

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE
EDINA HERITAGE PRESERVATION BOARD
TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 10, 2008, AT 7:00 P.M.
EDINA CITY HALL – MAYOR’S CONFERENCE ROOM
4801 WEST 50TH STREET**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chairman Chris Rofidal, Bob Kojetin, Lou Blemaster, Arlene Forrest, Jean Rehkamp Larson, and Elizabeth Montgomery

MEMBERS ABSENT: Laura Benson, Karen Ferrara, and Connie Fukuda

STAFF PRESENT: Joyce Repya, Associate Planner
Jackie Hoogenakker, Planning Secretary

OTHERS PRESENT: Robert Vogel, Heritage Preservation Consultant
Scott Busyn, Great Neighborhood Homes, Inc.

I. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES: October 14, 2008

Member Blemaster moved approval of the minutes from the October 14, 2008 meeting. Member Kojetin seconded the motion. All voted aye. The motion carried.

II. COUNTRY CLUB DISTRICT :

A. Certificates of Appropriateness

1. H-08-14 4615 Wooddale Avenue – Demolition of House & Garage – Continuation from 10/14/08

Planner Repya explained that at the October meeting, the subject request was considered and received preliminary approval. At this point, the applicant, Scott Busyn is researching the history of the property in keeping with the required conditions for approval, and will present the design plans for the replacement home at the December meeting. Prior to presenting those plans, Mr. Busyn asked to share his concepts for the design objectives with the Board.

Applicant Presentation

Mr. Busyn provided the following design objectives for discussion with the Board:

- Size, Scale and Massing – A two story Colonial Revival home, to be compatible in size with the adjacent homes to the north and south.
- Design compatibility with other Colonial Revival homes in the Brown Section of the district,

- Exterior finishes, emphasizing the traditional materials found in the Brown Section of the district,
- Landscaping elements, providing the symmetry inherent with the Colonial Revival style, and
- The new garage complementing the style of the home, and meeting the criteria set out for replacement garages in the district.

Mr. Busyn pointed out that the design objectives were preliminary and an approximation of the work to be completed. He added that at this point, the proposal is subject to change as required to be responsive to budget, governmental, site conditions, and construction constraints.

Board Comments

Member Kojetin questioned if the driveway width could become an issue. Chair Rofidal commented that if he understands code correctly, the driveway width should not be an issue, adding the width of the driveway can remain as is, it's a pre-existing condition.

Chair Rofidal asked Mr. Busyn if any trees would be lost to accommodate construction of the new house. Mr. Busyn responded that it is possible the White Pine could be lost.

A discussion ensued with Board Members discussing design elements of the proposed house with Members suggesting the following:

- Construct three dormers, not four, as depicted on the plans provided by Mr. Busyn.
- Eliminate transom over sun porch
- Keep shutters
- 2nd floor/south elevation. Shorten return above window. Return shouldn't cover entire window
- Re-visit rear elevation. Proportions appear unbalanced

Member Kojetin noted that it appears to him that there is no chimney on the plans. Mr. Busyn acknowledged that fact, adding chimneys are very expensive to construct. Board Members agreed "no chimney" is better than a "boxed version".

The discussion continued focusing on procedure. Consultant Vogel pointed out this is the Board's first application for demolition and rebuild since the revised Plan of Treatment was adopted, adding in this instance he believes that at least two more meetings are needed before a COA is granted. Consultant Vogel said the past meetings could be viewed as "preliminary". Member Forrest pointed out there isn't anything in the Plan of Treatment that indicates that a preliminary COA is required. Member Forrest suggested reviewing the wording in the Plan to ensure that Board actions are procedurally correct.

Continuing, Members stated they also need to be clear with their conditions in justifying the issuance of a COA. Board Members agreed that there must be legitimate reasons in granting a COA for the demolition of an existing house. Members also indicated they want the immediate neighbors notified of future meetings and provide neighbors the opportunity to review the new house plans.

In conclusion Members indicated the following rationale in proceeding with granting the COA:

- The house does not meet the criteria for individual designation
- There is physical deterioration of the existing house
- The lack of historical significance of this house compared with other houses located in the Brown Section of the District.

Mr. Busyn told the Board he listened to their discussion and will revise the plans as suggested.

Board action

No formal action was taken.

III. **PUBLIC COMMENT:** None

IV. **WOODDALE BRIDGE:** Wooddale Avenue at Minnehaha Creek

Consultant Vogel explained that in 2006-07, as part of the HPB's annual work plan, he carried out a survey of Minnehaha Creek to identify and gather data on heritage resources within and along the Edina reach of the creek. The objectives of the survey were to document buildings, structures, sites, and objects of preservation interest and to gather the information needed to plan for the wise use of these heritage resources. One of the heritage resources identified by the survey is the bridge that carries Wooddale Avenue over Minnehaha Creek.

Mr. Vogel provided a detailed history and description of the bridge. Identifying how it meets the Edina Heritage Landmark eligibility criteria, focusing in its historic significance and integrity. Following are the highlights of his report:

Description

The subject property (commonly known as the Wooddale Bridge and designated Bridge No. 90646 in the state bridge inventory) is located on Wooddale Avenue South, a short distance south of 50th Street, upstream from the St. Stephens Episcopal Church, 4439 W. 50th Street. It is a single-span masonry arch bridge, 21 feet in length, and carries two lanes of traffic over Minnehaha Creek. The bridge, headwalls, and abutments are constructed of reinforced concrete, covered with a veneer of locally quarried Platteville limestone laid in random

courses. The low parapet walls on either side of the roadway are either solid limestone or concrete ornamented with stone veneer--additional research will be required to fully document the structure's dimensions and construction materials. The arch is formed by a galvanized, corrugated iron pipe similar to that used in culverts and is anchored to the concrete abutments to protect the structure against stream erosion. The concrete deck is covered by bituminous asphalt paving, with concrete curb and gutter. A plaque inscribed "WPA 1937" is found on the downstream parapet wall. The creek bottom at this location is narrow and rocky, and the steeply sloped stream banks are cloaked with a dense growth of small trees and shrubs.

Physical History

The bridge occupies a part of the original William Marvin and George Baird farms, which were settled in the 1850s, and the Baird estate sold the surrounding area to developers in the 1920s. Village records indicate there may have been some kind of timber and iron bridge at this location prior to the construction of the present bridge in 1937. The plans for the Wooddale Bridge were prepared by W. E. Duckett, a local civil engineer who was employed by Hennepin County as a highway engineer from 1928 until 1938. (Duckett also worked on the design for Highway 100 and drew up the plans for the beltway crossing of Minnehaha Creek as well as the Eden Prairie Road [modern 50th Street] interchange in Edina.) The project was paid for with Federal funds administered by the U.S. Department of the Interior, passed through the State Department of Highways (now the Minnesota Department of Transportation) to Hennepin County's highway agency. The workers who built the bridge were employed by the local unit of the WPA, which also provided administrative support, training, and supervision.

Association With the WPA

The Works Progress Administration (WPA) was a federal relief program established by presidential executive order in 1935; in 1939 the agency was renamed the Federal Works Agency but continued to be commonly known as the WPA until the program was terminated in 1942. Headed by Harry L. Hopkins, the WPA was one of the centerpieces of Franklin Delano Roosevelt's "New Deal" designed to alleviate the effects of the Great Depression. The WPA offered work to unemployed adults by funneling federal funds to a wide range of public works projects, including highway construction and roadside beautification. (In addition to transportation projects, the WPA built municipal swimming pools, auditoriums, airports, post offices, playgrounds, park buildings, sewers, paved streets, and low-income housing.) The "pump-priming" effect of the WPA was an important stimulus to the development of public infrastructure along Minnehaha Creek between 1935 and 1941. The Wooddale Bridge was a typical WPA project in that it was labor-intensive, utilized locally available construction materials and craft skills, and produced a structure that was both technologically and aesthetically impressive. It is unlikely that Hennepin County or the Village of

Edina could have built such a bridge without the massive and unprecedented federal participation.

Significance

In order to be considered eligible for designation as an Edina Heritage Landmark, a property must meet one of the ordinance criteria for evaluation of historical significance by being associated with an important historic context and by retaining historic integrity of those features necessary to convey its significance. The Wooddale Bridge is significant for its associative and design values (criteria A and C) within the historic context "Minnehaha Creek: From Wilderness Stream to Urban Waterway," as delineated in the 1999 Edina Historic Context Study. Built in 1937 under the auspices of the Works Progress Administration, the bridge is a locally significant transportation structure reflecting the role of the Federal government in work relief and public construction during the Great Depression. It best represents the impact of the New Deal public works programs in Edina. In terms of its design and construction values, the bridge is a notable, well preserved example of early 20th century highway engineering and illustrates the "rustic" aesthetic in public works that is recognized as one of the hallmarks of the WPA. The bridge is particularly noteworthy for its modular, multi-plate arch construction and the visual impact of its rusticated masonry. Historic integrity is excellent: the structure has been little altered from its 1937 appearance and continues to serve its originally intended function.

More information is needed to document the direct links between the bridge and the federal relief construction program in Hennepin County; to provide insights into the career of designer W. E. Duckett; and to reconstruct the property's physical history with respect to maintenance, safety inspections, roadway reconstruction, and changes in the hydrology of Minnehaha Creek.

The Wooddale Bridge is one of seven structures crossing Minnehaha Creek within the Edina city limits. The others are: the West 44th Street Bridge, a 32-foot long reinforced concrete slab type structure (built in 1986); the Highway 100 Bridge (built in 1970, remodeled in 1981); the historic Browndale Bridge, a designated Edina Heritage Landmark (built in 1906); the West 50th Street Bridge (built in 1926, reconstructed in 1976); the West 54th Street Bridge, a 36' concrete slab bridge (built in 1935, rebuilt in 1948); and the 148-foot long steel culvert that carries the creek under France Avenue (built in 1958). This particular type of historic bridge is known as "multi-plate stone arch" construction and was widely used for small bridges during the 1930s; it is estimated that less than forty such structures have survived to the present day in Minnesota. The Wooddale Bridge has been evaluated as historically significant by the Minnesota Department of Transportation but has not been nominated to the National Register of Historic Places.

Recommendation

Mr. Vogel reminded the Board that by ordinance, the HPB may issue a finding of significance whenever it determines that a particular property appears to be eligible for rezoning as a heritage landmark. If the Board determines that the bridge is potentially eligible, they can direct staff to prepare the necessary landmark nomination documents, or conduct additional survey work to address specific information needs.

Mr. Vogel recommended that the HPB find the Wooddale Bridge potentially eligible for designation as an Edina Heritage Landmark and issue a Finding of Significance to that effect.

Board comments

Board Members told Consultant Vogel the information he presented on the Wooddale Bridge and other area bridges was very interesting.

Board action

Member Kojetin moved to add the Wooddale Bridge to the list of significant landmarks eligible for designation as an Edina Heritage Landmark. Member Blemaster seconded the motion. All voted aye; motion carried.

V. **OTHER BUSINESS:** None

VII. **CORRESPONDENCE:** None

IX. **NEXT MEETING DATE:** December 9, 2008

X. **ADJOURNMENT** 9:20 p.m.

**Respectfully submitted,
*Jackie Hoogenakker***