

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

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FILE NAME: 1022 University Avenue, Florence Court Apartments  
DATE OF APPLICATION: June 18, 2008  
APPLICANTS: Clark Gassen, CAG Development  
PUBLICATION DATE: August 5, 2008  
DATE OF HEARING: August 12, 2008  
END OF APPEAL PERIOD: August 22, 2008  
HPC SITE/DISTRICT: Florence Court Apartments, Individual Landmark  
CATEGORY: Non-contributing  
CLASSIFICATION: Certificate of Appropriateness for new construction  
STAFF INVESTIGATION AND REPORT: Molly McCartney, (612) 673-5811

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**A. SITE DESCRIPTION & BACKGROUND:**

1022 University Avenue Southeast is a multi-building site that contains six residential structures, including one large apartment building, Florence Court. Florence Court is a local historic landmark that was designated in 1983. There are five non-contributing residential structures on the parcel that are not the subjects of this report (see agenda items #x, x, x,). As part of a proposed redevelopment plan, the five non-contributing, freestanding residential structures, and one detached garage, are proposed to be moved or demolished to make way for a new multi-family structure. The following report details the history of the local designation, the proposed new construction on the site, and an analysis of the redevelopment request.

In addition to the Florence Court parcel, there are two other properties on this block. On the northwest corner there is a service station and on the east end of the block is a contract parking lot for the University of Minnesota.

***History of the local designation***

The Florence Court parcel is unique in that a historically designated structure is located on the same tax parcel as other structures that do not have the same protection. When Florence Court was designated in 1983, the nomination from staff recommended that all the structures on the site be designated. At that time, the City Planning Commission reviewed designations and the CPC recommended that Heritage Preservation Commission adopt a recommendation that only the L-shaped apartment building, known as Florence Court, be designated. That recommendation was adopted by the City Council (per 599.260<sup>1</sup>). *See attached Council resolution on page 88.*

The designation of Florence Court noted that the property was an example of one of the oldest apartment buildings in Minneapolis and that the inward focus of the development on a courtyard was a unique design associated with community planning. The designation of the Florence Court apartment building does include the landscape of the interior courtyard – without the courtyard, Florence Court would not

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<sup>1</sup> In 1983, the corresponding ordinance section was Chapter 34.40

have the significance in which it was originally recognized for through historic designation. The other buildings on the site are considered non-contributing resources to this local historic landmark; however they have consistent building placement focusing inward to the courtyard in a “U” shaped pattern around the property

Since the time of designation, CPED-Planning staff has treated the non-contributing structures much like non-contributing structures in a historic district. Some building records have been retained in the landmark files; however, alterations to these buildings have not come under review of the HPC. The proposed changes to the site that address the non-contributing structures or the redevelopment of this area are being reviewed by staff and the HPC because the entire property is protected by the local designation, the buildings do have significance to the protected building, and the site has unique landscape features which are a major reason for designation and that changes to the site will have the potential for negative impacts.

## **B. PROPOSED CHANGES & ANALYSIS:**

Because the individual landmark is on a parcel that includes the proposed redevelopment, staff is analyzing the new construction much new construction in an historic district. While there are no local historic guidelines for Florence Court, the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation include specific guidelines for new construction on a site and also within a district.

The proposed redevelopment includes a new four-story multi-family residential apartment building as well as updates to the interior courtyard that was also detailed in the COA staff report for rehabilitation of Florence Court. The landscape features will also be discussed in this report.

### **New Construction**

The proposed new construction is four-story, 52 dwelling unit, multi-family residential building. The site is a about one and one half acres in size and the existing Florence Court apartment has a footprint of 9,445 sq. ft. The proposed building would occupy the majority of the east side of the parcel. The proposed building footprint is 16,617 sq. ft. and the front building wall is proposed to be set back 15 ft. from the property line along University Avenue Southeast.

The proposed building would have a main entrance on the University façade of the building and have town home-style units on the first and second floors that would have direct access to either the east side and the west sides of the building. The west elevation of the building would face the interior courtyard. There is also a main entrance proposed on the west elevation at the southern end of the building. The units on the third and fourth floors would have access from the front of the building, the rear of the property (facing the courtyard ), and the underground garage. The building massing is broken up with four, large portions with access at a third and fourth story connection. Access to the underground parking is proposed with access from 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue Southeast

The building has four, large portions that almost appear to be separate buildings; however, there are connections on the third and fourth floors that make it one building. On the façade, there are three main projecting building sections that terminate with gable dormers above the fourth floor. The areas under the dormers have either pairs or trios of sash windows and there are some first floor porches and entries. The building is recessed back from the main portions in a number of ways, the first being set back just a few feet and this portion include a sash window on all floors.

The east and west elevations are similar in design to the façade, in that the pattern of the main projection with the gable dormer termination. The areas under the dormers have either pairs or trios of sash windows and there are some first floor porches and entries. The building is recessed back from the main portions in a number of ways, the first being setback just a few feet and this portion include a sash window on all floor. Projecting even further back is the elevated connection that includes sash windows as well.

The proposed building has a number of exterior materials, including vertical wood siding, cement fiber board, and brick. The material has a consistent pattern of brick on the first and second floors of the large building portions, with the cement fiber board used on the main portions of the building on the third and fourth floors. This material is also used on the portions of the first and second floor that flank the brick material. On portions of the third and fourth story, the vertical wood siding is proposed to be used on areas flanking the main portions as well as on the connecting portions that are set back from the building wall.

### **Landscape**

In addition to the proposed work to the building, the site is proposed to receive improvements, including a new courtyard design, resurfacing, and increased green space. The courtyard will retain its general shape, however, instead of the current “L” shape, the proposed work includes reconfiguring the driveway from University Avenue Southeast to a circular drive around the interior so that traffic would circulate back onto University Avenue Southeast. The “L” portion toward 11<sup>th</sup> Street Southeast would be replaced with the new construction. The proposed courtyard features five parking spaces, which would reduce the current 20 to 30 un-striped parking spaces on the site. The applicants are proposing to increase the green space on the site to 13,777 sq. ft. and retain many of the mature trees on site. The driveway is proposed to have pavers as the surfacing material, and applicant is proposing to use some type of “green” building material for the paving surface.

Because the building has elevation connections on the third and fourth floors, the proposed design does have pedestrian access in and out of the courtyard in a number of locations. The proposed site plans shows that a sidewalk would be installed on the east side of the building, with sidewalk connections to the porch entrances for the units on that side, as well as sidewalk connection to 2<sup>nd</sup> Street Southeast. This proposed sidewalk would be adjacent to the University of Minnesota parking lot. Sidewalks also extend under the elevation connections in three locations and connect with another sidewalk that will extend along the west side of the building with connections to porch entrances on that side as well. These sidewalks would also connect to new sidewalks proposed along the existing façade of Florence Court.

### ***Analysis of proposed new construction***

The proposed new construction is consistent with many of the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation, or “Standards” as it relates to building site. Most importantly, the design of the new construction preserves the interior courtyard, which the designated structure is significant for being design around. The new building retains the access from University Avenue Southeast and replaces the “L” shaped driveway with a circular drive, which seems to be the original layout based on plat maps. While the courtyard materials will be replaced, it is the design and layout of the courtyard that will be preserved through the new construction. The new building is much like the five freestanding structures in that there is a prominent structure facing University Avenue Southeast and then other residential uses that face the interior courtyard. The historic relationship between buildings and the open space of the courtyard is retained.

The design and materials of the new construction is compatible with Florence Court in that the new construction uses certain design features that are also found on Florence Court, including orientation to the courtyard, materials, roof styles and entrances. The building's massing is larger than Florence Court, however, the building projections and recess along with the exterior pedestrian access through the building break up the massing and create views in and out of the courtyard, much like the previous freestanding residential structures.

The proposed circular drive and parking areas are unobtrusive to Florence Court, in that the new drive is consistent with the current setback from the buildings on the west portion of the drive and that there is limited surface parking. Five parking spaces are proposed to be located on the east side of the drive, closer to the new construction than Florence Court. Parking for the new use as well as parking for residents of Florence Court will be located under the new building.

### **C. GUIDELINE CITATIONS:**

There are no local guidelines for the Florence Court individual landmark, so the following Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation are used to evaluate the proposed new construction. Also included in this section is the chapter from the City-adopted Marcy Holmes Neighborhood Master Plan.

#### **Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation (1990)**

##### **Building Site**

###### **Recommended:**

Identifying, retaining, and preserving buildings and their features as well as features of the site that are important in defining its overall historic character. Site features can include driveways, walkways, lighting, fencing, signs, benches, fountains, wells, terraces, canal systems, plants and trees, berms, and drainage or irrigation ditches; and archeological features that are important in defining the history of the site.

Retaining the historic relationship between buildings, landscape features, and open space.

Protecting and maintaining buildings and the site by providing proper drainage to assure that water does not erode foundation wall; drain toward the building; nor erode the historic landscape.

Minimizing disturbance of terrain around buildings or elsewhere on the site, thus reducing the possibility of destroying unknown archeological materials.

Surveying areas where major terrain alteration is likely to impact important archeological sites.

Protecting, e.g. preserving in place known archeological material whenever possible.

Planning and carrying out any necessary investigation using professional archeologists and modern archeological methods when preservation in place is not feasible.

Protecting the building and other features of the site against arson and vandalism before rehabilitation work begins, i.e., erecting protective fencing and installing alarm systems that are keyed into local protection agencies.

Providing continued protection of masonry, wood, and architectural metals which comprise building and site features through appropriate surface treatments such as cleaning, rust removal, limited paint removal, and re-application of protective coating systems; and continued protection and maintenance of landscape features, including plant material.

Evaluating the overall condition of materials to determine whether more than protection and maintenance are required, that is, if repairs to building and site features will be necessary.

Repairing features of buildings and the site by reinforcing the historic materials. Repair will also generally include replacement in kind - with a compatible substitute material - of those extensively deteriorated or missing parts of features where there are surviving prototypes such as fencing and paving.

Replacing in kind an entire feature of the building or site that is too deteriorated to repair-if the overall form and detailing are still evident-using the physical evidence to guide the new work. This could include an entrance or porch, walkway, or fountain. If using the same kind of material is not technically or economically feasible, then a compatible substitute material may be considered.

### **Design for Missing Historic Features**

Designing and constructing a new feature of a building or site when the historic feature is completely missing, such as an outbuilding, terrace, or driveway. It may be based on historical, pictorial, and physical documentation; or be a new design that is compatible with the historic character of the building and site.

### **Alterations/Additions for the New Use**

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 character-defining features of the site.

Designing new exterior additions to historic buildings or adjacent new construction which is compatible with the historic character of the site and which preserve the historic relationship between a building or buildings, landscape features, and open space.

Removing nonsignificant buildings, additions, or site features which detract from the historic character of the site.

### **Not Recommended:**

Removing or radically changing buildings and their features or site features which are important in defining the overall historic character of the building site so that, as a result, the character is diminished.

Removing or relocating historic buildings or landscape features, thus destroying the historic relationship between buildings, landscape features, and open space.

Removing or relocating historic buildings on a site or in a complex of related historic structures - such as a mill complex or farm - thus diminishing the historic character of the site or complex.

Moving buildings onto the site, thus creating a false historical appearance.

Lowering the grade level adjacent to a building to permit development of a formerly below-grade area such as a basement in a manner that would drastically change the historic relationship of the building to its site.

Failing to maintain site drainage so that buildings and site features are damaged or destroyed; or, alternatively, changing the site grading so that water no longer drains properly.

Introducing heavy machinery or equipment into areas where their presence may disturb archeological materials.

Failing to survey the building site prior to the beginning of rehabilitation project work so that, as a result, important archeological material is destroyed.

Leaving known archeological material unprotected and subject to vandalism, looting, and destruction by natural elements such as erosion.

Permitting unqualified project personnel to perform data recovery so that improper methodology results in the loss of important archeological material.

Permitting buildings and site features to remain unprotected so that plant materials, fencing, walkways, archeological features, etc. are damaged or destroyed.

Stripping features from buildings and the site such as wood siding, iron fencing, masonry balustrades; or removing or destroying landscape features, including plant material.

Failing to provide adequate protection of materials on a cyclical basis so that deterioration of building and site features results.

Failing to undertake adequate measures to assure the preservation of building and site features.

Replacing an entire feature of the building or site such as a fence, walkway, or driveway when repair of materials and limited replacement of deteriorated or missing parts are appropriate.

Using a substitute material for the replacement part that does not convey the visual appearance of the surviving parts of the building or site feature or that is physically or chemically incompatible.

Removing a feature of the building or site that is unrepairable and not replacing it; or replacing it with a new feature that does not convey the same visual appearance.

### **Design for Missing Historic Features**

Creating a false historical appearance because the replaced feature is based on insufficient historical, pictorial, and physical documentation.

Introducing a new building or site feature that is out of scale or otherwise inappropriate.

Introducing a new landscape feature or plant material that is visually incompatible with the site or that destroys site patterns or vistas.

### **Alterations/Additions for the New Use**

Placing parking facilities directly adjacent to historic buildings where automobiles may cause damage to the buildings or landscape features or be intrusive to the building site.

Introducing new construction onto the building site which is visually incompatible in terms of size, scale, design, materials, color and texture or which destroys historic relationships on the site.

Removing a historic building in a complex, a building feature, or a site feature which is important in defining the historic character of the site.

**Master Plan for the Marcy Holmes Neighborhood**  
**Adopted by the City Council 2004**  
**Chapter 9. Historic Preservation**

**Historic Properties**

**Objective:** Avoid the loss of historic properties.

**Policies:**

1. Encourage strong compliance with HPC permit guidelines in the Street Anthony Falls and Fifth Street Historic Districts and individually designated properties in the neighborhood and the Ard Godfrey House just outside the neighborhood.
2. The neighborhood supports preservation designation studies for the following properties or areas:
  - A. The Frey house (mansion) at 1206 5th Street SE that is part of the Heart of the Earth School
  - B. The Joseph Avery Wright house at 1126 5th Street SE
  - C. The John S. Lane house near at 625 8th Avenue SE
  - D. The Southeast Community Library building at the corner of 13th Street and 4th Avenue
  - E. The old Pillsbury Library building at 100 University Avenue SE
  - F. Dinkytown
  - G. Steel Structures Building
  - H. Ninth Street industrial buildings
  - I. Star Machine – 6th Street and Second Avenue
3. The issue of historic preservation designation for the fraternity and sorority houses in the neighborhood should be more widely discussed.

**Historical Character**

**Objective:** Preserve the historical character of the area. The neighborhood is defined by narrow, tree-lined streets, large older houses, mostly low rise apartment buildings, fraternities and sororities, Dinkytown, the Mississippi River and adjacent riverbanks, and industries.

**Policies:**

1. Preserve such landscapes as Dinkytown, the Mississippi River area and the fraternity and sorority areas in the neighborhood.
2. Preserve the old Pillsbury library, now an art gallery, at Central Avenue and University Avenue and the newer Southeast Community library buildings.
3. Devise programs to encourage rehabilitation and conversion of multi-family dwellings to their original single-family home use in the single-family core of the neighborhood.
4. Provide information to property owners and renters about the historic character of the area and increase the general awareness and sensitivity about the historic nature of the buildings.
5. Develop grant or loan programs for property owners to repair their buildings.

6. Provide more accessible property information, including historic preservation regulations, to prospective buyers and property owners. Try to include preservation information on the Planning Department's web site.
7. There should be some flexibility with codes -- other than life safety codes -- when applied to older buildings. Codes are rigidly enforced when permits are sought. Remodeling requires updating to current code requirements. This can be very costly and discourage updating.
8. Simplify the City's permit system so that it is not so confusing and complicated and encourages reinvestment.
9. Enforce this plan's design guidelines for new developments.

#### **D. FINDINGS:**

1. The Florence Court Apartment building at 1022 University Avenue Southeast is a locally historic designated resource.
2. Florence Court is located on a parcel that includes six non-contributing structures, including five residential structures and one detached garage.
3. The proposed redevelopment includes a new four-story multi-family residential apartment building as well as updates to the interior courtyard.
4. The proposed new construction is consistent with many of the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation, or "Standards" as it relates to building site. The design of the new construction preserves the interior courtyard, which the designated structure is significant for being design around.
5. The proposed new construction is consistent with the Standards the call for the retention of character defining site features. The new building retains the access from University Avenue Southeast and replaces the "L" shaped driveway with a circular drive, which is based on historical documentation of the original layout based on plat maps. While the courtyard materials will be replaced, it is the design and layout of the courtyard that will be preserved through the new construction.
6. The proposed new construction is consistent with the Standards the call for retaining the historic relationship between buildings, landscape features, and open space. The new building is much like the five freestanding structures in that there is a prominent structure facing University Avenue Southeast and then other residential uses that face the interior courtyard. The historic relationship between buildings and the open space of the courtyard is retained.
7. The proposed new construction is consistent with the Standards the call for designing new adjacent construction to be compatible with the historic character of the site. The design and materials of the new construction is compatible with Florence Court – the new construction uses certain design features that are also found on Florence Court, including orientation to the courtyard, materials, roof styles and entrances.
8. The building's massing is larger than Florence Court; however, the building projections and recess along with the exterior pedestrian access through the building break up the massing and create views in and out of the courtyard, much like the previous freestanding residential structures.

9. The proposed change to the surface parking is consistent with the Standards that call for protecting historic buildings. The proposed circular drive and parking areas are unobtrusive to Florence Court, in that the new drive is consistent with the current setback from the buildings on the west portion of the drive and that there is limited surface parking. Five parking spaces are proposed to be located on the east side of the drive, closer to the new construction than Florence Court. Parking for the new use as well as parking for residents of Florence Court will be located under the new building.
10. The proposed new construction will not negatively impact the designated structure, or the landscape that it is significant for being designed around.

#### **E. STAFF RECOMMENDATION:**

Staff recommends that the HPC adopt staff findings and **approve** a Certificate of Appropriateness for signage, subject to the following conditions:

1. Any new construction on the site must not develop the traditional “U” shaped interior courtyard. This includes limiting the amount of parking and paving surface to be included in the courtyard. A detailed landscape plan, including existing and proposed species shall be submitted to the Heritage Preservation Commission prior to any moving or demolition permit.
2. Final drawings including plans, elevations and details shall be reviewed and approved by the Heritage Preservation Commission.

#### **F. ATTACHMENTS**

- I. Applications for Certificates of Appropriateness and Historic Variance, pages 1-7
  - A. Rehabilitation of Florence Court, pages 8-10
  - B. New Construction, page 11
  - C. Removal/Demolition of five residential structures, pages 12-19
  - D. Historic variance to allow two principal residential structures
- II. Land Use study of Florence Court and Adjacent Property, prepared by Hess, Roise, and Company, pages 20-36
- III. Description of Rehabilitation Work of Florence Court, pages 37-57
- IV. Structural reports (including photographs) for No. 1018, pages 58-75
- V. Site plan, elevation drawings and renderings of proposed redevelopment
  - A. Existing site plan, page 76
  - B. Florence Court floor plans, pages 77-80
  - C. Florence Court elevation drawings, pages 81-82
  - D. Proposed site plan with new construction and landscape changes, page 83
  - E. Elevation drawings of the proposed new construction and renderings, pages 84-87
- VI. City Council Actions, July 15, 198, in regards to the local historic designation of Florence Court, page 88
- VII. National Register of Historic Places – Nomination Form for Florence Court, 89-105
- VIII. Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps for No. 19, No. 20, No. 25, and No. 27, 106-107
- IX. Building permit histories for No. 19, No. 20, No. 25, No. 27, and No. 1018
- X. Correspondence received, pages 108-126
- XI. Map of Florence court, page 127

