

Department of Community Planning and Economic Development - Planning Division
Certificate of Appropriateness
BZH-27308

Date: June 19, 2012

Applicant: BKV Group, on behalf of Village Green Companies

Address of Property: 101 5th Street S

Project Name: Soo Line Building restoration and conversion

Contact Person and Phone: Gretchen Camp, 612-339-3752

Planning Staff and Phone: Chris Vrchota, 612-673-5467

Date Application Deemed Complete: May 18, 2012

Publication Date: June 12, 2012

Public Hearing: June 19, 2012

Appeal Period Expiration: June 29, 2012

Ward: 7

Neighborhood Organization: Downtown Minneapolis Neighborhood Association

Concurrent Review: N/A

Attachments:

- Materials Submitted by CPED – A1
- Materials Submitted by Applicant – B1-B-153
- Materials Submitted by Others - C-1

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CLASSIFICATION:	
Individual Landmark	Soo Line Building
Period of Significance	1914-1915
Criteria of significance	Architecture
Date of local designation	1996
Date of National Register of Historic Places Listing	2008
Applicable Design Guidelines	Secretary of Interior Standards for Rehabilitation

PROPERTY INFORMATION	
Current name	Soo Line Building
Historic Name	First National Soo Line Building
Current Address	101 5 th Street S
Historic Address	101 5 th Street S
Original Construction Date	1914-1915
Original Contractor	Thompson and Starrett Company
Original Architect	Robert Gibson
Historic Use	Offices
Current Use	Offices, lower level retail
Proposed Use	Mixed use- Retail and rental apartments

BACKGROUND:

The Soo Line Building is a 19-story commercial building designed in the Renaissance Revival style, constructed between 1914-1915. Designed by architect Robert Gibson and built by the Thompson and Starrett Company, the Soo Line Building was the tallest building in Minneapolis at the time of its completion. Despite alterations including the installation of a skyway connection, replacement of most of the windows and replacement of the street level storefronts, the building retains its integrity.

The Soo Line Building was designated as a local landmark in 1996 and placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 2008.

SUMMARY OF APPLICANT'S PROPOSAL:

The Applicant intends to convert the building from the current office use into rental apartment units. The Applicant has an extensive proposed scale of work that includes rehabilitation, restoration, and alterations to the building. (See the project description and plans in Appendix B for the detailed scope of work proposed by the Applicant.) General, building-wide work includes: cleaning and re-pointing the existing masonry, repair and replacement of damaged or deteriorated terra cotta cladding, reconstruction of the rooftop parapet wall, repair of terra cotta coping, repair and restoration of historic window units, replacement of existing non-historic windows with new aluminum window units, and replacement of the street-level storefronts. The Applicant is also proposing to construct rooftop additions.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

The Downtown Minneapolis Neighborhood Association submitted a letter supporting the proposed project. (See Appendix C).

Findings as required by the Minneapolis Preservation Code:

The Planning Division of 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.*

The Applicant is proposing a large scale rehabilitation of the building that includes repairing existing historic windows, repairing masonry, replacing non-original windows and storefronts. The window and masonry repairs will stabilize the building and help retain historic building materials. The proposed replacement windows are designed to more closely match the original windows on the building than the existing replacement windows do. (See Appendix B-26 – B-26 for historic drawings and photographs, Appendix B-121 and B-123 B-124 for window details and color sheets numbered A510 & A511 for a window survey.) The new storefronts are not intended to match the historic conditions, but are compatible with the design of the building. (See Appendix B-119 – B-120 and B-122 for storefront details.) The proposed work is compatible with and supports the criteria and period of significance for the building.

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

The Soo Line Building is significant for its representation of the Renaissance Revival style of architecture. Character defining features include the faux balconies on the 5th and 15th floors, multi-storied arched windows between the 2nd and 3rd floors, and masonry details at the 4th and 19th floors. The proposed repair work on these features will help protect the integrity of the landmark. Replacing the existing single-hung replacement windows with more appropriate double-hung windows will also improve the integrity of the building. Finally, the proposed rooftop additions are setback from the primary building walls. This setback, combined with the height of the building and limited sightlines would greatly reduce the visibility of the additions. (See sight study in Appendix B-134- B-153.) The proposed work is in keeping with this finding.

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

Both the City of Minneapolis' Heritage Preservation Regulations and the National Register of Historic Places identify integrity as the authenticity of historic properties and recognize seven aspects that define a property's integrity: location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association. Based upon the evidence provided below, the proposed work would impact but not impair the integrity of the landmark.

Location: The Applicant is not proposing to change the location of the structure, thus the project will not impair the landmark's integrity of location.

Design: The aspects of the project that have the biggest potential to impact the integrity of design are the proposed window and storefront replacements and the proposed rooftop additions.

The Applicant is proposing to replace existing replacement windows on the building with new windows intended to more closely match the original windows on the building. The existing replacement windows are single-hung windows with a dark bronze tinting. The Applicant is proposing to install new aluminum double-hung windows with clear insulated glass. As outlined in Appendix B-6-B, these windows are not exact replicas of the historic windows and do have a wider frame and sash profile. However, they are substantially closer to the original design than the existing windows and would be appropriate for the building.

The Applicant is also proposing to restore glazing to the large window sections between the 2nd and 3rd floor where they are currently filled in with louvers. Again, these are not meant to fully replicate or restore the historic condition, but the proposed design is compatible with the design of the building.

The proposed rooftop addition is set back from the rooflines along the north, east and west sides of the building. The setback, combined with the height of the building greatly limit the visibility of the proposed rooftop addition. (See sightline study in Appendix B-134 – B-153. Because of the limited visibility, the proposed rooftop addition would not have a substantial impact on the integrity of design.

Setting: The Applicant is not proposing any modifications that would have an impact on the integrity of setting.

Materials: The Applicant is proposing to repair damaged brick, terra cotta and granite where feasible. They are proposing to replace in-kind any masonry elements that are too damaged or deteriorated to be repaired. (See Appendix B-43 – B-53 for a detailed scope of work for the masonry repairs.) New flashing will be installed with the repaired/replaced masonry features to provide better long-term protection. The Applicant is also proposing to repair and restore the remaining historic windows on the south side of the building. The proposed work will have a beneficial impact on the integrity of materials by repairing and restoring existing historic materials.

During the concept review for this project, the Applicant and the Heritage Preservation Commission discussed the possibility of restoring or altering an existing skylight that has been roofed over on the 3rd floor. After further studying the issue, the Applicant has decided to replace the roofing material over the skylight to prevent any further damage, but not to pursue restoration at this time. While restoration of the skylight would be the

ideal treatment, maintaining it in its current state and leaving the possibility for future restoration open is a suitable treatment.

Workmanship: The addition would not result in the loss or alteration of any distinct decorative or character defining elements on the building and would not have an impact on the integrity of workmanship.

Feeling: The proposed replacement of the existing windows and the removal of the louvers in the arched window frames between the second and third stories would help to restore the original appearance of the building, having a positive impact on the integrity of feeling.

Association: The proposed alterations would not have a substantial impact on the integrity of association.

- (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 Heritage Preservation Commission has not adopted individual design guidelines for the Soo Line Building.

- (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.***

Standard # 1 states: "A property will be used as it was historically or be given a new use that requires minimal change to its distinctive materials, features, spaces, and spatial relationships." The First National Soo Line Building was originally built as a joint headquarters for the First National Bank and Soo Line Railroad. It has served primarily as office space since it was completed in 1915. The Applicant is proposing to convert a large portion of the building for use as rental apartments. While the use will change, this change of use would not require any changes to distinctive materials, features, spaces or spatial relationships. The proposed work is in keeping with this standard.

Standard # 2 states: "The historic character of a property will be retained and preserved. The removal of distinctive materials or alteration of features, spaces, and spatial relationships that characterize a property will be avoided." The Applicant is not proposing to remove any distinctive materials or the alteration of any features, spaces or spatial relationships that characterize the property. The work is in keeping with this standard.

Standard # 5 states: "Distinctive materials, features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property will be preserved." The Applicant is proposing to repair and restore damaged and deteriorated historic features

where feasible and to provide compatible replacements where rehabilitation is not possible. The distinctive materials and features that characterize the property will be preserved, in keeping with this standard.

Standard # 6 states: "Deteriorated historic features will be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature will match the old in design, color, texture, and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features will be substantiated by documentary and physical evidence." The Applicant is proposing to repair and restore damaged and deteriorated historic features where feasible and to provide compatible replacements where rehabilitation is not possible. The Applicant is proposing to use the existing features to guide the design of the replacement features where replacement is necessary. The Applicant is proposing to use glass reinforced fiber concrete to replace some terra cotta features, which is consistent with the National Park Service Preservation Brief #7: *The Preservation of Historic Glazed Architectural Terra Cotta*. The proposed work is in keeping with this standard.

Standard # 9 states: "New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction will not destroy historic materials, features, and spatial relationships that characterize the property. The new work will 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 proposed rooftop additions would not destroy historic materials, features or spatial relationships that characterize the property. The Applicant is proposing to use metal cladding on the exterior of the additions, serving to differentiate them from historic building elements. The additions would also be shorter than the existing rooftop penthouse, further differentiating them. The additions would be setback from all sides of the building, limiting their visibility. The proposed rooftop additions would be in keeping with this standard.

Standard # 10 states: "New additions and adjacent or related new construction will be undertaken in such a manner that, if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired." The rooftop additions could be removed in the future without having an impact on the essential form and integrity of the historic building, in keeping with 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.***

As conditioned, the project would comply with policy 8.1.1 of The Minneapolis Plan, which states: "Protect historic resources from modifications that are not sensitive to their historic significance."

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:

- (7) ***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 submitted statements outlining how they feel the proposed work meets the applicable findings (see Appendix B-19 – B-24).

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

The proposed rooftop additions do require site plan review. The Applicant is working with Development Services staff on the required application process.

- (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 Applicant submitted a statement saying how they believed the proposal was in keeping with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation (see Appendix B-20 – B-22). As outlined in Finding #5 above, staff finds that the proposed work is in keeping with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties.

RECOMMENDATION

The Department of Community Planning and Economic Development – Planning Division recommends that the Heritage Preservation Commission adopt the above findings and **approve** the Certificate of Appropriateness for building restoration, repairs and alterations for the property located at 101 5th Street South, with the following condition(s):

1. CPED-Planning shall review and approve the final site plan, floor plans, elevations, finishes and materials.
2. All workmanship must be completed in conformance with the Secretary of Interior Standards, see: <http://www.nps.gov/history/hps/tps/standguide/>
3. The Applicant shall obtain all other necessary City approvals prior to the commencement of work.
4. The Certificate of Appropriateness approvals shall expire if not acted upon within one year of approval, unless extended by the Planning Director in writing prior to the one-year anniversary date of the approvals.

Attachment A: Submitted by CPED staff

Attachment B: Materials submitted by Applicant

Attachment C: Materials submitted by Others