



# Minneapolis Heritage Preservation Commission

## Actions

### Regular Meeting

4:30 p.m., Tuesday, July 12, 2011  
Room 317, City Hall  
350 South Fifth Street  
Minneapolis, MN 55415-1385

**Commission Membership:** Mr. Chad Larsen, Ms. Denita Lemmon, Mr. Kevin Kelley, Ms. Meghan Elliott, Mr. Alex Haecker, Ms. Christina Harrison, Ms. Susan Hunter Weir, Ms. Ginny Lackovic, Ms. Tammy Lindberg, and Ms. Linda Mack

**Planning Manager:** Jack Byers, 612.673.2634

**Committee Clerk:** Diana Armstrong, 612.673.2615

Commissioner Harrison was absent and excused from tonight's meeting.

The meeting was called to order at 4:34 p.m.

### For Presentation

#### 3. 24 University Avenue NE – St. Anthony Falls Historic District, Ward 3

Staff: Chris Vrchota, 612.673.5467

Certificate of Appropriateness for construction of a 10-story apartment building.

**Action: Adopt** staff findings and **approve** the Certificate of Appropriateness for construction of a new 10-story apartment building with the following conditions:

1. CPED-Planning reviews and approves final site plan, floor plans, signage, and lighting.
2. The window openings throughout the building shall have a *consistent and repeated pattern*; the saw-tooth window pattern is not approved.
3. Fiber cement panels and metal panels are not allowed or approved.
4. Use of fiberglass windows is not approved. Windows shall be metal or metal clad.
5. All glass must be clear, non-tinted, non-reflective glass. One coat of Low-E glazing is permitted on the interior surface of the windows.
6. Detailed architectural drawings shall be submitted for review and approval by the Commission.
7. All material samples must be submitted for review and approval by the Commission.
8. Adequate consideration of the description and statement of significance in the original nomination upon which designation of the historic district was based

(Finding 7) be submitted and demonstrated through narrative and/or architectural design.

9. The Applicant shall obtain all other necessary City approvals prior to the commencement of work.
10. The Certificate of Appropriateness approval shall expire if it is not acted upon within one year of approval, unless extended by the Planning Director in writing prior to one-year anniversary date of approvals.

## Corner Apartments – project narrative

The project site is currently a surface parking lot located at the intersection of 2<sup>nd</sup> Street NE and 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue NE. Multi-family housing projects surround the property – The Pinnacle (28 stories) and The Falls (19 stories) across 2<sup>nd</sup> Street, Village Lofts at St. Anthony kitty corner from the site (7.5 stories) and St. Anthony Village townhomes (2.5 stories) across 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue. Immediately adjacent to the project site is an open three-story parking garage. The open nature of the garage creates a negative visual impact for the block. Also adjacent to the property is an office/retail space (1 story) located within the renovated Historic Minneapolis Fire Department Repair Shop. The remainder of the block consists of retail/office spaces (1-2 stories) and a mixed-use multifamily residential building (3 stories).

Corner Apartments, LLC proposes the construction of a multi-family residential building with approximately 55 rental units. The building will have walk-up live/work units on the first floor fronting 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue and 2<sup>nd</sup> Street and the primary residential entrance will be on 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue. The project will utilize the adjacent existing parking ramp to satisfy parking requirements for residents. Access to the enclosed parking will be from a new skyway connection at the second floor. Construction of the new building will also greatly reduce the visual impact of the parking garage.

The building has a series of recessed, terraced areas that will provide private outdoor space for residents but will also allow the building to relate to the street because the primary building wall is flush to the property lines. By providing a setback and elevated terrace, the ground floor live/work units will have direct street access for the work area of the unit and then a three foot raised terrace area within the unit and on the exterior for the residential portion.

Across the street there are townhouses and this street in particular has a nice residential edge to it; therefore, the building design incorporates that aspect into the design of the 1<sup>st</sup> Ave and 2<sup>nd</sup> Street facades. The primary residential entry is located on 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue and the open area between the two buildings helps to provide a buffer from the adjacent building. The proposed building has a contemporary base podium but it still has a scale and proportion that becomes a respectful neighbor to the 1-story Fire Barn building which is quite charming and one of the older structures in the area. Specific elements like the building entry canopy will be more contemporary in design but these elements help develop a delightful entry and also help tie the new building into the overall fabric of the neighboring structures.

Exterior building materials of brick, dark charcoal metal panels and glass are used in order to have a contrasting affect on the elevations. The gray panels are intended to be more of a neutral and more recessive rather than progressive. The main body of the housing will appear neutral and will be smooth in texture because we feel that an artful composition involves texture paired against smoothness. It is anticipated that the brick will have a fair amount of variation as far as color. So the gray panels will be a foil for the brick and will emphasize the texture of the brick.

Balconies will be four feet by nine feet in size and are intended to have a very light, elegant presence on the elevations. The base of each balcony is a 10-inch pre-constructed slab that has a solid top and bottom (so you don't see the underside of it) and then there are tie-rod hangers. The railings will be very light – a combination of glass and a metal mesh grill is proposed. French balconies will be provided on the brick portion of the building. The railings on these balconies will consist of a painted metal frame and a metal mesh grill.

The building design is deeply responsive to its context. The design for Corner Apartments responds to the historic structures on the block, the existing high-rise residential buildings across 2<sup>nd</sup> Street, and the evolving character of this area. The new building will be constructed in accordance with HPC guidelines for this area of the St. Anthony Falls Historic District.

## HPC Feedback

The development team is specifically interested in getting feedback from the Commission regarding the use of metal panels on the building exterior. During the previous approval process, the final actions from the July 12, 2011 HPC hearing included the following condition of approval:

3. *Fiber cement panels and metal panels are not allowed or approved.*

Since the approval in 2011, the building has undergone a number of exterior modifications. Most notably, the building height has been reduced from 10 stories to 6 stories. Additionally, the cement board panels have been eliminated from the exterior.

We would like specific comments from the Commission regarding the use of metal panels as an exterior cladding material for new buildings in the Hennepin and Central character area of the district. When reading the Saint Anthony Falls Historic Guidelines for this particular character area, it is pretty clear that it is appropriate for new buildings to have contemporary exteriors.

*Retain the feeling created along Hennepin Avenue by the historic storefront buildings and minimize impacts on other adjacent historic resources while allowing for high-quality contemporary design in new infill buildings.*

This stated intent for the area supports contemporary design and we feel it supports the use of more modern exterior materials such as the metal panels that are proposed.

## Design Guidelines for the Saint Anthony Falls Historic District

Materials: Building materials should reflect the range of textures, modularity and finish of those employed traditionally. They also should contribute to the visual continuity of the specific context. They should be of high quality and proven durability in similar applications.

9.20 – Building materials shall be similar in scale, color, texture and finish to those seen historically in the context.

9.21 – Contemporary materials that are similar in character to traditional ones will be considered.

9.22 – Use high quality, durable materials.

**Exterior building materials will consist of brick, glass, and metal panels. On the two primary building facades that front 2<sup>nd</sup> Street and 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue, the majority of the elevation is comprised of a dark red brick while metal panels are used at the upper floor levels and as an accent material. On the non-primary facades that face the interior of the block, more metal panels are incorporated and the brick is a secondary material.**

**The brick will include rowlock headers at the windows to add detail and interest. Metal panels will incorporate smaller scaled joint patterns to add to the textured and detailed look of the elevations. Additionally, the design team is studying the option of varying the color of the metal panels – using varying shades of grey for each section of panel. See enclosed study of the metal panel coloring.**

Building Placement and Orientation: New infill should reflect traditional development patterns in the specific character area, including facade alignment and uniform building orientation, where such features occur.

**The proposed building will complete the corner of this block and provide an urban edge by placing the building walls at the property lines. The principal elevations align with adjacent buildings to form a visual wall along both adjacent streets.**

Architectural Character and Detail: New construction should appear as a product of its own time while also being compatible with the historically significant resources of the area.

**The project respects local precedent while at the same time it is identifiable as a contemporary building because of its sleek lines and detailing. The window patterning reflects the context while providing significant daylight to the units. At the base of the building, the raised terraces and larger windows, railing and lighting provide added variety and character at the street.**

Building Massing, Scale and Height: A new building should be compatible in height, mass and scale with its context, including the specific block, the character area, and the historic district as a whole. This should be a primary consideration for the design of a new building. Each new building also should convey a human scale, reflect similar building massing and façade articulation features of the context, and be compatible with the district skyline.

**The proposed building is 6 stories or 69 feet tall to the roof terrace level; the height of roof penthouse is 79'-6". The overall height of Corner Apartments is well below the height of existing buildings in the area and is almost identical to the height of the Saint Anthony Village condominium building that is kitty corner to the site.**

**Walk-up units at the ground floor help to convey a sense of human scale at the pedestrian level.**

Building and Roof Form: The simplicity of traditional roof forms should continue to predominate throughout the district.

**The proposed roof is flat, which is appropriate in the district.**

Primary Entrances: A primary entrance should be clearly identifiable in a new building and it should be in character with the building and its context. The entrance should include features to signify it as such, and convey a sense of scale to the passer-by.

**The primary residential entry is located on 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue, adjacent to the proposed pedestrian walkway through the site. In addition to the metal canopy, an ample amount of glass and stylish signage will bring attention to this corner, so as to announce the main entrance.**

Windows: Window design and placement should help to establish a sense of scale and provide pedestrian interest. Where solid to void patterns are clearly established, this should be maintained. Contemporary and creative design interpretations of window rhythms and patterns that reference, but do not duplicate historic designs, are also encouraged.

**Proposed window openings are rectangular in nature and have a repetitive pattern across each façade. Window heights are 2 to 3 times the width. The frames of the windows will be a painted metal finish.**

Canopies and Awnings: Continue the use of canopies and awnings within the district. They should be compatible with the building type and style, and be located appropriately on the building.

**The building incorporates a canopy over the primary residential entrance on 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue. The height and placement not only brings a pedestrian scale to the sidewalk along this street but it also relates to the fenestration of the Fire Barn building next door.**