

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE
EDINA HERITAGE PRESERVATION BOARD
TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 11, 2007, AT 7:00 P.M.
EDINA CITY HALL – COMMUNITY ROOM
4801 WEST 50TH STREET**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chris Rofidal – Vice Chairman, Lou Blemaster, Connie Fukuda, Laura Benson, Nancy Scherer, and Sara Rubin

MEMBERS ABSENT: Bob Kojetin, Jean Rehkamp Larson, and Karen Ferrara

STAFF PRESENT: Joyce Repya, Associate Planner

OTHERS PRESENT: Robert Vogel, Preservation Consultant
Brett Fenske, 4626 Bruce Avenue

I. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES: August 14, 2007

Member Benson moved approval of the Minutes from the August 14, 2007 meeting. Member Fukuda seconded the motion. All voted aye. The motion carried.

II. CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS:

**1. H-07-9 4626 Bruce Avenue
New Detached Garage**

Planner Repya explained that the subject property is located on the west side of the 4600 block of Bruce Avenue. The existing home is a 1937 American Colonial Revival. A 2 stall flat roofed garage is attached to the rear of the house accessed by a driveway running along the south property line. The subject lot is 50' x 131' in area, or a total of 6,556 square feet. The maximum lot coverage allowed by the foot print of all structures is 30% or 1,966.8 square feet.

The subject request involves converting the existing 2 stall attached garage to a potential mud room leading into the kitchen. The new room will be reduced in size from 455 square feet to 245 square feet in area to ensure that the lot coverage on the property is not detrimentally affected by the introduction of the new garage.

Ms. Repya pointed out that the new detached garage proposed for the southwest corner of the rear yard measures 22' x 24', or 528 square feet in area, and is set 4 feet from the side and rear lot line. The garage has been designed to compliment the American Colonial architectural style of the home, with shingles,

siding, soffit, fascia and trim detail to match. The north and south elevations display an attention to detail with a window/planter box and service door on the north elevation and a double hung window in the gable on the south elevation. The west/rear elevation has a gabled dormer with a double hung window to provide additional storage in the rafter area. The east/front elevation has a double overhead door with lite windows across the top.

The height of the proposed garage is shown to be 16.75 feet at the highest peak, 13 feet at the mid-point of the gable, and 8.7 feet at the eave line. The proposed roof pitch is 7/12, with a ridge length of 22.5 feet. The lot coverage for the property with the proposed garage will be 1,961.7 square feet in area or 29.9%.

Ms. Repya observed that the applicant provided photographs and the heights of adjacent structures. The home to the north (4624 Bruce Ave.) has an attached, single stall-tandem garage set 5 feet from the shared property line. The property to the south (4628 Bruce Ave.) has a detached, 2 car garage, approximately 15.5 feet in height that is set 25.5 feet from the north property line, abutting the driveway shared by the two homes. Of the three homes to the rear on Casco Avenue, 4627, directly behind the subject home has a 2 stall attached garage with living space above; 4625 Casco Ave. has a 15 foot high 2 stall garage; and 4629 has a detached, 16 foot high, 320 square foot garage.

Ms. Repya added that the plans under consideration had been revised somewhat from those originally submitted. Mr. Fenske met with the abutting neighbors, and in an attempt to address some of their comments, the height at the peak was lowered 2 feet to the 16.75 feet height proposed, and the pitch was lowered from 8/12 to 7/12.

Although not required for Certificate of Appropriateness review, the applicant also provided a plan to change the front façade of the home showing removal of a 2nd story peak above the front door (not original to the home), and adding three gables at the eave line above each 2nd story window. A small covered porch with posts at the front entrance is also proposed.

Planner Repya concluded that the plans for the new detached garage demonstrate that the design and exterior materials will compliment the existing home and meet the setback and height requirements set out in the Zoning Ordinance. Furthermore, the proposed garage also addresses the homeowner's needs for parking and additional storage, while at the same time takes into consideration the impact the building will have on neighboring properties.

Staff also found that the information provided supporting the subject Certificate of Appropriateness met the requirements of the Zoning Ordinance and the Country Club Plan of Treatment. Approval of the request to build a new detached garage was recommended subject to the plans presented.

Board Member Comments:

- Members Scherer and Benson thanked Mr. Fenske for providing the drawing of the changed front façade of the home agreeing that changes will add to the historic integrity of the home. Consultant Vogel concurred adding that the changes are more suited to the colonial architectural style and will give the house a nice rhythm.

- Member Rofidal questioned the purpose for the gabled dormer on the rear elevation. He also asked what the southerly neighbor (4628 Bruce Ave.) who is most impacted by the new garage thought of the plan, and if the loss of the ash tree was a problem.

- Member Blemaster stated that she liked the plan very much - it was obvious that the applicant did his homework, and the changes will add value to the home. Ms. Blemaster questioned the type of cedar that will be used for the siding, with a caution that if “clear” cedar which is knot-free is not used, woodpeckers and insects could become a problem in the future.

- All Board members commended Mr. Fenske for sharing his plans with the neighbors and addressing their concerns prior to bringing them before the HPB.

Homeowner Comments:

Brett Fenske explained that he has owned his home since 2005 and was attracted to the neighborhood because of the historic architecture of the homes. The existing attached garage leaks and is structurally unsound requiring it to be totally replaced. The decision was made to replace the attached garage with a new detached garage to open the rear of the home to the back yard and provide more outdoor living space for his family.

Mr. Fenske pointed out that he has observed some controversial building projects close to his home and realizes that the neighbors have a keen interest in how changes impact the neighborhood. That being the case, he chose to share his plans with his neighbors. As a result of the meeting, the height of the garage was reduced by two feet and the pitch of the roof changed from an 8/12 to a 7/12.

Regarding the dormer proposed on the rear elevation, Mr. Fenske explained that the purpose is two-fold, to break up the wall area on that elevation, and also provide for some additional storage.

Addressing Member Rofidal’s question regarding the southerly neighbor at 4628 Bruce Ave., Mr. Fenske explained that he did share the plans with his neighbor and they are fine with them. Also, the ash tree that is in the place of the proposed garage will be removed and the southerly neighbor has stated that he

does not have a problem with the removal because the tree leans toward his property and isn't in the best of shape.

Decision:

Board members agreed that the design of the new garage was very fitting for the property and would be an enhancement. Member Benson appreciated Mr. Fenske's sensitivity to the desires of his neighbors in the planning process, and moved approval of the Certificate of Appropriateness to build a new detached garage in the southwest corner of the rear yard subject to the plans presented. Member Scherer seconded the motion. All voted aye. The motion carried.

III. COUNTRY CLUB DISTRICT - Survey Progress Report – August:

Consultant Vogel explained that work continued on updating the inventory of heritage resources in the Country Club District to include a review of the findings from the 1980 National Register survey to correct mistakes and inaccuracies. At the same time, information on the current condition of individual homes was also collected and integrated with the information already on file.

A good deal of effort was devoted to the reclassification and re-evaluation of individual homes. Our goal is to classify each property as either contributing or non-contributing. To be considered a contributing heritage resource, a house must add to the district's historic character by being associated with the district's primary historical theme (planned residential development by Thorpe Bros.) and embodying the distinctive characteristics of the period revival or "eclectic" styles of domestic architecture (Colonial Revival, Tudor, French Eclectic, Italian Renaissance, Mission, etc.). For planning purposes, we have decided to count as contributing resources all homes constructed prior to 1945 (the date Thorpe Bros. lifted its architectural controls on new construction), unless their principal facades have been radically altered.

Mr. Vogel observed that homes constructed after 1944 are being re-evaluated on a case-by-case basis. Mere age is not enough, in and of itself, for a house to qualify as contributing—it must also possess the distinctive physical characteristics that constitute one of the period revival architectural styles historically associated with the Country Club District. What we see in the district is a shift in architectural styles that began in the 1930s, when a number of smaller, more austere homes were built in Country Club—presumably, these "Minimal Traditional" style homes passed muster with the developer's architectural review committee, even though they would not qualify as authentic specimens of period revival architecture. Minimal Traditional style homes built between the late 1930s and the late 1950s represent a compromise between the traditional period revival styles and modern suburban house forms such as the Ranch or "rambler." Overall, these houses reflect the changing standards and tastes of Country Club residents during the 1930s-1950s period. Unless their façade integrity has been compromised by alterations, we are classifying Minimal Traditional style homes from the 1940s-1950s as contributing heritage resources because they reflect the broad theme of postwar suburban development in Edina and are architecturally derivative from the

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period revival styles of the 1920s-1930s (the relevant historic context study unit is “The Suburban Landscape, 1887 to 1974”).

Research continued to address design review issues, particularly with respect to the size and proportions of new houses and detached garages, the effects of large additions on the integrity of historic homes, driveway width, and landscaping. We are also conducting a comprehensive review of the historic preservation planning literature to find a better working definition of the terms “new construction” and “demolition.”

Mr. Vogel explained that he would like to recommend the Board’s consideration a modification of the Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) process. The change would involve adopting a standard format for documenting its COA decisions. At a minimum, this documentation should include a clear statement of the criteria used in granting or denying the COA, reference to the applicable standards for rehabilitation and plan of treatment guideline, and a simple check-list of the kinds of information provided by the applicant (plans, drawings, elevations, photos). This information would supplement, but not replace, the planning report and COA document that is attached to the building permit.

Board members discussed the determination of whether a home in the district is classified as “contributing” or “noncontributing”. Mr. Vogel pointed out that he would recommend setting the date for noncontributing homes as those constructed after 1974.

Mr. Vogel’s proposal to add a section to the COA staff reports identifying the criteria used for granting decisions was favorably received by the Board. It was suggested that a checklist or bullets could be used to identify the rationale for decisions. Planner Repya stated that a similar change has been implemented for variance staff reports, and it has been well received.

Member Fukuda asked if another tour of the Country Club neighborhood is proposed for this fall. Consultant Vogel stated that at the October meeting a tour date will set when the Board can focus on streetscapes, driveways, and anything else of interest to the Board.

Following a brief discussion, the Board thanked Mr. Vogel for his report. No formal action was taken.

IV. HISTORICAL PROJECT FUNDING TEA-21:

Consultant Vogel explained that the City’s Engineering Department is working with the consulting firm of SEH, and one of their projects involves coordinating inquiries to MnDOT’s State Aid office regarding a grant application for TEA-21 (Transportation Efficiency Act) funds which could potentially be used for transportation related expenditures in the Country Club District, and elsewhere in the community.

SEH has stated that because a sewer, water and street rehabilitation project is on the horizon for the Country Club neighborhood, the potential to utilize grant monies to fund street lights and other elements affecting pedestrian safety or boulevard treatments might qualify for funding. At this time, SEH would like the HPB to consider transportation related enhancements which might qualify for funding through the TEA-21 program.

Mr. Vogel pointed out that at this time, the Board is asked to brainstorm about potential uses for the funds. He added that it is important to keep in mind that the Minnesota Historical Society will determine what will be eligible for funding.

Mr. Vogel provided the Board with a brief history of how TEA-21 funds have been historically spent. Board members agreed that until they know MNSHPO's criteria for eligibility, it is difficult to be too specific. The Board then determined that the following elements would have a positive impact on the neighborhood and be well worth considering:

- Enhancements to the traffic triangles (pork chops)
- Street signs
- Pedestrian walk ways ,and
- Street lighting

Following a brief discussion, Consultant Vogel thanked the Board for their input. No formal action was taken.

V. NATIONAL TRUST FIELD TRIP: October 4, 2007

Consultant Vogel reviewed the itinerary for the upcoming National Trust tour with the Board. He pointed out that if members of the Board would like to participate they could join in at any of the stops. He added that it would be nice for some Board members to attend the lunch at Arneson Acres, pointing out that local mingling with the conference attendees is always a good idea.

Planner Repya offered to email the itinerary to the Board, and requested that if planning on attending the luncheon to let her know so she could have a head count.

IV. CONCERN OF RESIDENTS: None

VI. OTHER BUSINESS:

Member Benson reminded the Board that at the last meeting she reported that there is a home on Sunnyside Road that backs up to the vacated streetcar line and has an old stone structure in the rear yard - apparently once used as a wait station for the old streetcar. Since then, she has sent an email to the owner of

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the property introducing herself and asking if she could take some photographs of the structure. To date she had not heard back, however she promised to keep the Board advised if and when she does hear something.

VII. **CORRESPONDENCE:** None

VIII. **NEXT MEETING DATE:** October 9, 2007

IX. **ADJOURNMENT** 9:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Joyce Repya