

Department of Community Planning and Economic Development – Planning Division

Date: August 7, 2012

Proposal: Preservation Plan for the Machine Shop and White Grain Elevators of the Pillsbury A Mill Complex

Applicant: Owen Metz with Dominion, on behalf of Minneapolis Leased Housing Associates IV Limited Partnership

Address of Property: 301 Main Street SE, 100 3rd Avenue SE, 300 2nd Street SE, 400 2nd Street SE

Project Name: Pillsbury A Mill Complex

Contact Person and Phone: Owen Metz, 763.354.5618

Planning Staff and Phone: Brian Schaffer, 612.673.2670

Date Application Deemed Complete: June 29, 2012

Publication Date: July 31, 2012

Public Hearing: August 7, 2012

Appeal Period Expiration: August 10, 2012

Ward: 3

Neighborhood Organization: Marcy Holmes Neighborhood Association

Concurrent Review: Land use applications: Conditional Use Permit for a Planned Unit Development, Site Plan Review (BZZ-5522 and PL-263) were approved by the City Planning Commission on April 23, 2012.

Attachments:

Attachment A: Materials submitted by CPED staff

- A1. Map of Surrounding Area
- A2. Map of Historic District

Attachment B: Materials submitted by Applicant

- B1. WJE Conditions Study Report
- B2. Original Plans for the White Grain Elevators

CLASSIFICATION:	
Local Historic District	Saint Anthony Falls Historic District
Period of Significance	1858-1940
Criteria of significance	Architecture and Social Significance
Date of local designation	1971
Applicable Design Guidelines	- Saint Anthony Falls Historic District Guidelines - Secretary of Interior Standards for Treatment of Historic Properties

PROPERTY INFORMATION	
Current name	Pillsbury A Mill Complex, Mill and Main Phase I and Phase II and The Soap Factory
Historic Name	Pillsbury A Mill Complex
Proposed Address	301 Main Street SE
Historic Address	300 2 nd Street SE and 100 3 rd Avenue SE
Original Construction Date	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pillsbury "A" Mill (1880-1881) • Great Northern Railway Corridor (ca 1880-ca1916) • Red Tile Elevator (1910) • White Concrete Elevators (1914-1916) • Cleaning House (1914-1917) • South Mill (1916-1917) • Warehouse I (1917) • Warehouse II (1918-1919)
Original Contractor	N/A
Original Architect	Pillsbury A Mill: Leroy Buffington
Historic Use	Industrial
Current Use	Vacant
Proposed Use	Residential

SITE BACKGROUND:

The Pillsbury “A” Mill Complex is located in the Saint Anthony Falls Historic District. The Pillsbury “A” Mill is a National Historic Landmark, one of three in the City of Minneapolis. National Historic Landmark (NHL) status means the property is recognized as being significant to the history of the nation.

The NHL nomination form, prepared by Stephen Lissandrello, summarizes the significance of the Pillsbury A Mill succinctly. “Only one of the giant flour mills that made Minneapolis the milling capital of the nation from 1880 until 1930 still stands. The Pillsbury “A” Mill was the largest, most advanced mill in the world at its completion in 1881. The “A” Mill was a masterpiece of industrial design, a standard from which all other mills of its time were measured.”

The Pillsbury “A” Mill Complex contains ten contributing resources consisting of two structures and eight buildings; the complex also contains two non-contributing resources.

- Pillsbury Water Power System Infrastructure (1881) (*contributing structure*)
- Great Northern Railway Corridor (ca 1880- ca1916) (*contributing structure*)
- Pillsbury “A” Mill (1880-1881) (*contributing building*)
- Machine Shop (1916) (*contributing building*)
- Warehouse II (1918-1919) (*contributing building*)
- South Mill (1916-1917) (*contributing building*)
- Warehouse I (1917) (*contributing building*)
- Cleaning House (1914-1917) (*contributing building*)
- Red Tile Elevator (1910) (*contributing building*)
- White Concrete Elevators (1914-1916) (*contributing building*)
- Manildra Hydroprocessing Building (*non-contributing building*)
- Research & Development Annex Building (*non-contributing building*)

Together these historic resources functioned as an industrial machine that enabled the Pillsbury “A” Mill Complex to produce a staggering 17,000 barrels of flour a day, which could be visualized as a line of 25-pound flour sacks 56 miles long.¹

BACKGROUND ON PAST AND CURRENT PROPOSALS:

On March 20, 2012 the Minneapolis Heritage Preservation Commission (HPC) reviewed a Certificate of Appropriateness for the treatment of the rail corridor, site plan, and the construction of a new parking structure at the Pillsbury A Mill Complex. The HPC approved the application with several conditions including:

A preservation plan shall be submitted for the White Grain Elevators and Machine Shop. This plan is to be reviewed by the HPC at a public hearing.

¹National Register of Historic Places, St. Anthony Falls Historic District: St. Anthony Falls Waterpower Area. Prepared by Jeffery Hess and Scott Anfinson. 1992

The HPC added this condition of approval to address concerns over not having any immediate plans for the reuse or maintenance of the White Grain Elevator and Machine Shop. The HPC was also concerned about the impact of the site and parking structure work on the adjacent buildings. The Applicant's application materials from March 20, 2012 did not address these items.

The Applicant's proposed preservation plan consists of two main parts: Conditions surveys of the Machine Shop and White Grain Elevators and copies of the original plans for the White Grain Elevators.

The Conditions Survey was conducted by Wiss, Janey, Elstner Associates (WJE). The report states their investigation had four objectives:

1. To observe the current state and general condition of the exterior shell of each building
2. To identify areas of immediate concern in need of repair or stabilization.
3. To outline items that should be considered part of a routine maintenance schedule designed to maintain the existing building conditions and limit future deterioration.
4. To ascertain whether the proposed site work, demolition or construction in adjacent areas will have negative impacts on any portions of these structures

The survey consists of a brief description of each of the buildings followed by exterior observations for each building. The report then lists repair or stabilization recommendations for areas of immediate concern. There are three recommendations.

Machine Shop:

1. Address the distressed southwest corner of the Machine Shop.

White Grain Elevators:

1. Inspect incipient spalls and remove the spalls deemed to be unsound.
2. Exterior equipment, ladders, bridges, and chutes that are to be remained in place were not inspected for this study. The construction and design team should address the need to for additional bracing of these features.

The survey also includes future maintenance recommendations which identifies repairs and preservation procedures to be completed within the next ten years "... in order to, at a minimum, maintain existing building conditions and prevent further deterioration." Six items were identified for the Machine Shop and three for the White Grain Elevators.

ANALYSIS

The materials submitted by the Applicant provide for a good understanding of the existing physical condition of the two buildings. The background on each of the buildings is brief and addresses major visible alterations to the buildings since they were constructed. The observations of the buildings and identification of areas of immediate concern and future

maintenance is helpful in understanding the impact of issues observed on the buildings on the short term and long term integrity of the buildings.

The Applicant has not provided an approach or timeline to address the items raised in the Conditions Survey. Nor has the Applicant identified the procedures to address these items. The Applicant is not required by their previous approvals to complete any of the work recommended in the Conditions Survey. However, it should be noted that Article XI of Chapter 599 of the Preservation Ordinance does address maintenance of properties in historic districts. This article states:

599.650. Duty to maintain. All landmarks, properties in historic districts, nominated properties under interim protection and historic resources shall be kept in a state of maintenance and repair as required by Title 5 of the Minneapolis Code of Ordinances, Building Code, and Title 12 of the Minneapolis Code of Ordinances, Housing, and with all other applicable regulations. (2001-Or-029, § 1, 3-2-01)

599.660. Prevention of deterioration. No person with a legal or equitable interest in a landmark, property in an historic district or nominated property under interim protection, whether occupied or not, shall permit the property to fall into a serious state of disrepair or to remain in a serious state of disrepair so as to materially impair the integrity of the property or historic district. (2001-Or-029, § 1, 3-2-01)

The Applicant is required by ordinance to maintain the buildings. It should also be noted that when the Applicant pursues the repair and stabilization work it will require review by CPED in accordance with procedures of the Preservation Ordinance.

The Conditions Survey report submitted by the Applicant had four objectives. The final objective: “to ascertain whether the proposed site work, demolition or construction in adjacent areas will have negative impacts on any portions of these structures.” This objective does not appear to be addressed in the Conditions Survey report and could be very informative to understanding the impact of the proposed project on these two resources.

The HPC, in their March 20, 2012 approvals, included a condition that: “The Applicant shall submit and be responsible for implementing a plan to monitor and maintain the stability of the White Concrete Grain Elevators, the Machine Shop, Red Tile Elevator, Pillsbury A Mill, Cleaning House, and the South Mill during the demolition and construction phase of the project. The plan shall be submitted to CPED for review and approval.”

The above condition has similarities to the fourth objective of the Conditions Study. The Applicant has not yet submitted this plan for review and approval by CPED.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

The Department of Community Planning and Economic Development - Planning Division recommends that the Heritage Preservation Commission **approve** the Preservation Plan for the Machine Shop and White Grain Elevators of the Pillsbury A Mill Complex for properties located at 301 Main Street SE, 100 3rd Avenue SE, 300 2nd Street SE, 400 2nd Street SE.