

MINUTES
Regular Meeting of the
Edina Heritage Preservation Board
Edina City Hall – Community Room
Tuesday, April 14, 2015
7:00 p.m.

I. CALL TO ORDER 7:00 P.M.

II. ROLL CALL

Answering roll call was Chair Weber and Members, Moore, McLellan, Sussman, Christiaansen, Birdman, Kelly, Pearson and Student Members Otness and Druckman. Absent was Member O'Brien. Staff present was Senior Planner, Joyce Repya.

III. APPROVAL OF MEETING AGENDA

Member Kelly moved to approve the meeting agenda. Member Moore seconded the motion. All voted aye. The motion carried.

IV. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES March 10, 2015

Member Moore moved approval of the minutes from the March 10th meeting. Member Birdman seconded the motion. All voted aye. The motion carried.

V. COMMUNITY COMMENT - None

VI. REPORTS & RECOMMENDATIONS

**I. Edina Heritage Landmark Nomination - Oskam House - 6901
Dakota Trail**

Planner Repya reported that the HPB received a request for Edina Heritage Landmark designation from Marri Oskam, the owner of 6901 Dakota Trail. Mrs. Oskam explained her motivation for requesting the heritage landmark designation of her home centered on her desire to prevent a future owner of the property from tearing the house down - particularly in light of the tear-down trend underway in Edina. Upon receipt of the request, Preservation Consultant Robert Vogel conducted a nomination study and worked on a plan of treatment for the property in collaboration with Mrs. Oskam.

The nomination study describes the Oskam House as a two-level, single-family residence in the International style with a rectangular plan, a butterfly roof, post and beam construction, a walk-out basement, and a two-car detached garage. In keeping with its style, it is carefully integrated within its site. The exterior walls are clad with vertically grooved redwood siding. The interior of the house reflects the modernistic aesthetic in its vigorously functional open plan, geometric shapes, flat surfaces, exposed post and beam structure, and indirect lighting. The floors in the kitchen and other functional areas are covered with brick pavers, a feature borrowed from Dutch vernacular architecture. The floors in the living room, study and bedrooms are carpeted.

The house is set into a sloping half-acre lot overlooking Indianhead Lake. The detached garage echoes the house in design and materials and is accessed by a paved driveway from the street. When viewed from the public right-of-way, the house looks smaller than it really is and presents a somewhat stark appearance, but the rear (east) elevation features large windows overlooking the lake and surrounding woods. The property is in an excellent state of preservation and retains a high degree of historical integrity.

In the nomination study, Mr. Vogel observed that the Oskam House qualifies for designation as an Edina Heritage Landmark by meeting the criteria for evaluation set forth in City Code §36-714. Its historical significance is the product of its association with the broad themes of suburban development and Midcentury Modern residential architecture in Edina. The property is widely recognized by architects and architectural historians as one of the outstanding residential examples of the International style in the Twin Cities area. The house is in excellent condition and retains historic integrity of those features necessary to convey its significance.

The house was built in 1963 for the late Dr. Hendrik J. Oskam (d. 2001), professor of electrical engineering at the University of Minnesota, and his wife Marringje M. Oskam, who is the current owner. It was designed by Elizabeth Scheu “Lisl” Close (1912-2011) of Close Associates, a firm well known for its role in helping to disseminate the Modern Movement philosophy and aesthetic in Minnesota. One of the first women licensed to practice architecture in Minnesota; Lisl Close (although she refused to call herself a woman architect) was a role model for a generation of women who aspired to careers in what was then a male-dominated profession.

The International style developed in Europe during the 1920s and became popular in the United States during the middle decades of the twentieth century. Minimalist and utilitarian in concept, the common characteristics of International style houses are their compact plans, simple geometric forms (usually rectilinear), undecorated exterior walls, and open interior spaces; glass and reinforced concrete were the preferred materials of construction, although regional variants sometimes incorporated wood, stone, and other indigenous materials. In the context of Twin Cities suburban development, the International style encompasses the period from roughly 1938 until 1975, but it reached its height of popularity around 1960. Architect-designed houses in the International style are rare in Edina, where postwar builders generally favored house forms based on the Ranch style over more avant-garde manifestations of Modernism.

Planner Repya further explained that the following recommended plan of treatment for the property was created in collaboration with the homeowner, Mrs. Oskam:

PLAN OF TREATMENT

By ordinance, no city permit may be issued for certain kinds of development activities (demolition, moving a building, new construction, and excavation) involving a designated Heritage Landmark without a Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) approved by the Heritage Preservation Board. The City of Edina has adopted the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties as the authoritative guide for COA review decisions.

Within the framework of these standards, and in consultation with the property owner, the Heritage Preservation Board has adopted the following plan of treatment specifically tailored to the preservation requirements of the Oskam House:

1. The Oskam House will be preserved in place and rehabilitated so that those features which are significant to its historical and architectural values can be preserved intact.
2. Historically significant character defining architectural features should not be altered or destroyed as a result of any project permitted, funded, or assisted by the City of Edina.
3. Whenever possible, deteriorated architectural features should be repaired rather than replaced. In the event replacement is necessary, the new material should match the material being replaced in composition, design, color, texture, and other visual qualities.
4. Construction of new additions and adjacent accessory structures should be kept to a minimum and they should be designed to be compatible with the historic house in scale, size, and building materials. Additions should be designed to be distinguishable from the original construction and reversible.
5. Minor alterations and small structural additions should not be discouraged when such alterations and additions do not destroy significant historic architectural features and the new work is compatible with the size, scale, color, material, and character of the historic property.
6. Mechanical equipment should be placed in an inconspicuous location where installation will require the least possible alteration to the structural integrity and physical appearance of the historic house and garage.
7. Landscape features such as decks, patios, mature trees, walkways, and setbacks that have historically linked the house to its environment are important parts of the property's history and should be retained intact, whenever possible.

Ms. Repya explained that Mrs. Oskam was unable to attend the meeting, however she asked Jane King Hession, an Edina resident and architectural historian to represent her in supporting the request for Edina Heritage Landmark designation. Ms. Hession is currently out of the country; however she submitted an email to the HPB heartily endorsing the proposed landmark designation of the Oskam home.

Planner Repya concluded that Staff recommends that the HPB nominate 6901 Dakota Trail for Edina Heritage Landmark Designation and submit Mrs. Oskam's request to the Planning Commission and ultimately the City Council who is responsible for the final determination. Findings for the nomination are found in the nomination study, and the conditions for the designation are found in the proposed plan of treatment.

Ms. Repya also pointed out that as required by city code, the proposed nomination if approved by the HPB will be sent to the Minnesota State Historic Preservation Office providing 60 days for them to submit comments relative to the proposed designation. The City Council will consider the proposed landmark designation after SHPO's 60 day comment period.

Board Comments

The board engaged in a brief discussion gathering clarification on design elements of the home. Member Kelly observed that when she drove by the home to become acquainted with the property, Mrs. Oskam invited her on a tour. Ms. Kelly commented that the home has been impeccably maintained, and with its original Danish Modern furnishings it stands out as well deserving of an Edina Heritage Landmark designation.

Motion

Member Moore expressed his enthusiasm for the proposal by moving approval of a recommendation to the City Council that the Oskam House at 6901 Dakota Trail receive the Edina Heritage Landmark overlay zoning designation. Member Kelly seconded the motion. All voted aye. The motion carried.

VII. 2015 HERITAGE AWARD

Planner Repya explained that the two following nominations were received for the 2015 Edina Heritage Award:

1. Savory's Gardens - 5300 Whiting Avenue

Site of the 2014 summer tour, Savory's Gardens has been in operation since 1947 when it was one of three nursery businesses operating in the city. Today, only Savory's remains and thrives in its hidden niche amongst a residential neighborhood; and

2. 5201 Wooddale Avenue - A private residence

This home has undergone an extensive remodel/addition project that was sensitive to the original 1935 home. In these times when homeowners would rather tear down an older home and start over; it was good to see the owners appreciate and expand upon the "old bones" of this lovely home.

Ms. Repya observed that the nomination for 5201 Wooddale Avenue did not include all of the required information for a nomination (photos, homeowner information, etc.). However, the recent addition to the home was well executed, preserving the original home in lieu of tearing it down and building a new home. Board members agreed, suggesting that more information be gathered on the property, with the nomination being filed for consideration in the future.

Member Christiaansen commented that she believed the heritage award should be presented to public/civic spaces with a focus on the heritage of the city that the people can visit rather than private residences. In these times with so many homes in the community being renovated, to call out one home as being more significant than the others does not fulfill the intention of the heritage award program.

Board members discussed how the 2014 Heritage Award recipient 5501 Londonderry Road (private residence) was unique. Built in 1956, it was designed by the son of Frank Lloyd Wright,

has been meticulously maintained, and represents an excellent example of the residential construction occurring in the city during the 1950's. The board also discussed having the proposed working group that will be created to explore educational opportunities/public outreach and activities for 2016 preservation month also reevaluate and fine tune the criteria for the annual heritage award nominations.

Continuing the conversation, Member Kelly commented that when she drove by the Savory's Gardens property she had the good fortune of meeting Mrs. Savory who graciously offered her a tour of the property. Ms. Kelly stated that she had no idea that Savory's Gardens existed - tucked into the residential neighborhood, and was impressed with this longstanding Edina business. Also, Mrs. Savory proudly shared that the nursery will open for the season on May 1st when she has special events planned.

Member Moore commented that he was pleased that the board received the two nominations, however due to the lack of information provided with the 5201 Wooddale nomination, he would favor nominating Savory's Gardens.

Following a brief discussion, Member Birdman moved to award the 2015 Edina Heritage Award to Savory's Gardens, recognizing a longtime Edina business that has become to the fabric of the community. Member McLellan seconded the motion. All voted aye. The motion carried.

VIII. 2015 WORK PLAN REVIEW

I. Working Groups

a. Educational Opportunities/Public Outreach - Preservation Month - #5

Planner Repya reminded the board that at the March meeting interest was expressed for the creation of a working group that would focus on evaluating potential educational opportunities and public outreach activities for Preservation Month next May 2016.

Board members discussed the need to plan Preservation Month activities well in advance to allow sufficient time to obtain co-sponsorships if necessary, as well as getting the word out about prospective events. Board members agreed that another good task for this working group would be to evaluate the annual Heritage Award nomination criteria discussed earlier in the meeting and provide suggestions for clarifying the scope of the program.

Members Christiaansen, Pearson, Kelly, and Student Member Otness agreed to serve on the working group. The HPB decided that they would firm up a proposed agenda for the group by July with the actual meetings taking place from September thru November; and ultimately a presentation their recommendations to the full HPB at the December 8th meeting.

Explore the History of Your Home - #6

Chair Weber reviewed the history of the Explore the History of Your Home working group (consisting of Members Weber, Moore and Birdman) explaining that the goal of the group was to devise a means for the public to gather information that tells the story of homes in Edina. The last time they met, the group was considering a Wikipedia type application whereby the public could download data to include antidotal information and photos to a site that could be readily available to the public. Mr. Weber concluded that when Member Birdman left the HPB last October, the working group took an unplanned hiatus.

Board members wondered if such an activity wasn't better suited for the Edina Historical Society. Member Moore stated that the EHS was approached with that suggestion, but indicated that there wasn't interest for such a project.

Student Member Druckman stated that such a project might be of interest to the history classes at the high school. He agreed to talk with the school personal to gage their interest and report back to the board.

Members Weber, Moore and Birdman agreed to re-boot the working group and report back to the HPB at a future meeting.

IX. 2015 SUMMER TOUR

Member Sussman reminded the board that at the last meeting they decided the 2015 summer tour destination will be the Adath Yeshurun Cemetery at 5601 France Avenue. The tour, co-sponsored by the Edina Historical Society will take place on Tuesday, July 21st, at 6:30 p.m., and the Historical Society will advertise the tour to the public. Planner Repya agreed to offer an invitation to the Mayor, City Council and city staff.

Planner Repya pointed out that the tour will be considered a special meeting of the HPB which will not affect the members' attendance requirements whether or not one is able to attend.

X. OTHER BUSINESS - None

XI. ELECTON OF OFFICERS: Chairman & Vice Chair

Planner Repya called for nominations for the office of Chairman. Member Birdman nominated current Chair, Member Weber. Member Weber accepted the nomination. Member Moore seconded the nomination. All voted aye. Member Weber was approved to continue serving as Chairman for 2015.

Planner Repya called for nominations for the office of Vice Chair. Member Weber nominated current Vice Chair, Member Christiaansen. Member Christiaansen accepted the nomination. Member Birdman seconded the motion. All voted aye. Member Christiaansen was approved to continue serving as Vice Chair for 2015.

XII. CORRESPONDENCE & PETITIONS - None

XIII. CHAIR AND BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

Student Member Otness presented the board with a Walking Tour of the Edina Country Club District that he initially created for use by his fellow students. He explained that he designed the tour to acquaint the public about the historic neighborhood and provide an introduction to the characteristic design features of the most common architectural styles represented in the district. The guided tour includes a map of the suggested route with representative houses numbered and defined as to their architectural style. Mr. Otness added that the guide concludes with a list of references consulted for the tour and suggestions for further reading.

Board members reviewed the tour and commended Member Otness for taking the initiative to create the tour that will serve the not only students, but the entire Edina community. It was also observed that the tour will add to the HPB's 2015 Work Plan initiative which calls for "Adding to resources publically available on topics such as architecture and technical advice - raising community awareness through education". Member Otness agreed to email a copy of the tour to Planner Repya so that it could be included with the HPB files.

Member Moore, the HPB representative on the Edina Historical Society (EHS) Board shared the following EHS information:

1. The EHS will hold their annual meeting on Saturday, April 25th at Arneson Acres. The guest speaker will be former Edina hockey coach Willard Ikola, and the public is welcome.
2. This Saturday, April 18th, the Oliver Kelly Grange will hold their annual Spring Seed Social from 11:00 - 5:00 at the Minnehaha Grange Hall in Tupa Park. The event is open to the public and will provide fun events for all ages.

Member Birdman observed that the **Grandview Redevelopment** project has requested input from the public for suggested uses at the former public works site on Eden Avenue. Pointing out that there appears to be a desire for both private and public uses; and if a public use is considered, he suggested that the HPB take a stand to recommend that an element embracing the city's heritage be included in the development.

