



**Request for City Council Committee Action
From the Department of Community Planning & Economic Development**

Date: October 28, 2004

To: Council Member Gary Schiff, Chair of Zoning and Planning Committee

Prepared by: Amy Lucas, Senior Planner, CPED-Planning (612-673-2422)

Presenter(s) in Committee: Amy Lucas

Approved by: Barbara Sporlein, Director, Planning _____

Subject: Referral from the October 19, 2004 Heritage Preservation Commission Hearing

RECOMMENDATION: To adopt staff findings and approve the variance to vary the lot width from the required 80' to the existing 49.5'

Previous Directives: N/A

Financial Impact (Check those that apply)

No financial impact

Community Impact

Ward: 2

Neighborhood Notification: Property located in University of Minnesota

City Goals: Consistent with "Preserve and enhance our natural and historic environment and promote a clean, sustainable Minneapolis."

Comprehensive Plan: Consistent

Zoning Code: Section 525.530 and Section 599.490 authorizes the historic variance "to encourage the preservation and reuse of landmarks and properties in historic districts by providing the commission with authority to recommend departure from the literal requirements of any of the applicable zoning applications."

Background/Supporting Information

The attached report summarizes the actions taken at the Heritage Preservation Commission meeting held on October 19, 2004. The findings and recommendations are respectfully submitted for the consideration of your Committee.

**CITY OF MINNEAPOLIS
CPED PLANNING DIVISION
HERITAGE PRESERVATION COMMISSION STAFF REPORT**

FILE NAME: 1717 University Avenue SE

DATE OF APPLICATION: 9-22-04

APPLICANT: Phillips Architects & Contractors, Ltd.

WARD: 2

NEIGHBORHOOD ORGANIZATION: University of Minnesota

DATE OF HEARING: 10-19-04

HPC SITE/DISTRICT: U of M Greek Letter Chapter House Historic District

CATEGORY: Contributing

CLASSIFICATION: Historic Variance

STAFF INVESTIGATION AND REPORT: Amy Lucas

DATE: 10-12-04

A. SITE DESCRIPTION & BACKGROUND:

The building located at 1717 University Avenue SE was built in 1921 for the Delta Tau Delta Fraternity and remains under original use and ownership. The architect, Frederick Mann, designed the three-story brown brick building in the Federal Revival style with stone quoins and stone keystones over the windows. The windows contain six-over-six sash and there are stone stringcourses at the flat parapet and first story. The building has a raised open front porch.

The building is a contributing property to the University of Minnesota Greek Letter Chapter House Historic District.

At the public hearing of July, 8, 2003, the HPC approved a C of A to allow the applicant to demolish the rear portion of the existing building and construct a five-story addition to the back of the building. The proposal will preserve the front 38 feet of the building and construct a 69 foot addition out towards the back of the property. The front portion of the building will be restored to its original design including the historic main entrance, exterior materials and window and door placement. The addition will be constructed to resemble the existing building including exterior materials and window type. The addition will be built closer to the interior side property lines than the existing building and will be two stories taller than the existing building in order to identify where the historic portion of the building meets the addition. The addition will provide individual bathrooms for each of the bedrooms, a computer/study area and an elevator as well as bring the building into compliance with the current building codes.

At the public hearing of August 23, 2004, the CPC approved variances for the lot area, number of inhabitants, parking, side yard and rear setbacks.

B. PROPOSED HISTORIC VARIANCE:

The applicant is applying for an historic variance to vary the lot width from eighty (80) feet to the current 49.5' width.

Section 525.530 of the Minneapolis Zoning Code and section 599.490 of the Minneapolis Heritage Preservation Regulations authorize the historic variance “to encourage the preservation and reuse of landmarks and properties in historic districts by providing the commission with authority to recommend departure from the literal requirements of any of the applicable zoning regulations.”

The applicant, Phillips Architects & Contractors Ltd., is applying for an historic variance to vary the lot width. The 1921 building at 1717 University Avenue SE was constructed on a lot measuring 49.5 feet wide but the city zoning code requires new construction on lots measuring at least 80 feet wide. The application for this site is considered an application for new construction. The HPC and the CPC have approved the new construction on this site provided the applicant preserved the first 38 feet of the historic building. The rear building addition will be expanded beyond the historic footprint and therefore an expansion of the fraternity use. The Minneapolis Code of Ordinances allows variances of lot width for up to 30% of the lot width. Thirty percent of an 80 foot lot is 56 feet and the historic building sits on a 49.5 foot lot; therefore, the applicant is applying for the historic variance through the HPC.

C. FINDINGS

1. The property is a contributing building to the University of Minnesota Greek Letter Chapter House Historic District.
2. The proposal will preserve the first 38 feet of the historic building and provide the addition at the rear of the building as recommended by the HPC.
3. The lot width variance will allow the current fraternity to expand and continue to use the historic fraternity building.
4. The granting of the lot width variance would not significantly affect the essential character of the area given that the fraternity has existed on the site since 1921 at its current size.
5. The proposed variances are compatible with the preservation of the property and other properties in the area and alleviate undue hardships due to the unique conditions of the property.

D. STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends that the HPC adopt staff findings and forward to the City Council a recommendation to approve the historic variance to vary the lot width from the required 80 feet to the existing 49.5 feet.

E. HPC RECOMMENDATION:

At the public hearing of October 19, 2004, the HPC voted to adopt staff finding and forward to City Council a recommendation to approve the historic variances to vary the lot width from 80' to 49.5'.