

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

FILE NAME: 1900 Colfax Avenue South, F.E. Day House
CATEGORY/DISTRICT: Historic Resource
CLASSIFICATION: Demolition of an Historic Resource
APPLICANT: St. Paul Development Corporation (651) 287-1319
DATE OF APPLICATION: August 27, 2008
PUBLICATION DATE: October 7, 2008
DATE OF HEARING: October 14, 2008
APPEAL PERIOD EXPIRATION: October 24, 2008
STAFF INVESTIGATION AND REPORT: Brian Schaffer (612) 673-2670
REQUEST: Demolition of an Historic Resource

A. BACKGROUND & DESCRIPTION

The structure located at 1900 Colfax Avenue South was constructed for F.E. Day as a single family dwelling in 1908 by Evenstra & Hagstrom for a cost of \$7,000. The structure was designed by architect Ernest C. Haley and designed in a derivative of the Colonial Revival style with an open front porch with round Doric columns with egg and dart capitals. The structure has a brick veneer with a stone string course and stone window sills. The gable dormers have closed pediments which are held up by Ionic pilasters.

In 1921 a 14 by 16 foot two-story enclosed porch was added to the rear of the dwelling. In 1951 the structure was converted into a duplex and in 1981 the structure was divided once again, now into five units. Current records indicate that there are seven referenced dwelling units. The subject site is approximately 100 feet wide and 135 feet deep. The lot is 13,500 square feet in size and is currently zoned R4 Multiple Family District.

The building site also contains a 40 by 20 foot garage constructed at the same time of the home in 1908 by the same builder, Evenstra & Hagstrom.

In 2004 the applicant proposed an eight-unit condominium building on this site (BZZ-2057). The land use applications to allow for the proposed structure were denied by the Planning Commission.

B. CONSIDERATIONS FOR POTENTIAL HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE

The Minneapolis Code of Ordinances, Title 23, Heritage Preservation, Chapter 599 Heritage Preservation Regulations states that before approving the demolition of a property determined to be an historic resource, the commission shall make findings that the demolition is necessary to correct an unsafe or dangerous condition on the property, or that there are no reasonable

alternatives to the demolition. 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 historic resource a reasonable opportunity to act to protect it.

Significance of the Property as part of a Potential Historic District

A 2006 Historic Resource Inventory of the Calhoun-Isles Area identified 1900 Colfax Avenue South as a contributing property to a proposed historic district called the “Groveland Addition Residential Area.” The following is an excerpt from the Inventory Report prepared by Mead & Hunt

The Lowry Hill area is generally bounded by Hennepin Avenue on the east, 22nd Street West on the south, Logan Avenue South on the west, and I-394 on the north. This area has long been associated with homes constructed for important individuals.

Thomas Lowry, founder of the Twin Cities streetcar system, and his father-in-law Calvin Goodrich platted the Groveland Addition in 1872. The addition included areas to the west and east of Hennepin Avenue. Portions of the addition to the east of Hennepin Avenue are located outside the survey area. Lowry built a mansion (non extant) two years after platting the Groveland Addition. The mansion was located on seven acres of high ground near the corner of Hennepin Avenue and Groveland Avenue, thus affording the common name of Lowry Hill to this area. The Groveland Addition was among the earliest sections of land near the lakes to be platted and comprised the western edge of high-style residential development in Minneapolis.

Rapid development of the Lowry Hill area did not commence until the 1890s, following improvements made to Hennepin Avenue and land surrounding Lake of the Isles. After the extension of electrified streetcar lines, the Lowry family began marketing real estate in the Groveland Addition in 1892. The large lots, at least 50 feet by 135 feet, on small blocks were offered to buyers at high prices and with restrictions written into the deeds to attract wealthy residents. Examples of these restrictions include a 25-foot front yard setback and a minimum home construction value of \$5,000.¹ Development expanded to areas adjacent to the Groveland Addition as real estate agents sold platted additions with similar restrictions.

Within the survey area, the majority of construction within the Groveland Addition occurred between approximately 1893 and 1916. Houses were built by prominent business leaders that included J.B. Hudson, Governor John Lind, and Annie and Elizabeth Quinlan. Leading Minneapolis architects designed the homes in fashionable Period Revival styles. Many of the homes feature brick and stone masonry construction and brick veneer. When compared to the surrounding homes, approximately nine city blocks of the Groveland Addition stand out among the rest. These particular blocks within the Groveland Addition display among the most outstanding examples of architecture found within the survey area. The homes are located on large lots, feature a consistent visual row of similar architectural style, form, and character along broad streetscapes, and retain excellent historic integrity.

Pictorial evidence illustrates that the structure at 1900 Colfax Avenue South is in keeping with the massing, architectural style, and orientation of other properties within the Groveland Addition Potential Historic District. The Groveland Addition Potential Historic District is likely eligible for designation under local criterion number 4 - the property embodies the distinctive characteristics of an architectural or engineering type or style, or method of construction.

¹ Bob Glancy, "Theodore and Belle Wold House," City of Minneapolis, 2006, n.p.

Individual Significance of Property

The 2006 Historic Resource Inventory of the Calhoun-Isles Area identified 1900 Colfax Avenue South as an individual historic resource. The Inventory states that 1900 Colfax Avenue South is “recommended individually for intensive level survey and research.” The structure is likely eligible for designation under local criterion number 4 - the property embodies the distinctive characteristics of an architectural or engineering type or style, or method of construction. Staff believes that this is a unique example of Colonial Revival architecture in Minneapolis. The structure may also be eligible for designation under local criterion number 5 - the property exemplifies a landscape design or development pattern distinguished by innovation, rarity, uniqueness or quality of design or detail. And under criterion number 6 - the property exemplifies works of master builders, engineers, designers, artists, craftsmen or architects.

The architect of the F.E. Day house was Ernest C. Haley. He was born on September 25, 1867 in Malone, New York. He was the son of architect Joseph Haley. The family moved to Minneapolis when Ernest was a child and he studied architecture with his father. The Haley's were responsible for residential and business construction in Minneapolis and Montevideo, Minnesota at the turn of the century. Ernest C. Haley died on July 2, 1954.

Other properties that were designed with Haley’s involvement include:

- 39 Barton Avenue SE... ...1901
- 45 Barton Avenue SE... ...1904
- 51 Barton Avenue SE... ...1904
- 87 Bedford Avenue SE... ...1908
- 96 Bedford Avenue SE... ...1923
- 1834 Fremont Avenue SE.....1903
- 617 Central Avenue NE... ...1898
- 1501 Washington Avenue S... 1916

Physical Integrity of Property

Section 599.480(b) of the Ordinance states that “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 applicant has not submitted information detailing the specific physical condition of the structures beyond stating that the structures are in “fair” physical condition. The applicant states that “the existing building is functionally obsolete”, but the applicant has not provided information illustrating what about the structure is functionally obsolete to support this statement.

The 2006 Historic Resource Inventory states that the condition of the materials is “good.”

Economic Value of the Existing Structure:

The 2007 Assessor’s estimated market value states that the property is worth \$641,500; of that amount \$321,900 is attributed to the structure. The applicant has not provided staff with an analysis of the cost to renovate the structure; however the applicant did state that it would cost “\$400 per square foot to return the building back to a single family residence. This information is not supported by any documentation provided by the applicant. According to City Assessor’s data the structure is 5,449 square feet. Based on the applicant’s estimate, that is not based on any supported documentation, the cost would be \$2,179,600 to return the structure to a single family residence.

Usefulness of the Existing Structure:

The applicant states that structure is “functionally obsolete.” The single family structure was divided into seven dwelling units in 1981. The City of Minneapolis Assessor information shows that the subject structure has 5,449 square feet of finished space.

C. PROPOSED CHANGES:

The applicant has not submitted redevelopment plans for the site. The applicant states that they are proposing to remove all the structures on the property and then grade and sod the property.

D. APPLICABLE POLICIES:

The following are policies from The Minneapolis Plan: Minneapolis’s Comprehensive Plan, adopted in 1999.

Policy 1.7: “Minneapolis will recognize and celebrate its history.” This policy is supported by the following implementation step “encourage new developments to retain historic structures, incorporating them into new development rather than demolishing them.”

Policy 4.14: “Minneapolis will maintain the quality and unique character of the city's housing stock, thus maintaining the character of the vast majority of residential blocks in the city.” This policy is supported by the following implementation step “encourage adaptive re-use, retrofit and renovation projects that make the city's housing stock competitive on the regional market.”

E. APPLICABLE ORDINANCES:

Chapter 599. Heritage Preservation Regulation

ARTICLE V DESIGNATION

599.210. Designation criteria. The following criteria shall be considered in determining whether a property is worthy of designation as a landmark or historic district because of its historical, cultural, architectural, archaeological or engineering significance:

- (1) The property is associated with significant events or with periods that exemplify broad patterns of cultural, political, economic or social history.
- (2) The property is associated with the lives of significant persons or groups.
- (3) The property contains or is associated with distinctive elements of city identity.
- (4) The property embodies the distinctive characteristics of an architectural or engineering type or style, or method of construction.
- (5) The property exemplifies a landscape design or development pattern distinguished by innovation, rarity, uniqueness or quality of design or detail.
- (6) The property exemplifies works of master builders, engineers, designers, artists, craftsmen or architects.
- (7) The property has yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

599.230. Commission decision on nomination. The commission shall review all complete nomination applications. If the commission determines that a nominated property appears to meet at least one of the criteria for designation contained in section 599.210, the commission may direct the planning director to commence a designation study of the property. (2001-Or-029, § 1, 3-2-01)

599.240. Interim protection. (a) Purpose. Interim protection is established to protect a nominated property from destruction or inappropriate alteration during the designation process.

(b) *Effective date.* Interim protection shall be in effect from the date of the commission's decision to commence a designation study of a nominated property until the city council makes a decision regarding the designation of the property, or for twelve (12) months, whichever comes first. Interim protection may be extended for such additional periods as the commission may deem appropriate and necessary to protect the designation process, not exceeding a total additional period of eighteen (18) months. The commission shall hold a public hearing on a proposed extension of interim protection as provided in section 599.170.

(c) *Scope of restrictions.* During the interim protection period, no alteration or minor alteration of a nominated property shall be allowed except where authorized by a certificate of appropriateness or a certificate of no change, as provided in this chapter. (2001-Or-029, § 1, 3-2-01)

A. ARTICLE VIII. HISTORIC RESOURCES

599.440. Purpose. This article is established to protect historic resources from destruction by providing the planning director with authority to identify historic resources and to review and approve or deny all proposed demolitions of property.

599.450. Identification of historic resources The planning director shall identify properties that are believed to meet at least one of the criteria for designation contained in section 599.210, but that have not been designated. In determining whether a property is an historic resource, the planning director may refer to building permits and other property information regularly maintained by the director of inspections, property inventories prepared by or directed to be prepared by the planning director, observations of the property by the planning director or any other source of information reasonably believed to be relevant to such determination.

599.460. Review of demolition permits. The planning director shall review all applications for a demolition permit to determine whether the affected property is an historic resource. If the planning director determines that the property is not an historic resource, the demolition permit shall be approved. If the planning director determines that the property is an historic resource, the demolition permit shall not be issued without review and approval by the commission following a public hearing as provided in section 599.170.

599.470. Application for demolition of historic resource. An application for demolition of an historic resource shall be filed on a form approved by the planning director and shall be accompanied by all required supporting information, as specified in section 599.160.

599.480. Commission decision. (a) *In general.* If the commission determines that the property is not an historic resource, the commission shall approve the demolition permit. If the commission determines that the property is an historic resource, the commission shall deny the demolition permit and direct the planning director to commence a designation study of the property, as provided in section 599.230, or shall approve the demolition permit as provided in this section.

(b) *Destruction of historic resource.* Before approving the demolition of a property determined to be an historic resource, the commission shall make findings that the demolition is necessary to correct an unsafe or dangerous condition on the property, or that there are no reasonable alternatives to the demolition. 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 historic resource a reasonable opportunity to act to protect it.

(c) *Mitigation plan.* The commission may require a mitigation plan as a condition of any approval for demolition of an historic resource. Such plan may include the documentation of the property by measured drawings, photographic recording, historical research or other means appropriate to the significance of the property. Such plan also may include the salvage and preservation of specified building materials, architectural details, ornaments, fixtures and similar items for use in restoration elsewhere.

The 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.

-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.

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

F. FINDINGS:

1. 1900 Colfax Avenue South was identified as part of Groveland Addition Potential Historic District in the 2006 Historic Resource Inventory of the Calhoun-Isles Area.
2. 1900 Colfax Avenue South was recommended individually for intensive level survey and research in the 2006 Historic Resource Inventory of the Calhoun-Isles Area.
3. There is no known unsafe condition that needs to be corrected through demolition. The property owner has the responsibility to maintain the property.
4. The applicant has not submitted detailed information regarding the specifics of the physical condition of the structure or evidence that shows the structure is “functionally obsolete.”
5. The applicant has not submitted sufficient analysis of the existing value of the structure, cost to rehabilitate the structure, or other economic considerations.
6. The applicant has not provided an analysis of reasonable alternative uses for the structure.

G. STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends that the Heritage Preservation Commission adopt staff findings and **deny** the demolition application of the property at 1900 Colfax Avenue South and direct the Planning Director to commence a designation study.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Application and Applicant Statement
2. Map of Potential Groveland Addition Historic District
3. Minneapolis HPC Building Inventory Form for 1900 Colfax Ave S
4. Photographs of Property