

Project Narrative

The project site is currently a surface parking lot located at the intersection of 2nd Street NE and 1st Avenue NE. Multi-family housing projects surround the property – The Pinnacle (28 stories) and The Falls (19 stories) across 2nd Street, Village Lofts at St. Anthony kitty corner from the site (7.5 stories) and St. Anthony Village townhomes (2.5 stories) across 1st 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 56 rental units. The building will have walk-up live/work units on the first floor fronting 1st Avenue and 2nd Street and the primary residential entrance will be on 1st 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 1st Ave and 2nd Street facades. The primary residential entry is located on 1st 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 effect 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 2nd 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.

Specific Design Guidelines for the Saint Anthony Falls Historic District

1. 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.

2. 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.

3. 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 facade 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.

4. 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.

5. 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 1st 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.

6. 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 2nd Street and 1st 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.

7. 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.

8. 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 1st 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.

Certificate of Appropriateness Findings per Section 599.350

(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.

The St. Anthony Falls Historic District guidelines are intended to:

1. preserve the memory of past events
2. encourage sympathetic new development
3. encourage and enable access to the river
4. foster along the riverfront and adjacent areas a viable community geared to the pedestrian.

The new building will be compatible with the existing context which is comprised of high-rise and mid-rise residential buildings as well as low-rise commercial buildings. The project will take a current surface parking lot and transform it into a residential community that is pedestrian friendly.

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

The site does not contain properties that have been designated as contributing elements; therefore, the new construction does not alter an existing property.

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

The design team has used the design guidelines for the Saint Anthony Falls Historic District as the basis of the design for the project. The new building is visually compatible with the existing context and the exterior design will uphold the integrity of the district. See submitted details and material samples.

(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 design guidelines were carefully considered throughout the design development process. See narrative regarding the specific design guidelines for the Saint Anthony Falls Historic District Sub-Area J: East Hennepin - Central Avenue.

(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 Rehabilitation Standard that is relevant to the Corner Apartments project is Standard 9: New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction will not destroy historic materials, features, and spatial relationships that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and will be compatible with the historic materials, features, size, scale and proportion, and massing to protect the integrity of the property and its environment.

The design of the project relates to the historic district while clearly being a product of the twenty-first century. The proposed project does not contemplate destruction or alteration of any contributing historic structures.

(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.

The certificate of appropriateness supports the following principles and policies of the *Minneapolis Plan for Sustainable Growth*:

1.1.5 Ensure that land use regulations continue to promote development that is compatible with nearby properties, neighborhood character, and natural features; minimizes pedestrian and vehicular conflict; promotes street life and activity; reinforces public spaces; and visually enhances development.

1.2.1 Promote quality design in new development, as well as building orientation, scale, massing, buffering, and setbacks that are appropriate with the context of the surrounding area.

1.8.1 Promote a range of housing types and residential densities, with highest density development concentrated in and along appropriate land use features.

3.1.1 Support the development of new medium- and high-density housing in appropriate locations throughout the city.

3.1.2 Use planning processes and other opportunities for community engagement to build community understanding of the important role that urban density plays in stabilizing and strengthening the city.

3.2.1 Encourage and support housing development along commercial and community corridors, and in and near growth centers, activity centers, retail centers, transit station areas, and neighborhood commercial nodes.

3.7.5 Promote the use of high quality materials in new housing construction to minimize long-term deterioration of the housing stock.

6.9.8 Eliminate combined sewer overflows and reduce the volume of stormwater that inflows into sanitary sewers to reduce the total volume for treatment.

7.4.6 Encourage planting of appropriate vegetation for this climate and environment.

7.6: Continue to beautify open spaces through well designed landscaping that complements and improves the city's urban form on many scales – from street trees to expansive views of lakes and rivers.

7.6.3 Invest in the greening of streets, particularly those that connect into and supplement the parks and open spaces network.

10.2.5 Locate access to and egress from parking ramps mid-block and at right angles to minimize disruptions to pedestrian flow at the street level.

10.2.8 Coordinate site designs and public right-of-way improvements to provide adequate sidewalk space for pedestrian movement, street trees, landscaping, street furniture, sidewalk cafes and other elements of active pedestrian areas.

Policy 10.8: Strengthen the character and desirability of the city's urban neighborhood residential areas while accommodating reinvestment through infill development.

(b) Destruction of any property.

The project does not involve destruction of any property.

(7) The description and statement of significance in the original nomination upon which designation of the landmark or historic district was based.

The materials submitted with this application demonstrate an understanding of the significance of the Saint Anthony Falls Historic District.

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

As part of the approval for the Planned Unit Development for this project, CPED planning staff will review the overall project for compliance with the Site Plan Review standards. The project will comply with all regulations of Chapter 530 and will significantly improve current site conditions. The pedestrian realm will be maintained, as no new curb cuts are proposed. Parking will be provided in the existing parking ramp on the block. Walk-up units are proposed which will improve security for the block with eyes on the street.

(9) 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 proposed project does not involve the restoration of any historic buildings.

(10) 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 proposed building has a contemporary base podium but it still has a scale and proportion that becomes a very 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.

(11) 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 project site is currently a surface parking lot located at the intersection of 2nd Street NE and 1st Avenue NE. Multi-family housing projects surround the property – The Pinnacle (28 stories) and The Falls (19 stories) across 2nd Street, Village Lofts at St. Anthony kitty corner from the site (7.5 stories) and St. Anthony Village townhomes (2.5 stories) across 1st 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).

Granting the certificate of appropriateness for the proposed work will be in keeping with the spirit and intent of the ordinance and it will not negatively alter the Saint Anthony Falls District. The proposed project will reactivate the current surface parking lot. The proposed 6-story height will act as a bridge between the very tall Pinnacle and Falls buildings across 2nd Street, down to the 1 and 2-story buildings on the Corner Apartments block.

(12) 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. (2001-Or-029, § 1, 3-2-01; 2009-Or-023, § 11, 3-27-2009)

The proposed project will not be injurious to the significance and integrity of other resources in the Historic District. The building is set back from the adjacent Fire Barn building to the north, ensuring that the new construction will not impede the orderly preservation of this neighboring property.