

**Department of Community Planning and Economic Development**  
Historic Variances and Certificate of Appropriateness  
BZH-28069

**Date:** February 4, 2014

**Applicant:** Adsit Architecture and Planning

**Address of Property:** 300 Clifton Avenue

**Project Name:** Conversion from offices to a beauty salon, three dwelling units, and a bed and breakfast home

**Contact Person and Phone:** Mina Adsit, 612-343-8013

**CPED Staff and Phone:** John Smoley, Ph.D., 612-673-2830

**Date Application Deemed Complete:** December 27, 2013

**End of 60-Day Decision Period:** February 25, 2014

**End of 120-Day Decision Period:** April 26, 2014

**Ward:** 7

**Neighborhood Organization:** Citizens for a Loring Park Community

**Proposed Use:** Beauty salon, three dwelling units, and bed and breakfast home

**Concurrent Review:** n/a

**BACKGROUND:** The subject property is a single-family residence turned office located mid-block on Clifton Avenue between Interstate 94 and Clifton Place on the northern side of the street. In 1978 the City Council designated this property as a historic landmark significant for its Georgian Revival style of architecture, designed by architect Edwin Hewitt for Eugene J. Carpenter, a Minneapolis lumberman and prominent patron of the arts. In 1976 and 1977 the property was converted from a single family dwelling into an office building. At the same time, the property was listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

The applicant proposes to convert the building from offices to a mixed-use building with a beauty salon, three dwelling units, and a bed and breakfast home. The project requires three historic variances:

1. Historic Variance to permit a bed and breakfast home with exterior alterations or modifications that change the residential character or appearance of the dwelling or zoning lot;
2. Historic Variance to permit a bed and breakfast home with more than three bedrooms available to guests; and
3. Historic Variance to reduce the required size of a mixed use building with a neighborhood serving retail sales and service use in the OR-3/Institutional Office Residence District from 20,000 square feet to 11,213 square feet.

The following exterior changes, the subject of the Certificate of Appropriateness application, are proposed:

1. install a rooftop deck;
2. restore the porch;
3. construct a trash enclosure;
4. install landscaping;
5. repair and replace steps, stoops, and the driveway;
6. paint the exterior of the building; and
7. repair the terrace.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:**

Staff has received two letters commenting on the project, both in support of the project but one expressing concern over the effort and level of funding necessary to accomplish the proposal.

**HISTORIC VARIANCES:**

**Zoning code section authorizing the requested variances: 525.530**

**Background:** The subject property is an interior double lot. City of Minneapolis Zoning Code section 536.20 limits bed and breakfast homes to no more than 3 bedrooms available to bed and breakfast guests and prohibits exterior alterations or modifications that change the residential character or appearance of the dwelling or any accessory buildings or the zoning lot. Zoning Code section 547.30(f)(6) requires a minimum floor area of 20,000 square feet for structures with neighborhood serving retail sales and service uses like beauty salons.

**Analysis:** As conditioned, the proposed residence complies with the City of Minneapolis' Zoning Code in all areas but the number of guest rooms, the exterior modifications, and the building's minimum floor area.

**Findings as required by the Minneapolis Preservation Code:**

Before approving a historic variance, the commission shall make findings that the variance is compatible with the preservation of the property and with other properties in the area, and that the variance is necessary to alleviate practical difficulties due to special conditions or circumstances unique to the property and not created by the applicant.

The proposed Historic Variance to permit a bed and breakfast home with exterior alterations or modifications that change the residential character or appearance of the dwelling or zoning lot is partially compatible with the preservation of the property. The proposed driveway and trash enclosure, as conditioned, are designed in such a way as to meet Zoning Code requirements while complementing the character of the historic property. The proposed rooftop deck does not, however. Such a deck is not required by the Zoning Code, was not a historic feature of the home, and will be highly visible from the public right of way. Staff recommends the project be conditioned to deny the proposed rooftop deck.

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The proposed Historic Variance to permit a bed and breakfast home with exterior alterations or modifications that change the residential character or appearance of the dwelling or zoning lot are partially necessary to alleviate practical difficulties due to special conditions or circumstances unique to the property and not created by the applicant. The Zoning Code requires a trash enclosure for businesses like beds and breakfast homes but does not require a rooftop deck. Staff recommends the project be conditioned to not allow the proposed rooftop deck.

The Historic Variance to permit a bed and breakfast home with more than three bedrooms available to guests is compatible with the preservation of the property and with other properties in the area. Recent designations in the Loring Park neighborhood were for properties that were all designed as single family residences with many bedrooms for highly affluent families. The main building (exclusive of the carriage house) currently possesses nine bedrooms. The home is large enough to accommodate a bed and breakfast comfortably while still providing space for the owners to reside onsite.

The Historic Variance to permit a bed and breakfast home with more than three bedrooms available to guests is necessary to alleviate practical difficulties due to special conditions or circumstances unique to the property and not created by the applicant. The main residence was designed as a single family residence and has been designated as a Landmark by the City of Minneapolis. Conversion to a commercial building permitted by the Zoning Code would likely necessitate Building Code-required changes that would damage the building's integrity. The property is also in the Downtown Parking (DP) overlay zoning district, where accessory parking lots required for commercial buildings also require a Conditional Use Permit. The parcel also lies in the Shoreland (SH) overlay zoning district, where development, to include an accessory parking lot, within 40 feet of the top of a steep slope or bluff like the one at the rear of the subject property requires variances.

The Historic Variance to reduce the required size of a mixed use building with a neighborhood serving retail sales and service use in the OR-3/Institutional Office Residence District from 20,000 square feet to 11,213 square feet is compatible with the preservation of the property. The neighborhood serving retail sales and service use in question is a beauty salon. The salon will require minimal exterior alterations: primarily a sign (to be permitted separately) and a trash enclosure.

The Historic Variance to reduce the required size of a mixed use building with a neighborhood serving retail sales and service use in the OR-3/Institutional Office Residence District from 20,000 square feet to 11,213 square feet is necessary to alleviate practical difficulties due to special conditions or circumstances unique to the property and not created by the applicant. The main residence was designed as a single family residence and has been designated as a Landmark by the City of Minneapolis. Conversion to a commercial building permitted by the Zoning Code would likely necessitate Building Code-required changes that would damage the building's integrity.

**CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS:**

**Findings as required by the Minneapolis Preservation Code:**

**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 Georgian Revival architectural style. As conditioned, the proposed project is compatible with the building with one exception. The proposed rooftop deck will be visible from the public right of way and will not be compatible with the property's design.

**(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 not impair the integrity of the property with one exception. The deck proposed for the top of the roof will have metal guardrails highly visible from the street that diminish the building's integrity of design and 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 Commission has not adopted design guidelines for this landmark.

**(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 following exterior changes are proposed:

1. install a rooftop deck;
2. restore the porch;
3. construct a trash enclosure;
4. install landscaping;
5. repair and replace steps, stoops, and the driveway;
6. paint the exterior of the building; and
7. repair the terrace.

*Install a rooftop deck* (attachment B9-10, 13, 24-27)

The rehabilitation guidelines of *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties* recommend designing additions to roofs such as decks when required by the new use so that they are inconspicuous from the public right-of-way and do not damage or obscure character-defining features. Plans indicate that the proposed 18.5' x 22.5' deck consists of two parts: a 6.5' x 5' trap door-style access hatch and a 3.5' high aluminum frame cable railing. Renderings and plans indicate that the railing of the rooftop deck, proposed to be located at the edge of the deck roof's flat upper portion, would be visible from the public right of way.

Redesigning the deck to prevent it from being visible from the public right of way does not appear to be feasible. Setting the railing back from the roof edge would reduce its visibility, but the roof is very visible. The building is only 36.5' above grade, and the proposed deck is set 61.6' back from the property line: the approximate location of the back edge of the sidewalk. The back edge of the sidewalk is the closest point a person in the right of way could be to the building. Persons driving along Clifton Avenue or walking on the opposite side of this street would have even greater views of rooftop projections. Reducing the height of the handrail to the building code-required 3' minimum and setting the handrail back a distance where it could not be seen from the public right of way appears to reduce the deck to a size unable to accommodate the proposed 6.5' x 5' access hatch. For this reason staff recommends the project be conditioned to not allow the rooftop deck.

*Restore the porch* (attachment B4-8, 13-18, 23, 25-27, 29-35, 55-60)

The rehabilitation guidelines of *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties* recommend designing and constructing a new entrance or porch when the historic entrance or porch is completely missing. It may be a restoration based on historical, pictorial, and physical documentation; or be a new design that is compatible with the historic building's character. Historical photographs and building permit records indicate that the historic porch, proposed to be restored, was removed without a permit sometime between 1983 and 2002. The applicant has obtained original plans for the porch and intends to use the plans and historical photographs to rebuild the porch. The applicant proposes to use wood to fabricate all new porch components above the foundation and flooring with two exceptions. A balustrade and columns made of high-density urethane and fiberglass, respectively, are proposed to be installed where a painted wood balustrade and columns once stood (B29-31, 55-59).

Preservation Brief 16 (The Use of Substitute Materials on Historic Building Exteriors) identifies four circumstances where substitute materials ought to be considered:

1. the unavailability of historic materials;
2. the unavailability of skilled craftsmen;
3. inherent flaws in the original materials; and
4. code-required changes (which in many cases can be extremely destructive of historic resources).

The applicant has not demonstrated that any of these conditions exist. The company proposed to fabricate the urethane and fiberglass balustrade and columns indicates that they can make wood columns on their website, and numerous other companies reproduce wood balustrade handrails and spindles. Staff has found no evidence that the original wood materials used in the porch had inherent flaws, or that current Building Code requirements prohibit the use of wood in balustrades.

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Additionally, the proposed materials do not appear to match the historic materials in several areas. The proposed balusters appear more slender and less pear-shaped than porch balusters depicted in historical photographs (B7, 13, 25-27, 29). Furthermore, the applicant has not provided urethane or fiberglass material samples to demonstrate how they would match the appearance and durability of painted wood. For these reasons, staff recommends that the project be conditioned to ensure wood be used to make the replacement balustrade and columns.

The applicant is proposing to install a wood lattice on the northern side of the porch where a historic wood lattice once stood (B27). No detailed drawings of the lattice have been provided. Staff recommends that the project be conditioned to ensure the applicant provides scaled and dimensioned drawings of the proposed lattice to ensure its component proportions match those of components depicted in historic photographs and plans.

Photos indicate that the porch foundation and floor, made of limestone and terra cotta tiles, are deteriorated (B45). The applicant proposes to replace some, but not all, worn and broken limestone caps with cast stone caps, citing how new limestone's lighter color and sharper lines will make it stand apart from existing historic limestone, but the mixed materials will wear at different rates and thus retain a "matching" appearance for a finite period of time. The cast stone material sample provided by the applicant has sharp edges and is light in color. Furthermore, the porch, terrace, and building foundation appear to be made of limestone that matches the caps. For these reasons, staff recommends that the project be conditioned to ensure limestone blocks of the same type, size, and finish as the existing limestone caps shall be used to replace the capstones.

The applicant proposes to install 8" globular, glass lights mounted atop black metal posts affixed to the limestone step handrail on the porch's eastern side. The proposed design and materials appear to match those of the historical lights depicted in historical photographs (B25-27, 29, 31, 55).

The applicant proposes to replace terra cotta tiles on the porch floor with 24" square cast stone tiles. (B2, 4-5, 43-45). The applicant has demonstrated that terra cotta tiles installed on the porch floor are deteriorated. Photographs indicate that cracking and discoloration have occurred (B45, 60). The applicant has not demonstrated that the tiles are nonhistoric, however. Staff recommends the project be conditioned to ensure replacement tiles match the existing terra cotta tiles.

*Construct a trash enclosure* (B16, 18, 26)

The rehabilitation guidelines of *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties* recommend designing adjacent new construction which is compatible with the historic character of the site and which preserves the historic relationship between the building or buildings and the landscape. The applicant's proposed trash enclosure drawings provide no details regarding the proposed materials. Staff recommends the project be conditioned to ensure the trash enclosure cladding, doors, and posts are made of wood with metal fasteners.

*Install landscaping* (B16)

The applicant proposes to replace a gravel area on the side of the lot with unspecified landscaping. The rehabilitation guidelines of *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties* do not recommend introducing a new landscape feature, including plant material, that is

visually incompatible with the site, or that alters or destroys the historic site patterns or vistas. For this reason, staff recommends that the project be conditioned to ensure new landscaping remains low enough to preserve views of the historic building from the public right of way.

*Repair and replace steps, stoops, and the driveway (B11-13, 16-17, 25, 27, 29-31, 34-35)*

The applicant proposes to replace the asphalt driveway, concrete steps, and two carriage house concrete stoops with concrete replacements. No change to the size of these features is proposed, with one exception. The applicant proposes to widen the driveway to accommodate two parallel parking spaces on the eastern side of the driveway. The rehabilitation guidelines of *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties* recommend designing new onsite parking, loading docks, or ramps when required by the new use so that they are as unobtrusive as possible and assure the preservation of the historic relationship between the building or buildings and the landscape. The proposed uses require three parking spaces per the City of Minneapolis' Zoning Code. While the applicant can accommodate one space in the existing driveway area, two additional spaces are required. The proposed location of the spaces avoids steep slopes at the rear of the lot (where variances are required for development) and reasonably maintains views of the historic building from the public right of way. The applicant also proposes to replace nonhistoric stairway railings with simple metal handrails, with no pickets, flanking the porch steps (B11-13, 25, 27, 29-31, 34-35), where historical photos indicate similar railings once stood.

*Paint the exterior of the building (B12-13)*

The applicant proposes to repaint the building's wood exterior. The rehabilitation guidelines of *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties* recommend applying compatible paint coating systems following proper surface preparation and repainting with colors that are appropriate to the historic building and district. The proposed paint and color scheme meet these standards (B12-13).

*Repair the terrace (B4-5, 43-44)*

The applicant is proposing to replace large square concrete terrace pavers with new 2'x2' cast stone pavers. Visual evidence indicates that neither material is historic (B4-5, 43-44). Cast stone was available during the period of significance. The rehabilitation guidelines of *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties* recommend designing and installing a new masonry feature when the historic feature is completely missing. It may be an accurate restoration using historical, pictorial, and physical documentation; or be a new design that is compatible with the size, scale, material, and color of the historic building. The proposed pavers meet this standard.

**(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. With the exception of the proposed rooftop deck, the project will not modify the building in ways that are insensitive to its historical character, as discussed in finding # 5 above.

Comprehensive plan policy 8.1 states that the City will, “Preserve, maintain, and designate landmarks, landmarks, and historic resources which serve as reminders of the city's architecture, history, and culture.” As conditioned, the proposed work will help preserve one city landmark.

**(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 statement addressing these findings indicates a sound understanding of the property’s significance.

**(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 conditioned, 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.

## **STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

### **Recommendation of the Department of Community Planning and Economic Development:**

The Department of Community Planning and Economic Development recommends that the Heritage Preservation Commission adopt the findings above and **approve** the Historic Variance to permit a bed

and breakfast home with exterior alterations or modifications that change the residential character or appearance of the dwelling or zoning lot at 300 Clifton Avenue, the Eugene Carpenter House, in the OR-3/Institutional Office Residence District, DP/Downtown Parking Overlay District, and SH/Shoreland Overlay District subject to the following conditions:

1. Final site and elevation plans must be approved by CPED staff.
2. The rooftop deck is not allowed.

**Recommendation of the Department of Community Planning and Economic Development:**

The Department of Community Planning and Economic Development recommends that the Heritage Preservation Commission adopt the findings above and **approve** the Historic Variance to permit a bed and breakfast home with more than three bedrooms available to guests at 300 Clifton Avenue, the Eugene Carpenter House, in the OR-3/Institutional Office Residence District, DP/Downtown Parking Overlay District, and SH/Shoreland Overlay District subject to the following conditions:

1. Final site and elevation plans must be approved by CPED staff.

**Recommendation of the Department of Community Planning and Economic Development:**

The Department of Community Planning and Economic Development recommends that the Heritage Preservation Commission adopt the findings above and **approve** the Historic Variance to reduce the required size of a mixed use building with a neighborhood serving retail sales and service use in the OR-3/Institutional Office Residence District from 20,000 square feet to 11,213 square feet at 300 Clifton Avenue, the Eugene Carpenter House, in the OR-3/Institutional Office Residence District, DP/Downtown Parking Overlay District, and SH/Shoreland Overlay District subject to the following conditions:

1. Final site and elevation plans must be approved by CPED staff.

**Recommendation of the Department of Community Planning and Economic Development:**

The Department of Community Planning and Economic Development recommends that the Heritage Preservation Commission adopt the findings above and **approve** the Certificate of Appropriateness to convert the building at 300 Clifton Avenue, the Eugene Carpenter House, from offices to a beauty salon, three dwelling units, and a bed and breakfast home subject to the following conditions:

1. The proposed rooftop deck is not allowed.
2. The porch balustrade and columns shall be made of wood.
3. The applicant shall provide scaled and dimensioned drawings that demonstrate that the component proportions of the proposed porch lattice match those of lattice components depicted in historic photographs and plans.
4. Limestone blocks of the same type, size, and finish as the existing limestone caps shall be used to replace the capstones.

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5. Porch floor replacement tiles shall match the existing terra cotta tiles.
6. The trash enclosure cladding, doors, and posts shall be made of wood with metal fasteners.
7. New landscaping shall remain low enough to preserve views of the historic building from the public right of way.
8. 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 February 4, 2016.
9. 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.
10. CPED Staff shall review and approve the final plans and elevations prior to building permit issuance.

**Attachments:**

- A. Vicinity map
- B. Plans, photographs, and applicant's statements
- C. Public comment