not be compatible with the proportion of the storefront windows and entrance.

The possibility of having three signs on the Fourth Street North facade if the canopy mounted sign was not replaced in kind is incompatible with the scale, size, proportions and features of the building due to its relatively narrow width and the previously approved canopy location.

(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.

The plan does not offer guidance that is applicable. The comprehensive plan: The Minneapolis Plan for Sustainable Growth offers the following guidance:

Implementation Step: 8.1.1 “Protect historic resources from modifications that are not sensitive to their historic significance.”

Implementation Step: 8.1.2 “Require new construction in historic districts to be compatible with the historic fabric.”

The implementation and analysis of these is best done through adopted local design guidelines and the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards and Guidelines.

The subject site is located with the plan area of the Downtown East – North Loop Master Plan.

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) Adequate consideration of the description and statement of significance in the original nomination upon which designation of the landmark or historic district was based.

The applicant states that “Signage and awnings were commonly used in the historic district.” Staff believes that the reconstructed canopy was designed in a way that showed adequate consideration of the architectural integrity of the structure. The proposed revision to the canopy alters the spatial relationships of the canopy and the building and does not indicate adequate consideration of the building’s design.

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

Chapter 530 of the Zoning Ordinance does not offer much guidance on signage. Section 541 of the Zoning Ordinance directly deals with signage. The zoning ordinance allows for projecting, wall, canopy, and awning signs. Wall, projecting, and canopy signs are allowed to be internally illuminated.

(10) 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.

The applicant states the following. “The ‘rehabilitation’ standard has been adopted for this project, for the most part, and the proposed signage and awnings are appropriate for the rehabilitation standard. The canopy conforms to the ‘reconstruction’ standard.”

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:

(11) 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.

In general signage as outlined in the proposed master sign plan is compatible with the district and will ensure its integrity by meeting the adopted Design Guidelines for On-Premise Signs and Awnings. The proposed signage is in keeping with the types of signs present on the building during its period of significance.

The installation of canopies, based on historic documentation, that are in scale and proportion with the buildings within the district will ensure the district's integrity by reconstructing features that were present during the period of significance. The increased horizontal member height of the Fourth Street canopy does not appear to be in keeping with the design of the original canopy or the previously approved reconstruction of the canopy. Changing only this portion of the canopy changes the proportions of the entire canopy.

(12) 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.

In general the master sign plan is in keeping with the adopted Design Guidelines for On Premise Signs and awnings. The plan allows for a canopy sign that is supported by historic pictorial evidence. The plan potentially allows for the sign mounted on top of the canopy to be replaced with another type of sign located on the building. This would not be in keeping with the pictorial evidence of the previous canopy and not in keeping with the spirit and intent of the Design Guidelines for On-Premise Signs and Awnings. Allowing for three signs on the subject building without thorough analysis of the need for signage or the impact of the additional signage would negatively alter the essential character of the historic district.

(13) 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.

Allowing for the potential of having three signs along the Fourth Street North façade of the building may set precedence for additional signage on other buildings. Over time this could be injurious the integrity of the district. The proposed master sign plan will not impede in the orderly preservation of the district.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

CPED-Planning staff recommends that the Heritage Preservation Commission **adopt** staff findings and **approve** Certificate of Appropriateness to allow a Master Sign Plan including amendments to previously approved canopy design with the following conditions:

1. The increased height of the horizontal members of the Fourth Street North canopy from ten to sixteen inches shall not be approved.
2. The master sign plan shall be revised to allow only the removal or in kind replacement of signage mounted on top of the canopy and not allow for the replacement of the canopy mounted signage with any other type of sign.
3. CPED-Planning review and approve final site plan, floor plans, and elevations including paint samples.