

**CITY OF MINNEAPOLIS  
CPED PLANNING DIVISION  
HERITAGE PRESERVATION COMMISSION STAFF REPORT  
BZH #27076**

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**ADDRESS:** 1700 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue South

**CATEGORY/DISTRICT:** Individual Landmark- Amos B. Coe House

**CLASSIFICATION:** Historic Variance

**APPLICANT:** Minnesota African American Museum and Cultural Center

**CONTACT PERSON:** Nathan Johnson, 4RM+ULA Architects, 612-867-0953

**DATE APPLICATION DEEMED COMPLETE:** November 15, 2011

**PUBLICATION DATE:** December 6, 2011

**DATE OF HEARING:** December 13, 2011

**APPEAL PERIOD EXPIRATION:** December 23, 2011

**STAFF INVESTIGATION AND REPORT:** Chris Vrchota, 612-673-5467

**REQUEST:** Historic Variance to reduce the minimum required lot area for a museum from 20,000 square feet to 15,962 square feet.

Historic Variance to reduce the minimum required on-site parking from 6 spaces to 4 spaces.

**Attachments**

Appendix A: Material provided by Staff

- 350' Map (A-1)

Appendix B: Material Provided by the Applicant

- Application form (B-1 – B-2)
- Project summary and statement addressing findings (B-3 – B-4)
- Existing and proposed site plans (B-5 – B-6)

<b>CLASSIFICATION:</b>	
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>

<b>PROPERTY INFORMATION</b>	
Current name	The Amos B. Coe House
Historic Name	The Amos B. Coe House
Current Address	1700 3 <sup>rd</sup> Avenue South
Historic Address	1700 3 <sup>rd</sup> 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



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



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

**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 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue South and 17<sup>th</sup> 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.

**SUMMARY OF APPLICANT'S PROPOSAL:**

The Applicant intends to convert the structure for use as the Minnesota African American Museum & Cultural Center. The Applicant is proposing building and site alterations that require a Certificate of Appropriateness (see BZH- 27075).

The Applicant is requesting 2 historic variances for the property. The first is to reduce the minimum required lot area for a museum use from 20,000 square feet to 15,962 square feet. The second requested variance is to reduce the minimum required on-site parking from 6 spaces to 4 spaces.

## **FINDINGS REQUIRED FOR A HISTORIC VARIANCE:**

- 1. Before recommending approval of a historic variance, the commission shall make findings that the variance is compatible with the preservation of the property and with other properties in the area.**

**A. Variance to reduce the minimum required lot area for a museum use from 20,000 square feet to 15,962 square feet.**

The Applicant is proposing to convert the building for use as the new Minnesota African American Museum and Cultural Center. The minimum required lot area for a museum in the OR-3 zoning district is 20,000 square feet. The subject property is 15,952 square feet. The property is a corner lot. The adjacent lots are developed. It would not be possible to expand the existing lot without obtaining property from other property owners. The building has not functioned as a single-family dwelling for over 100 years, and has been vacant since 2005. Conversion of the building to use as a museum would allow it to be re-occupied and rehabilitated, which would be compatible to the preservation of the property.

**B. Variance to reduce the minimum required on-site parking from 6 spaces to 4 spaces.**

As shown on the existing site plan (Appendix B-5), there are currently 4 on-site parking spaces on the property, adjacent to the alley at the rear of the lot. The Applicant is proposing to reconfigure and resurface this parking area, still providing 4 parking spaces, with proper clearance for a legal handicap parking stall. The only other location on the property where parking might be possible is in the side yard on the south side of the property. Putting surface parking in this side yard would be detrimental to the historic nature of the property, intruding in to what has historically been an open yard providing views of the south side of the house and the carriage house and creating a buffer between the house and adjacent structures. The adjacent properties are developed; in order to obtain additional land to provide parking, the Applicant would need to purchase and demolish another building. Reducing the number of required spaces from 6 to 4 would be compatible with the preservation of the property and other properties in the area.

- 2. Before recommending approval of a historic variance, the commission shall make findings that the variance is necessary to alleviate undue hardship due to special conditions or circumstances unique to the property and not created by the applicant.**

**A. Variance to reduce the minimum required lot area for a museum use from 20,000 square feet to 15,962 square feet.**

The Applicant is proposing to use the property as a museum, which is a permitted use in the OR3 district, but requires a minimum lot area of 20,000

square feet. The existing parcel is 15,962 square feet. The adjacent properties are developed and are not owned by the Applicant, leaving little option for increasing the area of the lot. The parcel boundaries reflect the historic boundaries of this parcel. The historic size of the parcel is a condition which was not created by the Applicant.

**B. Variance to reduce the minimum required on-site parking from 6 spaces to 4 spaces.**

Due to the size and placement of the house, the property has a relatively small rear yard. There are 4 existing parking spaces at the rear of the lot, adjacent to the alley. This is the maximum number of spaces that can be provided in this location due to the placement of the carriage house and the required side yard setback adjacent to 17<sup>th</sup> Street East. The only other location on the property where parking might be possible is in the side yard on the south side of the property, though it is likely that setback variances would be needed to provide parking in this area. The lack of feasible areas to provide parking on the site is a hardship created by the placement of the structures on the site, a condition not created by the Applicant.

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:**

Staff recommends that the Heritage Preservation Commission **adopt** staff findings and **approve** the Historic Variance to reduce the minimum required lot area for a museum use from 20,000 square feet to 15,962 square feet with the following conditions:

1. The final site plan shall be subject to review and approval by CPED- Planning staff and other applicable City departments.

Staff recommends that the Heritage Preservation Commission **adopt** staff findings and **approve** the Historic Variance to reduce the minimum required on-site parking from 6 spaces to 4 spaces with the following conditions:

1. The final site plan shall be subject to review and approval by CPED- Planning staff and other applicable City departments.