Department of Community Planning and Economic Development
Planning Division

Certificate of Appropriateness
BZH-27171

Proposal: Request for Certificate of Appropriateness to replace windows

Applicant: Renewal by Andersen, 651-264-4088

Address of Property: 510 6th Avenue Southeast

Project Name: Certificate of Appropriateness to replace windows

Planning Staff: John Smoley, Ph.D., 612-673-2830

Date Application Deemed Complete: n/a

Public Hearing: February 14, 2011

Appeal Period Expiration: February 24, 2012

Ward: 3

Neighborhood Organization: Marcy Holmes Neighborhood Association

Concurrent Review: n/a

Attachments:

- Staff Report – A1-A10
- Materials Submitted by CPED – B1
- Materials Submitted by Applicant – C1-C80
- Materials Submitted by Other Parties – n/a

510 6th Ave SE, 2011, front face, photo submitted by Applicant

CLASSIFICATION:	
Local Historic District	Fifth Street Southeast Historic District
Period of Significance	1856 to circa 1940
Criteria of significance	Architecture, Persons
Date of local designation	1976
Applicable Design Guidelines	*The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Treatment of Historic Properties* *Fifth Street Southeast Historic District Design Guidelines*

PROPERTY INFORMATION	
Current name	Nelson Residence
Historic Name	T.E.J. Schultz Residence
Current Address	510 6th Avenue Southeast
Historic Address	510 6th Avenue Southeast
Original Construction Date	1921
Original Contractor	Day labor
Original Architect	None listed
Historic Use	Residence
Current Use	Residence
Proposed Use	Residence

BACKGROUND:

The subject property is a single family residence located mid-block between Fifth and Sixth Streets Southeast in the Fifth Street Southeast Historic District (Attachment B1).

The Fifth Street Southeast Historic District exhibits popular nineteenth and early twentieth century architectural styles built by influential citizens of Minneapolis. Primarily centered along Fifth Street Southeast extending from 4th Avenue to I-35W, the district generally includes those properties facing Fifth Street, in addition to a few properties facing Fourth and Sixth Streets Southeast. Beginning as a scattered residential development in the late 1850s, the district expanded on the edge of the pioneer milling town of St. Anthony. When St. Anthony and Minneapolis merged in 1873, the street names were changed to numeric identities and lots along Fifth Street Southeast were sold to prominent families for further development.

During the early years of St. Anthony and after the merge, Fifth Street Southeast remained one of the finer streets of residence. Many of the people who resided in this neighborhood were merchant families originally from New England. The flour and milling industry drew these early residents to St. Anthony and Minneapolis. In order to be near their business, Fifth Street Southeast was a reasonable choice for settlement, due to its close proximity to the river.

SUMMARY OF APPLICANT'S PROPOSAL:

The Applicant wishes to replace twenty-nine historic wood windows. The proposed replacement windows are proposed to match (to within 1/16" of an inch) the existing window dimensions (Attachment C3) but will be made of Fibrex (a composite of wood fibers and a special thermoplastic polymer – Attachment C45). The new window frames are designed to fit within the existing window frames, decreasing the exposed glass by no more than ½ inch on each side of the window (Attachment C3). New aluminum frame window screens are proposed to be affixed to the window's exterior (Attachment C5).

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Staff has received no public comment on the project.

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.

Regardless of what changes are made to the subject property, it will retain its historical significance, but proposed changes may affect its integrity (i.e. the property's ability to communicate its historical significance), as discussed in finding #3 below.

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

The exterior portions of the building contribute to the district's significance. The district is significant for its historic residential architecture. The proposal to remove historic wood windows in good condition does not support the property's 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.

The proposed work will impair the integrity of the property by removing historic materials that are in good condition, thereby marring the property's integrity of materials.

(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 Applicant proposes to replace serviceable historic wood windows with new Fibrex windows.

The property lies within the Fifth Street Southeast Historic District. The district's design guidelines stipulate that, "If existing windows need to be replaced, use wooden, a suitable colored or anodized metal or other materials that blend with and not detract from the building."

The Applicant has not submitted evidence of window deterioration that requires anything other than very minor repair.

(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 Applicant is conducting a rehabilitation of the subject property. The proposed project does not follow the rehabilitation guidelines of *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties*.

The rehabilitation guidelines of *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties* do not recommend retrofitting or replacing windows rather they recommend maintaining the sash, frame, and glazing. The twenty-nine windows proposed for replacement are all historic, wood frame, double hung, true divided light (3/1) windows. No evidence has been provided that indicates that the existing windows cannot be repaired, yet the Applicant proposes to replace nearly every window on the building (sidelights around the door, small square windows in the gables, and basement windows are not proposed for replacement). In fact, submitted photographs show no evidence of rot and minimal evidence of wear on the existing historic windows. (Attachment C37). The window frames, proposed to be reused, reinforce this evidence. Indeed, the only parts proposed for replacement in all twenty-nine window frames are three bottom stops on entryway windows (Attachment C7-C8).

The rehabilitation guidelines of *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties* do not recommend changing the historic appearance of windows through the use of inappropriate designs, materials, finishes, or colors which noticeably change the sash, depth of reveal, and muntin configuration; the reflectivity and color of the glazing; or the appearance of the frame. The window frames are proposed to be made of Fibrex, a composite of wood fibers and a special thermoplastic polymer (Attachment C45). This material was not available during the period of significance. The application indicates that the proposed replacement windows can be manufactured to match (to within 1/16" of an inch) the existing window dimensions (Attachment C3). The new window frames are designed to fit within the existing window frames, decreasing the exposed glass by no more than ½ inch on each side of the window. Given the fact that the proposal will replace every double-hung window on the building (and nearly all windows) this small difference from the historic window dimensions should be difficult to notice from the public right of way. But the application does not identify how closely the standard replacement muntin widths and depths will match the historic muntin dimensions, nor does it identify which of the three available muntin designs (none of which create true divisions of lights) will be used in the new windows. Specifications submitted indicate that several glass coating options (High-performance Low E4, High-performance Low E4 Sun, and High-performance Low E4 SmartSun) are available (Attachment C76). Specifications also indicate several glass pattern options (no pattern, Obscure, Cascade, Reed, and Fern) (Attachment C47). Historic glass was clear, with no reflectivity, and obscured only in limited instances (bathrooms and a closet). Window glass whose color, reflectivity, and pattern match that of the historic glass would meet the guidelines.

The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and Illustrated Guidelines on Sustainability for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings (which replace the Energy Conservation chapter of *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation & Illustrated Guidelines*

for Rehabilitating Historic Building) do not recommend removing repairable historic windows and replacing them with new windows for perceived improvement in energy performance. The Applicant has stated that the primary reason for replacing the windows is a desire for improved energy efficiency, yet the Applicant has submitted no evidence of tests assessing the energy efficiency of the existing historic windows and their accompanying storm windows.

The Applicant proposes to remove the storm windows already on the building (Attachment C3). While the exterior storms do not date back to the district's period of significance, their presence definitely improves the energy efficiency of the building. Their proposed removal raises doubts about the amount of energy efficiency improvements that may occur.

The proposed windows are valued at $31,380 on the building permit application and the window contract (Attachment C9). The number of years that will be required to recoup these costs in energy savings is undoubtedly high, yet Renewal by Anderson only warranties Fibrex material components of the windows not to rot or crack for ten years (Attachment C70). Visual and building permit evidence indicates that the existing wood windows have lasted for nearly a century without such failure (Attachment C11-C40).

(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.

Action 8.1.1 of the Minneapolis Plan for Sustainable Growth indicates that the City shall protect historic resources from modifications that are not sensitive to their historic significance. The project will modify the building in ways that are insensitive to its historical character, as discussed in items 4 and 5 above.

Comprehensive plan policy 8.1 states that the City will, "Preserve, maintain, and designate districts, landmarks, and historic resources which serve as reminders of the city's architecture, history, and culture." The proposed work will damage this building's ability to communicate its historical significance, as discussed in item 3 above.

(7) Destruction of any property. 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 project does not involve the destruction of the property.

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:

(8) 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 included a statement describing how the project meets findings 1-4 (Attachment C4).

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

The proposal does not trigger Site Plan Review required by Zoning Code Chapter 530.

(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.

As discussed in finding #5, the application is not in compliance with the rehabilitation guidelines of *the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties.*

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.

The project will not authorize changes to other properties within the district.

(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.

The proposed work will impair the integrity of the property by removing historic materials that are in good condition, thereby negatively altering the district’s essential character.

(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.

The request might set a precedent for future cases, but will not authorize changes to other Landmarks, Historic Districts, or properties under interim protection without staff or HPC review.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

CPED-Planning recommends that the Heritage Preservation Commission **adopt** staff findings and **deny** the Certificate of Appropriateness.