

## Department of Community Planning and Economic Development - Planning Division

Certificate of Appropriateness  
BZH-27512

**Proposal:** Rear wing rehabilitation

**Applicant:** Ostroot and Ostroot Professional Remodelers, LLC

**Address of Property:** 1721 University Avenue Southeast

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

**Date Application Deemed Complete:** October 15, 2012

**Public Hearing:** November 5, 2012

**Appeal Period Expiration:** November 15, 2012

**Ward:** 2

**Neighborhood Organization:** Marcy Holmes Neighborhood Association

**Concurrent Review:** n/a

**Attachments:**

- Staff Report (A)
- Materials Submitted by CPED (B)
  - Zoning District Map
- Materials Submitted by Applicant (C)
  - Project Description and supplemental information
  - Plans
  - Photographs
  - Statement addressing the applicable Certificate of Appropriateness findings
- Materials Submitted by Other Parties (D) – n/a

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<b>CLASSIFICATION:</b>	
Local Historic District	University of Minnesota Greek Letter Chapter House Historic District (contributing resource)
Period of Significance	1907-1930
Criteria of Significance	Events, Architecture
Date of local designation	2003
Date of National Register listing	n/a
Applicable Design Guidelines	<i>University of Minnesota Greek Letter Chapter House Historic District Design Guidelines</i>  <i>The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Treatment of Historic Properties</i>

<b>PROPERTY INFORMATION</b>	
Current name	Students' Co-op
Historic Name	Psi Upsilon Fraternity
Current Address	1721 University Avenue Southeast
Historic Address	1721 University Avenue Southeast
Original Construction Date	1908
Original Architect	Kees and Colburn
Original Builder	Maurice Schumacher
Historic Use	Student Housing
Current Use	Student Housing
Proposed Use	Student Housing

**BACKGROUND:**

The subject property is a multiple-family residence located mid-block on University Avenue Southeast between 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> Avenues Southeast (Attachment B) on the northeastern side of the street.

This vaguely Beaux Arts, three-story, stucco-clad building has a flat roof behind a peaked parapet. A raised terrace at ground level is faced in limestone. The north, rear elevation is clad in painted common brick.

The focus of this application is the small, flat-roofed, one-story rear wing clad in narrow clapboard that rests on a high limestone foundation. Windows contain double-hung sash. The origin of this wing, whether an addition or pre-existing structure, is unknown, as neither appears in building permit records for the property. It does appear on the 1912 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, making it a historic portion of the building, but its design and materials are distinct enough that it reads as an addition (pre-existing or not) to the original structure designed by Kees and Colburn.

This building is a contributing property in the University of Minnesota Greek Letter Chapter House Historic District. 1721 University Avenue Southeast is the second oldest chapter house remaining on University Avenue and at the University of Minnesota. Despite alterations to the stucco and entry, it still exemplifies the scale and style of the pre-World War I period. This building followed the Chi Psi (1897; razed) Delta Kappa Epsilon (1906; razed) and Phi Kappa Psi (1907) chapter houses constructed on Fraternity Row, and its style reflects the early twentieth century preference for columned facades.

The Phi Upsilon chapter was founded at Union College in 1833 and at the University of Minnesota in 1891. Prior to the construction of this building, the chapter was at 1312 7th Street Southeast. By 1940 the chapter moved into the former Sigma Phi Epsilon Fraternity house at 1617 University Avenue, and appears to have been inactive by 1949. The building has since been used for private student housing.

**SUMMARY OF APPLICANT'S PROPOSAL:**

The Applicant wishes to rehabilitate the rear wing of the building. The application consists of three major parts:

1. replace the flat roof with a low-pitch hipped roof(Plan sheets #1-8);
2. replace deteriorated non-historic aluminum windows with aluminum clad wood windows (Plan sheets #9-11); and
3. replace rotted historic wood siding, eaves, and trim in kind, and replace a nonhistoric wood deck in kind (Plan sheets #1-12).

**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 maintain 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 communicate the building's significance. The building is significant for its vaguely Beaux Arts architecture and association with the strength of the Greek letter system at the University of Minnesota during the first three decades of the twentieth century. The applicant generally proposes to replace unserviceable materials in kind. The majority of unserviceable materials are wood suffering from rot. To better combat the effects of water, the applicant also proposes to modify the design of the rear wing's roof to better shed water. The appropriateness of the specific design, location, and other attributes of the roof are discussed below in finding #5.

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

The Applicant's proposed in kind replacement of deteriorated materials and efforts to better shed water from the building will help ensure the property's longevity and not impair the building's integrity of design.

***(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 application consists of three major parts:

1. replace the flat roof with a low-pitch hipped roof(Plan sheets #1-8);
2. replace deteriorated non-historic aluminum windows with aluminum clad wood windows (Plan sheets #9-11); and
3. replace rotted historic wood siding, eaves, and trim in kind, and replace a nonhistoric wood deck in kind (Plan sheets #1-12).

*Replace the flat roof with a low-pitch hipped roof*

The proposal (Plan sheets #1-8) complies with every roof guideline in the *University of Minnesota Greek Letter Chapter House Historic District Design Guidelines* except one: "The original roofline including the cornice, parapet, dormers and other elements should be maintained. No part of the cornice or parapet should be covered or removed." The proposed roof redesign occurs on a rear wing that has experienced substantial rot. The proposed roof redesign will better enable the rear wing to shed water. The low slope of the proposed hipped roof and its position at the rear of the property, in front of a massive, new, six-story building, will make the redesign difficult to see from the public right of way. A detailed statement from the applicant discusses how the current building code will not permit the replacement of the roof without extreme structural changes designed to reduce water infiltration and support a massive snow drift load that could theoretically be created by the main building wall that extends two stories above the rear wing. To build the roof atop the existing walls, which currently rise up above the eaves, requires the removal of the deteriorated eaves and addition of several rows of siding on wall areas previously covered by these eaves. Like all of the proposed siding, this new siding will match the historic siding in terms of materials, dimensions, and finish.

*Replace deteriorated non-historic aluminum windows with aluminum clad wood windows*

The proposal (Plan sheets #9-11) complies with every window guideline in the *University of Minnesota Greek Letter Chapter House Historic District Design Guidelines*. All existing historic window openings will be retained. No window openings will be enlarged or reduced to fit new units. New window openings will not be introduced into principal elevations, as the rear wing, where work is proposed, sits at the rear of the property and historic district. No windows will be removed or permanently blocked for the installation of air conditioners.

No historic wood windows will be affected by the proposal, as no historic wood windows are proposed for replacement. Nonhistoric double hung aluminum replacement windows will be removed and replaced with double hung aluminum clad wood windows with a painted or baked finish.

The guidelines stipulate that new sash should duplicate the existing or other appropriate historic models, including the division of lights, but the only historic windows left on the building are on the front face of the property, and these historic fixed wood windows have X-shaped muntins. Historical photographs of the property reveal the fenestration pattern on the front of the building only, where fixed windows and the top sash of single- or double-hung windows bore X-shaped muntins. The applicant is proposing to replicate the 1/1 fenestration pattern of the nonhistoric windows which cover the rear wing and the remainder of the building. In the absence of evidence that the X-shaped muntins existed on side and rear windows, a simple 1/1 division of lights is appropriate. Plans demonstrate that the new windows will be similar, in terms of dimensions, to both the historic and nonhistoric windows on the building, thereby complementing both window designs and providing a sound design for future window replacements on the building.

The guidelines state, "Glazing should be clear unless historical documentation shows other

treatments...Low E and other energy-efficient glazing is acceptable.” While the statement addressing the applicable Certificate of Appropriateness findings notes that the proposed Pella windows will meet these standards, the plans do not. For clarity’s sake, staff recommends that the project be conditioned to meet these standards.

No decorative trim exists around the windows. The plain trim will be replaced in kind.

*Replace rotted historic wood siding, eaves, and trim in kind, and replace a nonhistoric wood deck in kind*

The *University of Minnesota Greek Letter Chapter House Historic District Design Guidelines* have no guidelines related to this portion (Plan sheets #1-12) of the application, but the proposal follows the rehabilitation guidelines of *The Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties*, as discussed in finding #5.

**(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 follows the rehabilitation guidelines of *The Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties*.

The application consists of three major parts:

1. replace the flat roof with a low-pitch hipped roof(Plan sheets #1-8);
2. replace deteriorated non-historic aluminum windows with aluminum clad wood windows (Plan sheets #9-11); and
3. replace rotted historic wood siding, eaves, and trim in kind, and replace a nonhistoric wood deck in kind (Plan sheets #1-12).

*Replace the flat roof with a low-pitch hipped roof*

The rehabilitation guidelines of *The Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties* recommend identifying, retaining, and preserving roofs—and their functional and decorative features—that are important in defining the overall historic character of the building. This includes the roof’s shape, such as hipped, gambrel, and mansard; decorative features such as cupolas, cresting chimneys, and weathervanes; and roofing material such as slate, wood, clay tile, and metal, as well as its size, color, and patterning. The applicant is proposing to replace the rear wing’s flat roof with a low-pitch hipped roof. The origin of this wing, whether an addition or pre-existing structure, is unknown, as neither appears in building permit records for the property. It does appear on the 1912 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, making it a historic portion of the building, but its design and materials are distinct enough that it reads as an addition (pre-existing or not) to the original structure designed by Kees and Colburn. As such, it is not important in defining the overall historic character of the building.

Furthermore, the proposed roof redesign occurs at the rear of the property where substantial rot has occurred. The roofing materials on this wing are not historic, having previously been replaced, but the flat roof design of the roof is presumed to be historic. The new, low-pitch, hipped roof design will complement the rear wing extremely well. Indeed, the low-pitch hipped roof was typical on Prairie style buildings which included narrow horizontal wood siding like the historic rear wing. But the purpose of the proposed roof redesign is all about function, not style. The proposed roof redesign will better enable the rear wing to shed water and meet current building code. A detailed statement from the applicant discusses how the current building code will not permit the replacement of the roof without extreme structural changes designed to reduce water infiltration and support a massive snow drift load that could theoretically be created by the main building wall that extends two stories above the rear wing. To build the roof atop the existing walls, which currently rise up above the eaves, requires the removal of the deteriorated eaves and addition of several rows of siding on wall areas previously covered by these eaves. Like all of the proposed siding, this new siding will match the historic siding in terms of materials, dimensions, and finish. The low slope of the proposed hipped roof and its position at the rear of the property, in front of a massive, new, six-story building, will make the redesign difficult to see from the public right of way.

*Replace deteriorated non-historic aluminum windows with aluminum clad wood windows*

The rehabilitation guidelines of *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties* recommend identifying, retaining, and preserving windows—and their functional and decorative features—that are important in defining the overall historic character of the building. The applicant is proposing to preserve all existing historic windows, which only remain on the front of the building, out of the area affected by this project.

The rehabilitation guidelines of *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties* recommend designing and installing new windows when the historic windows (frames, sash and glazing) are completely missing. The replacement windows may be an accurate restoration using historical, pictorial, and physical documentation; or be a new design that is compatible with the window openings and the historic character of the building. Historical photographs of the property reveal the fenestration pattern on the front of the building only, where fixed windows and the top sash of single- or double-hung windows bore X-shaped muntins. The applicant is proposing to replicate the 1/1 fenestration pattern of the nonhistoric windows which cover the rear wing and the remainder of the building. In the absence of evidence that the X-shaped muntins existed on side and rear windows, a simple 1/1 division of lights is appropriate. Plans demonstrate that the new windows will be similar, in terms of dimensions, to both the historic and nonhistoric windows on the building, thereby complementing both window designs and providing a sound design for future window replacements on the building.

*Replace rotted historic wood siding, eaves, and trim in kind, and replace a nonhistoric wood deck*

The rehabilitation guidelines of *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties* recommend replacing in kind an entire wood feature that is too deteriorated to repair—if the overall form and detailing are still evident—using the physical evidence as a

model to reproduce the feature. Photographic evidence submitted by the applicant indicates that the historic wood siding, trim, and eaves are too deteriorated to repair. The applicant originally proposed replacing the rotted wood siding, eaves, and trim with LP Smartside but changed their proposal to meet the Secretary of the Interior's Standards.

The nonhistoric wood deck will be replaced in kind. Appearing at the rear of the property and being nonhistoric, its retention or replacement in kind is in compliance with the rehabilitation guidelines of *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties* which recommend designing and installing additional entrances or porches on secondary elevations when required for the new use in a manner that preserves the historic character of the buildings, i.e., limiting such alteration to non-character-defining elevations.

***(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.***

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 help preserve the historic building by replacing rotted historic wood and altering the design of the roof, both to combat the ill-effects of water. These actions will help ensure the property's longevity and not impair the building's integrity of design.

Implementation Step 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. As conditioned, the project will not modify the building in ways that are insensitive to its historical character, as discussed in findings #4 and #5 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's proposed in kind replacement of rotted historic wood and alteration of the roof on the rear of the property, where views from the public right of way are extremely limited, indicates a sensitivity toward the property's ability to communicate its historical significance. Furthermore, the fifteen page statement addressing the applicable Certificate of Appropriateness findings submitted by the applicant is one of the most extensive, carefully considered analyses staff has received.

**(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.**

The application complies with the rehabilitation guidelines of *the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties* as discussed in finding #5 above.

**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 alterations occur at the rear of the property, employ materials (wood, primarily) available during the district's period of significance, and are in keeping with local and federal design guidelines, thus the alterations are compatible with and continue to support the criteria of significance and period of significance for which the historic district was designated.

**(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 location of the alterations at the rear of the property are on the portions of the building least visible from the public right of way.

***(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 formally authorize changes to other Landmarks, Historic Districts, or properties under interim protection without staff or HPC review.

## **STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

The Department of Community Planning and Economic Development - Planning Division recommends that the Heritage Preservation Commission adopt the findings above and **approve** the Certificate of Appropriateness to rehabilitate the rear wing of the building located at 1721 University Avenue Southeast subject to the following conditions:

1. Glazing shall be clear. Low E and other energy-efficient glazing is acceptable.
2. By ordinance, approvals are valid for a period of two years from the date of the decision unless required permits are obtained and the action approval is substantially begun and proceeds in a continuous basis toward completion. Upon written request and for good cause, the planning director may grant up to a one year extension if the request is made in writing no later than November 5, 2014.
3. By ordinance, all approvals granted in this Certificate of Appropriateness shall remain in effect as long as all of the conditions and guarantees of such approvals are observed. Failure to comply with such conditions and guarantees shall constitute a violation of this Certificate of Appropriateness and may result in termination of the approval.
4. CPED-Planning Staff shall review and approve the final plans and elevations prior to building permit issuance.