

**MINUTES**  
**Regular Meeting of the**  
**Edina Heritage Preservation Board**  
**Edina City Hall – Community Room**  
**Tuesday, May 13, 2014**  
**7:00 p.m.**

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

**II.    ROLL CALL**

Answering roll call was Chair Birdman and Members Moore, Mellom, Weber, Sussman, O'Brien, Christiaansen, and McLellan. Absent were Members McDermott, Brandt and Johnson. Staff present was Senior Planner, Joyce Repya. Preservation Consultant Robert Vogel was also in attendance.

**III.   APPROVAL OF MEETING AGENDA**

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

**IV.    APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES           **April 8, 2014****

Member O'Brien moved approval of the April 8, 2014 minutes. Member Moore seconded the motion. All voted aye. The motion carried.

**V.     COMMUNITY COMMENT – None**

**VI.    REPORTS & RECOMMENDATIONS**

**A.     H-14-4   4601 Browndale Avenue - A new front entry overhang**

Planner Repya explained that the subject property is located on the east side of the 4600 block of Browndale Avenue. The existing home, a Mediterranean style, was constructed in 1925. The Certificate of Appropriateness request is for the addition of a new front entry overhang on the front street facing façade of the home.

The proposed 24 square foot (2'6" x 9'8") overhang requires a COA because it is a structural change to the street facing façade of the home. The existing front entry is flush with the west façade of the home and is surrounded by what the applicant describes as Mankato glacier buff stone in a random pattern. Stone columns, walls and a terrace lead up to the front entrance; which are elevated 3 steps above the first floor elevation of the home.

The applicant has explained that in an attempt to provide shelter at the front entry as well as a greater degree of design depth and interest, they are proposing a new flat-roofed, front entry overhang with copper fascia to match the existing gutter and downspout system. The work will include removing the existing randomly placed Mankato stone surrounding the front door and

replacing it with Mankato stone in a uniform design and honed finish.

The design is intended to be compatible with the style of the home, maintaining its historic integrity, with no loss of distinctiveness. The proportions and materials have been designed to be consistent with the home's Mediterranean style. Originally, the plan called for removal of an original Juliet balcony over the front door (option A). At the request of Staff, the applicant has provided an alternative plan (option B) which maintains the Juliet balcony.

Preservation Consultant Robert Vogel provided a written evaluation of the project where he observed that the subject home has been evaluated as a contributing heritage resource within the Country Club District because it illustrates the land use and architectural controls imposed by the developer Samuel S. Thorpe during the district's period of historical significance (1924-1944). However, the home is not individually eligible for designation as an Edina Heritage Landmark.

He pointed out that both the Secretary of the Interior's standards for rehabilitation and the district plan of treatment allow for removal of historic fabric and the introduction of new architectural elements in historic districts, provided the new work is compatible with the historic character of the house and the surrounding neighborhood. The arrangement of doors and windows is a character-defining aspect of Spanish Eclectic/Spanish Colonial Revival style domestic architecture. However, the stone trim and ironwork around the entrance at 4601 Browndale are not significant character defining façade details in their own right. The cut stone door surround is not commonly seen on Spanish-themed period revival style houses dating from the 1920s; however it does not compromise the historic integrity of the house or the neighborhood. The applicant proposes to replace the stone with similar, but more uniformly cut stone, resembling ashlar, which would actually be visually more appropriate than the existing stone work. The curved wrought-iron balconet ("Juliet balcony") that protrudes slightly from the wall above the front door is an original architectural element and an integral part of the façade.

Mr. Vogel added that the addition of front entry overhang, as well as the replacement of the stone surround will not have a measurable adverse impact on the historic integrity of the house or surrounding homes in the Country Club district. The front door surround and balconet are not primary historic character defining elements of the façade, and the historic significance of the subject property is the product of its association with the Thorpe plan of development, not its architectural details. Mr. Vogel recommended approval of the COA, however, in the interest of preserving the historic fabric of the home, suggested the applicant consider retaining the existing balconet and lighting fixture.

Prior to the meeting, the applicant provided a revised plan that addressed Mr. Vogel's recommendation that the light fixture over the door be retained. The new plan also provided for a wrought iron railing on top of the new overhang - wider than the existing Juliet balcony,

but in proportion with the proposed overhang.

Planner Repya concluded that she recommended approval of the plans for the new front entry canopy demonstrated in most recent plans including the retained light fixture and new railing atop the overhang. Findings supporting the approval recommendation included:

- The front entry overhang will complement the architectural style of the home and not be detrimental to the adjacent historic structures.
- A wrought iron balcony was original to the home and an integral part of the front façade.
- The information provided supporting the subject Certificate of Appropriateness meets the requirements of the Plan of Treatment and Zoning Ordinance.

Conditions associated with the approval recommendation include:

- Subject to the revised plans presented dated May 12, 2014

Nathan Franta, Reuter Walton Construction and Brandi Hagen, Eminent Interior Design representing the property owners were present to address questions from the board.

#### **Board Comments:**

**Member Christiaansen** questioned whether the purpose of the new overhang was for protection or architectural interest - adding that because it is so shallow, it won't provide much protection. Brandi Hagen responded that the design of the overhang is two-fold, both protection (albeit minimal) and architectural interest.

Ms. Christiaansen also observed that the proposed project appears to fit with the aesthetics of the proposed home, but wondered how the changes to the front façade would impact the surrounding homes. She suggested that in the future, applicants provide photos of the adjacent homes so proposed changes can be viewed in the context of the surrounding properties as well.

**Member McLellan** questioned whether the storm entry door would remain. Ms. Hagen responded that they do not plan on retaining the existing storm door.

**Member Sussman** asked for clarification on the following elements of the plan:

- The cornice moulding is a lovely feature and proposed to be replaced. What is the current condition and how do you propose to replace it? Nathan Franta explained that the existing cornice material is gypsum plaster, and suffering from considerable deterioration. They are hoping to replicate the cornice with a durable material which has not yet been determined.
- The proposed stone surrounding the front entry is not unique in the district - on a drive thru, at least 15 homes with similar stonework were identified. Why is it being replaced?

Brandi Hagen explained that the existing stone and stucco surrounding the front door is damaged and needs replacing - interestingly the failure of the stone/stucco is what has precipitated the proposed project.

- Drainage proposed for the new flat roofed overhang - it isn't demonstrated on the plan. Mr. Franta explained that a scudder system will be implemented to drain into the existing downspout.
- The overhang lacks support which could be provided with brackets. Mr. Franta responded that the overhang is so shallow that it does not require supporting brackets which could somewhat overwhelm the front entry.

Mr. Sussman concluded that he appreciated the applicant addressing the comments made by Consultant Vogel and himself by providing a revised plan; and added that the proposal appears to be fitting for the home.

**Member Mellom** questioned whether the subject home was a contributing resource in the district; and whether considering changes to the street facing facades was appropriate. Ms. Mellom also opined that changes to the facades are not recommended in the Secretary of the Interior's standards for rehabilitation. Consultant Vogel responded that the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation which is referenced in the district's plan of treatment does allow for changes. Specifically, rehabilitation is defined as "The act or process of making a compatible use for a property through repair, alterations and additions while preserving those portions or features which convey its historical, cultural or architectural value".

**Member Weber** observed that in addition to the definition cited by Consultant Vogel; the recent decision of the City Council upholding approved changes to the street facing façade of the home at 4505 Arden Avenue, demonstrated that the Council does support changes to the street facing facades of Country Club District homes when they are approved through the COA process. Taking that direction from the Council, Mr. Weber concluded that considering changes to the street facing facades of homes in the district is appropriate

Following a brief discussion, **Member Weber** moved approval of the COA subject to the revised plans dated May 12, 2014. **Member Moore** seconded the motion. Members Christiaansen, McLellan, Sussman, O'Brien, Birdman and Weber voted aye. Member Mellom voted nay. The motion carried.

## **VII. OTHER BUSINESS**

### **A. Heritage Preservation Board Training: Identification of Heritage Resources**

In keeping with the observance of Preservation Month, Consultant led the HPB in an annual training exercise - this year entitled "The Identification of Heritage Resources". Board members referred to the National Register Bulletin #24 "Guidelines for Local Surveys: A Basis for Preservation Planning" as Mr. Vogel explained the goals and approaches to conducting surveys in the community.

Of particular interest to the board were hand-outs defining the field descriptions to be gathered for each property. Mr. Vogel pointed out that the "Explore the History of Your Home" project undertaken by the HPB could easily use the field description format to compile information on Edina residences.

Concluding the information on surveys, Mr. Vogel observed that he has found 4<sup>th</sup> graders and girl scouts (and their parents) to be some of the best surveyors. They are welcomed by residents, and persistent in completing the task. He added that it is also a great way to get the community involved in conducting surveys.

The board thanked Mr. Vogel for enlightening them on the importance of surveys to the city's preservation program.

### **B. Preservation Month**

#### **1. 2014 Activities**

Planner Repya explained that the highlight of Preservation Month will be the City Council meeting on May 20<sup>th</sup> when the Mayor will read a "Preservation Month" proclamation into the public record. The 2014 theme announced by the National Trust for Historic Preservation is "New Age of Preservation: Embark, Inspire, Engage!" After receiving the Preservation Month proclamation, the 2014 Heritage Award will be presented to Brian and Linda Tell, owners of the "Arthur Erickson House", 5501 Londonderry Road. Board member Bob Moore will be making the presentation which will include PowerPoint slides with great photos of the 1950; Frank Lloyd Wright, Jr. designed home.

#### **2. 2015 Planning**

Chair Birdman suggested that rather than have the entire HPB working on plans for the 2015 Preservation Month activities; a subcommittee be formed of several board members who can work on that project, and submit suggestions for the entire board to consider. The board agreed that would be a very good idea which they would discuss at a future meeting.

### **C. Explore the History of Your Home : Committee Report**

Chair Birdman reported that the committee is in the process of completing the revisions to the proposed survey; adding that the materials provided by Mr. Vogel with the local survey training will be helpful. Once the survey is fine-tuned, the plan is to share it with city employees who live in Edina as well as members of boards and commissions, and perhaps even the City Council - That should provide a good base of information to evaluate.

## **VIII. CORRESPONDENCE & PETITIONS    None**

## **IX. CHAIR AND BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS**

**Member Moore** reported that the May 11<sup>th</sup> “Spring Seed Social & Mother’s Day Open House” sponsored by the Edina Historical Society and the Oliver H. Kelley Grange at the Grange Hall in Tupa Park was a smashing success.

**Member Mellom** announced that she recently toured the historic towns of Decorah and Dubuque, Iowa, and found them both to be fascinating - with a lot to offer anyone interested in heritage preservation.

Ms. Mellom also expressed an interest in the HPB revisiting the Country Club District’s plan of treatment to tighten up the language- adding that she believes that changes to the front facades of the homes should not be allowed. Furthermore, she would like more emphasis on voluntary compliance.

Planner Repya explained that an evaluation of the district’s plan of treatment has not been recognized by the City Council as a task for the 2014 work plan. Since the work of the HPB is at the direction of the City Council, if the board agrees that the district’s plan of treatment needs to be reevaluated, that task would need to be at the direction of the City Council for the 2015 work plan.

Ms. Repya observed that the current plan of treatment, approved by the City Council in 2008, is the product of months of deliberation between the HPB and Country Club district representatives as they reevaluated the original 2003 plan.

Member Weber stated that he would appreciate receiving some background on the creation of the plan of treatment, adding that there have been so many changes to many homes in the district that a strict interpretation of the Secretary of the Interior’s standards can’t be used. Responding to Mr. Weber’s request, Ms. Repya agreed to share both the 2003 and 2008 plans with the board, commenting that the intention of the 2008 revision was to clarify the language

and strike a balance between preservation and property rights. At that time, both the City Council and the district residents involved in revising the plan agreed that the new (2008) version provided the lacking clarity.

Consultant Vogel pointed out that the Secretary of the Interior's standards provides four standards to choose from: 1. Preservation - freeze drying; 2. Restoration - replicating; 3. Reconstruction; or 4. Rehabilitation - allowing for alterations and modifications to provide a contemporary use. The standard used in the district's plan of treatment is "Rehabilitation" because it is philosophically consistent with Thorpe's original plan for the district - to ensure that the style of the homes fit the character of the neighborhood. Records show that he wasn't as concerned with the details of each home.

Member Christiaansen observed that people live in the Country Club District homes - the homes are not museums, nor individual landmark properties; and as such they must be livable. At over 80 years old, many of these homes are wearing out - and just because a home is old doesn't mean it was done right. Ms. Christiaansen opined that the HPB should be open to considering changes to the street facing facades of homes, and deal with them on a case-by-case basis.

Chair Birdman observed that Member Mellom believes that the Country Club District's plan of treatment needs to be revised, yet he has also heard comments from the consultant, staff, and board members that the plan is working just fine. Mr. Birdman suggested that at the next meeting of the HPB if a majority of the board agrees that the plan of treatment needs to be revised, a request to add that task to the 2015 work plan could be brought to the City Council for consideration. However, if a majority of the HPB believes that the existing plan of treatment is working well, then no further action would be taken.

Member Sussman pointed out that since Consultant Vogel drafted the original plan of treatment in 2003, and the 2008 revision, he would be interested in receiving an evaluation of both plans from Mr. Vogel. The Board agreed that they liked the approach Chair Birdman suggested, and agreed to provide Ms. Repya with comments on the plan of treatment which she will compile and prepare for discussion at the next meeting.

## **X. STAFF COMMENTS**

**Planner Repya** reported that she and Consultant Vogel will be visiting Marri Oskam, the owner of 6901 Dakota Trail who has expressed an interest in exploring the possibility of designating her home a heritage landmark. Designed by one of the first female architects in Minnesota, Lisle Close, this Contemporary style home was built in 1963 on the banks of

Indianhead Lake, and is truly a treasure. In addition to meeting with Mrs. Oskam, they will also be meeting the owner of the architectural firm Close and Associates Gar Hargens, and Larry Millett, a local preservationist. Ms. Repya concluded that she looked forward to providing the board with a report of her visit at the next meeting.

**XI. NEXT MEETING DATE                      June 10, 2014 at Arneson Acres**

**XII. ADJOURNMENT                                      9:05 p.m.**

Member O'Brien moved for adjournment at 9:05 p.m. Member Moore seconded the motion. All voted aye. The motion carried.

**Respectfully submitted,**  
*Joyce Repya*