

Department of Community Planning and Economic Development
Planning Division

Certificate of Appropriateness
BZH-27075

Date: December 13, 2011

Applicant: Minnesota African American Museum & Cultural Center

Address of Property: 1700 3rd Avenue S

Project Name: Minnesota African American Museum & Cultural Center Elevator Addition

Contact Person and Phone: Nathan Johnson, 4RM+ULA Architects, 612-867-0953

Planning Staff and Phone: Chris Vrchota, 612-673-5467

Date Application Deemed Complete: November 15, 2011

Publication Date: December 6, 2011

Public Hearing: December 13, 2011

Appeal Period Expiration: December 23, 2011

Ward: 6

Neighborhood Organization: Stevens Square Community Organization

Concurrent Review: N/A

Attachments:

Attachment A: Materials submitted by CPED staff –

- 350' map (A-1)
- NRPHP Nomination Form (A-2 – A-6)
- Transcript from 11/30/11 Concept Review (A-7 – A-23)

Attachment B: Materials submitted by Applicant –

- Notification letter to Council Member and Neighborhood Organization (B-1)
- Application (B-2 – B-3)
- Project Narrative and findings (B-4 – B-16)
- Site plan, drawings and photos (B-17 – B-48)

Attachment C: Materials Submitted by Others

- E-mail from National Park Service on status of review (C-1)
- Letter from Steven's Square Community Organization, dated February 20, 2009 (Submitted by Applicant) (C-2)

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1700 3rd Avenue S, The Amos B. Coe House, Circa 1931
Source: Minnesota Historical Society

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1700 3rd Avenue S, The Amos B. Coe House, Present Day
Source: Applicant

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CLASSIFICATION:	
Individual Landmark	Amos B. Coe House
Period of Significance	1884- Circa 1910
Criteria of significance	Architecture
Date of local designation	1983
Date of National Register Designation	1984
Applicable Design Guidelines	<i>Secretary of Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties</i>

PROPERTY INFORMATION	
Current name	The Amos B. Coe House
Historic Name	The Amos B. Coe House
Current Address	1700 3 rd Avenue South
Historic Address	1700 3 rd Avenue South
Original Construction Date	1884- House 1886- Carriage House
Original Contractor	Unknown
Original Architect	Unknown
Historic Use	Single Family Residence
Current Use	Vacant
Proposed Use	Museum

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BACKGROUND:

The subject property is a 2.5 story brick residence designed in the Queen Anne architectural style. It was constructed in 1884 for Amos B. Coe, a real estate developer. It sits at the southwest corner of 3rd Avenue South and 17th Street East, directly south of I-94.

The house was used as a single-family residence for approximately 24 years, before being turned into a hospital by Dr. John Rydell in 1908. Around 1928 the house was purchased by the Women's Christian Association, who used it as an orphanage, followed by the Young Men's Residence Club in 1931. A.D. Kleinman Realty acquired the property in 1960, and altered the house to accommodate a total of 6 dwelling units.

In 1982, the Minneapolis Department of Inspections found the property to be vacant and boarded, and required that the house either be rehabilitated or demolished. This spurred both the rehabilitation of the house and the effort to have it designated as an individual local landmark and placed on the National Register of Historic Places. The restoration work, which included exterior repairs to both the house and carriage house and reconfiguration of interior spaces to make the structure a duplex, was completed by the mid 1980s.

Dr. Robert Wengler owned the property through the 1990s and most of the 2000s. At some point, he converted the carriage house to a bed and breakfast. (Materials submitted by the Applicant state that this happened in the early 1990s, while licensing records from the City indicate that a bed and breakfast license was issued for the property from 2006-2009.) The Applicants, who purchased the property in June of 2009, have stated that the property has been vacant since 2005. (See Appendix B-6.)

SUMMARY OF APPLICANT'S PROPOSAL:

The Applicant is proposing to construct a 3-story, 1,769 square foot elevator and entry addition on the south side of the house. The addition would provide handicap accessibility to all 3 floors of the house. The structure would be converted for use as the Minnesota African American Museum & Cultural Center.

An earlier version of this project came to the Heritage Preservation Commission for a concept review in November of 2010. At that time, a much more substantial addition was being proposed, with additional floor space for the museum. The feedback given at that concept review was specific to that proposal. Staff offered the Applicant the opportunity to bring the new, smaller plan back to the Commission for a new concept review, but the Applicant elected to move forward with a formal submittal.

The Applicant is also proposing to tuck-point the brick, repair wood windows, and reconfigure and resurface the parking spaces at the rear of the lot.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

The Applicant provided 2 letters from other sources regarding the project. One is a letter from the Steven's Square Community Organization from February of 2009. The other is an e-mail from Mark Chavez with the National Park Service, regarding the status of their review of the project. The Park Service and Minnesota State Historic Preservation Office are reviewing the project because it is being funded in part through a Save America's Treasures grant.

CETIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS: Certificate of Appropriateness for an elevator addition, building maintenance and site alterations.

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 Amos B. Coe House is significant for its representation of the Queen Anne style of architecture. The nomination form for the National Register of Historic Places for the property states, "The Coe House and Carriage Barn is significant as an unusually picturesque representative of its architectural style and for its survival integrity in an urban environment."

The Applicant is proposing to construct an entry and elevator addition on the south side elevation of the property. (See Appendix B-24 for a site plan and Appendix B-37 for elevations.) The addition would be located towards the rear of the house, on a side facade. The 3-story addition is of a modern design. It bears little resemblance to the original Queen Anne styling of the house. The height of the primary windows on each floor appears to match the height of the windows in the house, but no other design connection between the original structure and the addition is readily apparent.

The primary materials used in the addition would be clay tiles, zinc panels, and glass. (A material sample will be available at the public hearing.) The clay tiles, used on the first and second stories of the addition, would be reddish in color, matching the brick used on the house. The zinc panels would be used on the upper portion of the addition. The color/finish of these panels is not identified in the application materials.

The alteration would not be compatible with and continue to support the criteria and period of significance for which the landmark was designated, based on the proposed design, location and material choices. Both the design and materials proposed for the project are out of character with the criteria and period of significance for the house- only the color palette is referential to the original design of the house.

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

The building is significant for being an "excellent example¹" of the Queen Anne architectural style that retains a remarkable level of integrity for a house of its age and

¹ National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form, p. 3.

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location. The proposed addition would have a significant impact on the appearance and design of the original structure. While set to the rear half of a side elevation, the addition would be very visible from the 3rd Avenue South façade, which is the front elevation of the house. The design of the proposed addition is substantially different from the design of the original building. The addition is not sensitive or complimentary in design, and would not be compatible with the design of the original house, which was designated for its architecture. The proposed addition would not be in keeping with this finding.

The proposed repair work, including tuck pointing and window repairs, would be compatible with and support the designation for the property. Ongoing maintenance is critical to the long-term integrity of the building. The proposed parking lot improvements, which would be at the rear of the lot adjacent to the alley, would not have an impact on the historic significance or the designation of the property.

(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 would impair the integrity of the landmark.

Location: The Applicant is not proposing to change the location of the structure, thus the project will not impair the landmark's integrity of location.

Design: The proposed addition is of a modern design, with little reference to the design of the original structure. While it is important that additions should not create false history, the design proposed for the addition is so substantially different that it would stand out, drawing attention to the addition rather than letting it fade into the original structure. The location on the side elevation makes it highly visible from the front elevation. The proposed addition would have a substantial impact on the integrity of design.

Setting: The proposed addition would be located on the south side of the house, between the house and the carriage house. The house sits on a large double lot. There has always been a larger than typical side yard, providing separation between the house and the adjacent structures, as well as providing a view of the carriage house from 3rd Avenue South. The addition would fill a portion of this space, though the majority of the yard would remain open and the carriage house would still be visible. The addition would have a minimal impact on the integrity of setting.

The proposed parking improvements would be located at the rear of the lot, adjacent to the alley, in a space where parking spaces already exist. These improvements would not have an impact on the integrity of setting.

Materials: The primary materials being proposed for the addition are clay tile, zinc panels and glass. The glass windows are an appropriate material for the building, based on the

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period of significance. The clay panels and zinc tiles are materials that would not have been used on a building like this during the period of significance. The addition of these new materials would have a negative impact on the integrity of materials.

The connection of the addition to the original building would require the removal of two full-sized windows, a dormer, brick and some roofing material. The material removal would be done on the side elevation, behind an existing projecting bay. The removal of this material would impact but not impair the integrity of materials.

Workmanship: The proposed addition would connect to the original structure through a walkway. Doors would be installed where full sized windows currently exist on the first and second stories, and through a dormer window on the 3rd floor. None of these windows are notably intricate in design. The addition would not impact any of the highly detailed porches, which demonstrate the highest level of workmanship on the house. The impact on the integrity of workmanship would be limited.

Feeling: The proposed addition could have a greater impact on the integrity of feeling than the larger addition originally proposed by the Applicant. The larger addition could have used glass and variations in height to achieve a greater separation from the original structure, while also incorporating more design elements from the house. The addition would be highly visible from the front of the property. The modern design of the addition would have a jarring effect, calling attention to the addition and away from the original structure. The stark contrast in design, massing and height of the addition would have an impact on the integrity of feeling.

Another potential impact on the integrity of feeling could come from the re-orientation of the entrances to the house. The traditional front entrance of the house faces 3rd Avenue South. With the parking located to the rear, the handicapped entrance on the rear of the addition and the new main entrance to the museum being proposed from the 17th Street side, the traditional front entrance would no longer function as such.

Association: The addition would alter the original design of the house to such a degree that it would impact the integrity of design. By impacting the integrity of the design, it would also detrimentally impact the integrity of association with the Queen Anne architectural style.

- (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 has not adopted individual design guidelines for the Amos B. Coe House.

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- (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 are most applicable to the proposed project.

Standard #1 states: "A property shall be used for its historic purpose or be placed in a new use that requires minimal change to the defining characteristics of the building and its site and environment. "

While the Amos B. Coe house was originally constructed as a single-family dwelling, it has not been used as such for over 100 years. Given the size of the house and the zoning classification (OR-3), it is unlikely that it would ever be feasible to use it as a single-family dwelling again. With that in mind, it is reasonable to expect that some changes may need to be made to convert it to a new use.

While the addition would have a minimal impact on the character defining features of the house, the impacts to the site would be substantial. The Applicant states in their Application materials that they are pursuing the proposed elevator addition because of difficulties in providing an elevator internally and to avoid the need for a long handicap accessible ramp. Staff has not seen any alternative plans for an elevator addition, either internally or externally, and thus cannot assess the practicality of providing an elevator within the existing building, but it seems likely that it would be possible. A handicap ramp, even a long one, would likely have less of an impact on the integrity of the building while also being substantially more reversible than the proposed addition.

Standard #2 states: "The historic character of a property shall be retained and preserved. The removal of historic materials or alteration of features and spaces that characterize a property shall be avoided."

The modern addition would stand out a great deal from the original Queen Anne architecture- the lone characteristic for which the property was designated. While the proposed addition would have a limited impact on historic materials or features and spaces that characterize the property, the design of the addition would have a significant impact on the overall character of the property because the aesthetic design is so starkly different.

Standard #6 states: "Deteriorated historic features will be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature will match the old in design, color, texture, and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features will be substantiated by documentary and physical evidence."

The Applicant has stated that they intend to repair the existing windows where they are deteriorated and replace currently boarded windows with new windows to match the

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existing. (A window survey, keyed to notes on the elevation drawings, can be found on Appendix B-27). This work would be in keeping with the guidelines, though the Applicant has not provided detailed plans or specifications for the proposed replacement windows. Staff is recommending a condition requiring the Applicant to provide further details on the proposed window work prior to the issuance of permits.

Standard #9 states: "New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction shall not destroy historic materials that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible with the massing, size, scale, and architectural features to protect the historic integrity of the property and its environment."

The addition would result in relatively limited physical impact on historic materials that characterize the property. The biggest impact would be to the windows that would be removed to make the connection to the addition. However, the addition would have a substantial detrimental impact on the visual character of the house, much of which is made readable by the use of the materials in Victorian architecture.

The new addition would be exceptionally differentiated from the original building. Staff believes that the biggest issue with the proposed addition is that it is *too* different from the original. Additions to historic buildings are often differentiated from the original construction by either varying the architecture while using similar materials, or by using similar architectural features but varying the materials and details. In this case, the proposed addition uses both substantially different architecture and materials. The result is an addition that would share only a color palette with the original structure.

When the Applicant originally brought this project through the Commission for a concept review in November 2010, there was some sense that a modern styled addition could work for this property. It seemed that the large addition could be designed in such a way so as to connect lightly to the original house, creating the appearance of two separate structures. The smaller but still modern styled addition now being proposed, located in a highly visible area, creates a very different feeling than the larger addition might have.

The massing and size of the addition are another primary concern. As shown on the elevation drawings (Appendix B-37), the addition would be only slightly shorter than the highest peak of the house and the chimneys. At the point where it would connect to the house, it would match the height of the adjacent cross gable. The original house has gables and pitched roof lines while the addition has flat roofs, making the bulk and height more apparent. The visual effect is that the addition is a 3-story structure connecting to a 2.5 story structure. While the addition is technically slightly shorter than the highest point of the house, staff does not believe that it is compatible with the massing, size or scale of the historic structure.

Standard #10 states: "New additions and adjacent or related new construction shall be undertaken in such a manner that if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired."

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The addition would be connected to the house behind a projecting bay, through existing window openings. The Applicant is proposing to salvage the removed windows and store them on site. It is conceivably possible that the addition could be removed in the future and the walls, roof and windows restored in such a way so as to have a limited impact on the essential form and integrity of the historic property. This is highly unlikely to happen, however. It is more likely that an internal elevator and handicap ramp could be removed in the future with a less substantial impact on the essential form and integrity of the historic property, while also having a smaller impact on the form and integrity of the house in the present.

- (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 proposed alterations are considered a major alteration and require a Certificate of Appropriateness application.

As proposed, the addition would comply policy 8.1.1 of The Minneapolis Plan, which states: "Protect historic resources from modifications that are not sensitive to their historic significance." The addition is not designed in a manner that is sensitive to the significance or integrity of the original house.

Other aspects of the project, such as the parking lot improvements and tuck pointing, would be in keeping with this policy.

Policy 1.2.1 states: "Promote quality design in new development, as well as building orientation, scale, massing, buffering, and setbacks that are appropriate with the context of the surrounding area." The design of the proposed addition is not appropriate within the context of the surrounding area. While the neighborhood on the whole is made up of buildings that vary greatly in age, the subject property and the property immediately adjacent to the south are both Victorian era and styled house. The modern design of the addition is not sensitive to this context.

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 submitted statements outlining how they feel the addition meets the applicable findings and the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation (see Appendix B-8 – B-12.) The Applicant states that the design is meant to protect the "jewel box" quality of the house by utilizing a substantially different design.

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Staff believes that the design for the proposed addition deviates too substantially from the design of the historic building, creating a negative impact on the architectural character for which the property was deemed significant and designated as a landmark. While staff finds that the Applicant has made consideration for the statement of significance, staff does not agree with the Applicant's assessment of the impact of the proposed addition.

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

Because the addition exceeds 1,000 square feet, it would require site plan review if approved. The Applicant has been working with CPED Planning Development Services staff on this process.

(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.*

The Applicant submitted a statement outlining how they believe the proposal was in keeping the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for rehabilitation (see Appendix B-9 – B-11.) Staff believes that the Applicant has placed too much emphasis on differentiating the new construction from the old, while underemphasizing the importance of designing the addition in a manner that is compatible with the design, massing, size and scale of the historic structure.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

CPED-Planning staff recommends that the Heritage Preservation Commission **adopt** staff findings and **approve** the Certificate of Appropriateness with the following condition(s):

1. The proposed elevator and entry addition is not approved.
2. The proposed tuck-pointing, window repair and parking area improvements are approved.
3. The Applicant shall provide detailed specifications for the replacement windows and window repair prior to the issuance of permits.
4. Mortar used for tuck pointing shall match the existing in color, strength and reveal.
5. CPED-Planning shall review and approve the final site plan, elevations, finishes and materials.
6. All workmanship must be completed in conformance with the Secretary of Interior Standards, see: <http://www.nps.gov/history/hps/tps/standguide/>
7. The Applicant shall obtain all other necessary City approvals prior to the commencement of work.
8. The Certificate of Appropriateness approvals shall expire if not acted upon within one year of approval, unless extended by the Planning Director in writing prior to the one-year anniversary date of the approvals.

Attachment A: Submitted by CPED staff

Attachment B: Materials submitted by Applicant

Attachment C: Materials submitted by Others