

Department of Community Planning and Economic Development
250 South Fourth Street, Room 300
Minneapolis, MN 55415-1385
(612) 673-2597 Phone
(612) 673-2526 Fax
(612) 673-2157 TDD

MEMORANDUM

DATE: February 26, 2013

TO: Heritage Preservation Commission

FROM: Beth Elliott, Principal City Planner

SUBJECT: National Register of Historic Places Nomination – Minnesota Linseed Oil Company

Background

On January 7, 2013 the Minnesota Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) sent the Minneapolis Heritage Preservation Commission a letter requesting comments on the nomination of the Minnesota Linseed Oil Company structures to the National Register of Historic Places (Attachment A). The properties are Building 2 located at 312 11th Avenue South and Building 4 located at 1101 South 3rd Street – they are now part of the Valspar Corporation campus.

As a Certified Local government, the Commission is required by federal law to participate in the National Register nomination process as follows:

- Afford the public a reasonable opportunity to comment on the nomination;
- Prepare a report as to whether or not the subject property is eligible for National Register listing; and
- Have the chief local elected official (the Mayor) submit this report and his/her recommendation to the Minnesota State Historic Preservation Officer within sixty days of notice from the SHPO.¹

¹ More than a simple comment letter, this report provides the City with significant decision making power in the matter. If both the Commission and the chief local elected official recommend that the subject property should not be nominated to the National Register, the SHPO shall take no further action, unless within thirty days of the receipt of such recommendation by the SHPO an appeal is filed with the State. If such an appeal is filed, the State shall follow the procedures for making nomination pursuant to established procedures. Even then, the City's report and recommendations are included with the nomination submitted by the State to the Keeper of the National Register.

The owner has retained Hess, Roise and Company to nominate the subject properties to the National Register of Historic Places as the first step in seeking financial aid for a substantial rehabilitation of the buildings. The owner is seeking state historic preservation tax credits and federal historic preservation tax credits to accomplish this goal which will require:

- The property to be listed on the National Register of Historic Places;
- The work to consist of a substantial rehabilitation (an amount greater than the pre-rehabilitation cost of the building(s));
- The work meet the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation*; and
- The property's historic character be maintained for five years.

Attachment A includes a copy of the nomination, prepared by Hess Roise, for your review and comment.

Previous Reviews

The property was identified as eligible for the National Register of Historic Places in the *Central Corridor Alternatives Analysis and Draft Environmental Impact Statement* in 2006.

Nomination Review

To be eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places, a property must be significant within a given context and retain its integrity, defined as its ability to communicate that significance.

Significance

Hess Roise has identified that the Minnesota Linseed Oil Company buildings meet National Register Criterion A, the property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history. The area of significance identified is Industry for both a manufacturing and industrial storage facility.

The Minnesota Linseed Oil Company was founded by local entrepreneur Godfrey Scheitlin in 1868 and originally located at Washington Avenue and 10th Avenue South. The plant was relocated to the present sites at 3rd Street and 11th Avenue South in 1904 due to the original site not being large enough for the desired expansion. Thus begins the period of significance which ends in 1949 after the company moved the linseed oil processing facility to the suburbs.

The nomination includes two structures – the original office building built in 1904 (Building 4) and a varnish manufacturing building constructed in 1926 (Building 2). Other original buildings as well as the grain and oil storage facilities were demolished in 1977. Building 4 is a 5-story rectangular block constructed of heavy timber with red brick walls. The well-known geometric mural was designed by artist Peter Busa in 1973 on the southwest exterior of the building. Building 2 is L-shaped with a brick veneer and was originally built as a 20-foot, one-story structure but has since seen additions on the roof.

According to the Central Corridor report, the Minnesota Linseed Oil Company was the first manufacturer of linseed oil in Minnesota and by the early twentieth century was the largest

manufacturer of linseed oil in the state. After about ten years producing linseed oil products, the company created a new product line using linseed oil as the base for paint. The company division that created the paint sold their products under the name “Minnesota Paints”. In 1948, the linseed oil milling division merged with another company and the paint division was reincorporated as Minnesota Paints. In 1970, the company merged with Valspar.

The Central Corridor analysis goes into greater detail than the nomination report about the significance of the Minnesota Linseed Oil Company as an early paint producer. The company started producing prepared paint products in the 1870’s but the *Minneapolis City Directory* did not start listing paint producers until the early 1880’s. The Central Corridor study identifies that “none of these early paint factories are extant”. Since the nomination report does not cover early paint production competitors in Minneapolis, it is unclear whether the Minnesota Linseed Oil Company buildings are the only surviving structures continuously used for paint production.

Integrity

The National Register of Historic Places divides integrity into seven aspects: location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. Possessing several, and usually most of these aspects allows resources to successfully communicate their historical significance within a given context.²

The property and related buildings have integrity of association since Minnesota Linseed Oil Company spun off to become Minnesota Paint which then merged with Valspar. The property has experienced continuous paint production of some form since the 1870’s. The locations of Building 2 and Building 4 have not changed so both still retain integrity of setting within the larger site. The two buildings also retain much of the original materials, and the footprint and overall form have not changed since the period of significance, which speaks to integrity of materials and workmanship.

Staff Recommendation:

Staff recommends the Commission adopt this CPED report, approve the nomination to the National Register of Historic Places, and direct staff to transmit a letter summarizing the report to the State Historic Preservation Officer.

Attachments

- A. Minnesota Linseed Oil Company National Register of Historic Places Nomination prepared by Hess, Roise and Company

² National Park Service, *How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation* (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1998) 44-49.