

Department of Community Planning and Economic Development
Planning Division

Certificate of Appropriateness
BZH-26634

Date: December 14, 2010

Proposal: After the Fact Certificate of Appropriateness for an awning sign exceeding 6 square feet in area.

Applicant: Greg Hennes

Address of Property: 1607 Hennepin Avenue

Project Name: Hennes Art Company Awning Sign

Contact Person and Phone: Greg Hennes, 612-436-2079

Planning Staff and Phone: Chris Vrchota, 612-673-5467

Date Application Deemed Complete: November 17, 2010

Publication Date: December 7, 2010

Public Hearing: December 14, 2010

Appeal Period Expiration: December 27, 2010

Ward: Ward 7

Neighborhood Organization: Citizens for a Loring Park Community

Concurrent Review: N/A

Attachments: Attachment A: Materials submitted by CPED staff –

- 350' map (A-1)

Attachment B: Materials submitted by Applicant –

- Notification letter to Council Member and neighborhood organization (B-1 – B-2)
- Application form submitted September 29, 2010 (B-3 – B-4)
- Specifications (B-5)
- Photos (B-6 – B-8)
- Applicants Findings Responses (B-9)

Attachment C: Materials Submitted by Other Parties-

- E-mail from Citizens for a Loring Park Community (C-1)

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**Front of Subject Property- Present Day
Photo Submitted by Applicant**

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Subject Property (Date Unknown)
Photo Provided by Staff

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CLASSIFICATION:	
Local Historic District	Harmon Place Historic District
Period of Significance	1907-1930
Criteria of significance	Broad patterns of economic history (automotive industry in Minneapolis); Architecture
Date of local designation	2001
Applicable Design Guidelines	Harmon Place Historic District Design Guidelines, Secretary of Interior Standards for Treatment of Historic Properties, Minneapolis Heritage Preservation Commission Design Guidelines for On-Premise Signs and Awnings

PROPERTY INFORMATION	
Current name	Hennes Art Company
Historic Name	The Thompson Hotel
Current Address	1605-1607 Hennepin Avenue
Historic Address	1605-1607 Hennepin Avenue
Original Construction Date	1900
Original Contractor	J.H. Thompson
Original Architect	Edgar Hodgson
Historic Use	Mixed Use (Ground level commercial, hotel above)
Current Use	Commercial
Proposed Use	Commercial

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BACKGROUND:

The subject property is a three-story brick, flat roofed structure. It was constructed in 1900. It originally housed offices and a storefront on the main level, with four residential hotel quarters on the upper floors.

The subject property is a non-contributing resource in the district, since it was constructed prior to the district's period of significance. It is still significant as a well-conserved building of a type still common to Hennepin Avenue during the period of significance. (Source: *The Harmon Place Historic District Final Report*, prepared by Carolle Zellie, Landscape Research. April 2001.)

SUMMARY OF APPLICANT'S PROPOSAL:

The Applicant is seeking approval for an awning sign that was installed without proper approvals. The present awning replaced an existing awning, on the same framework. (See Appendix B-6 for a photo of the old awning.) The previous awning also contained signage. Since being flagged for unpermitted work, the Applicant has been working with staff to gain the necessary approvals.

The signage on the awning totals approximately 32.5 square feet, which exceeds the maximum 6 square feet allowed for awning signs in the *Minneapolis Heritage Preservation Commission Design Guidelines for On-Premise Signs and Awnings*.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Staff received an e-mail from Citizens for a Loring Park Community stating that there was no opposition from the group for the proposed signage. (A copy of the e-mail can be found in Appendix C.)

CETIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS: Certificate of Appropriateness for an awning sign exceeding 6 square feet in area.

Findings as required by the Minneapolis Preservation Code:

The Planning Division of the Minneapolis Community Planning and Economic Development Department has analyzed the application based on the findings required by the Minneapolis Preservation Ordinance. Before approving a certificate of appropriateness, and based upon the evidence presented in each application submitted, the commission shall make findings based upon, but not limited to, the following:

- (1) *The alteration is compatible with and continues to support the criteria of significance and period of significance for which the landmark or historic district was designated.***

According to *The Harmon Place Historic District Final Report*, prepared by Carolle Zellie, Landscape Research, the Harmon Place Historic District is locally significant for its depiction of auto-related commercial development and automotive architecture during the period 1907-1930.

The subject property is a non-contributing resource in the district, since it was constructed prior to the district's period of significance. Because the subject site is a non-contributing resource in the district, concerns about the potential impacts of the proposed work are focused on how it would impact the adjacent buildings and the district as a whole, rather than how it impacts the subject site. Both awnings and signs were commonly found on commercial structures before, during and after the period of significance for the Harmon Place historic district. There was an awning with signage on the building at the time of designation. The proposed awning sign is compatible with supports the criteria and period of significance for which the historic district was designated.

- (2) *The alteration is compatible with and supports the interior and/or exterior designation in which the property was designated.***

A portion of the *Harmon Place Historic District Design Guidelines* states: "Simple canvas and a variety of metal awnings are traditional in the Harmon Place Historic District." Historic photos of the district show large signs on a number of buildings.

The awning is a simple canvas awning, and replaces an awning that was in place when the district was designated. Allowing a new awning with signage exceeding 6 square feet would be compatible with and support the exterior designation for the district.

- (3) *The alteration is compatible with and will ensure continued integrity of the landmark or historic district for which the district was designated.***

Both the City of Minneapolis' Heritage Preservation Regulations and the National Register of Historic Places identify integrity as the authenticity of historic properties and recognize

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seven aspects that define a property's integrity: location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association. Based upon the evidence provided below, the proposed work would not impair the integrity of the structure or district.

Location: The Applicant is not proposing to change the contributing resource's location, thus the project will not impair the integrity of location.

Design: The Applicant replaced an existing awning with a new awning, using the existing framework already in place. The work essentially "re-skinned" the awning, and replaced the existing non-conforming signage with new non-conforming signage. An awning sign has been in this location since at least 2000, and was in place at the time of designation. It would be possible to remove the awning with no impact on the design of the building. The project will not impair the property's integrity of design.

Setting: The Applicant is not proposing any off-site changes, and the changes being proposed would be compatible with the property and the district. The project will not impair the integrity of setting.

Materials: The proposed awning is a simple canvas awning, something readily found in the district during the period of significance. The framework was already in place and installation of the new awning did not require the removal or alteration of any historic materials. The project will not impair the property's integrity of materials.

Workmanship: The awning framework was already in place when the currently proposed awning was installed. It did not require the removal or alteration of any original historic details or materials. The work would not impair the integrity of workmanship.

Feeling: The Applicant is seeking approval for the installation of a canvas awning with signage exceeding 6 square feet in area. Both awnings and larger signs were readily found in the Harmon Place Historic District during the period of significance. The project will not impair the property's integrity of feeling.

Association: As conditioned, the project will not impair the property's integrity of association.

- (4) *The alteration will not materially impair the significance and integrity of the landmark, historic district or nominated property under interim protection as evidenced by the consistency of alterations with the applicable design guidelines adopted by the commission.***

The applicable design guidelines for this project are the Harmon Place Historic District Design Guidelines, which were adopted by the Heritage Preservation Commission in September of 2002, as well as the Minneapolis Heritage Preservation Commission Design Guidelines for On-Premise Signs and Awnings, adopted in June 2003.

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- Section 6.a of the Harmon Place Historic District Design Guidelines states: “Signs and awnings should follow regulations contained in Chapter 543 of the city’s zoning ordinance. Refer also to “Guidelines for Signs and Signage and Murals for Historic Properties and Districts” and “Architectural Fabrics in Historic Properties and Districts” adopted by the HPC.” (The last two documents referenced have been replaced by the Minneapolis Heritage Preservation Commission Design Guidelines for On-Premise Signs and Awnings since the time that the Harmon Place Historic District Design Guidelines were adopted.)
- Section 6.b of the Harmon Place Historic District Design Guidelines states: “Wherever possible, signs should be placed in traditional sign locations including the storefront signband area and upper facade. Existing signboards and sign frames should be reused if possible to limit drilling new holes into masonry.” Photos of the subject property do not show an obvious sign band on the front of the building. The proposed awning reuses an existing awning frame previously installed on the building, eliminating the need for drilling any new holes into the masonry of the building.
- Section 6.e of the district guidelines states: “No part of the historic facade should be irreversibly damaged or altered in the installation of signs and awnings. Limit drilling new holes into masonry. Signs must be attached to the building with holes drilled into mortar joints.” Staff does not have details on how the awning framework is mounted to the building or information on whether this connection is sound. However, the proposed awning uses the framework which is already in place, and has been in place since before the district was designated. Re-using this framework eliminates the need for any further damage to the building, and is in keeping with this guideline. A condition has been included requiring additional information on the anchoring of the awning framework to ensure that it is secure and stable.
- Section 6.g states: “Awnings should be sized to fit the windows and storefronts behind them. Simple canvas and a variety of metal awnings are traditional in the Harmon Place Historic District.” The awning spans the storefront and entrances. It is made of black canvas material on a metal framework. The awning is in keeping with this standard.

Below are the requirement for awnings signs established in the Minneapolis Heritage Preservation Commission Design Guidelines for On-Premise Signs and Awnings:

Awnings and Awning Signs:

- i. Location. Awnings should fit within the window or door opening.
- ii. Number of awnings. The number of awnings may not exceed the number of window or door openings.
- iii. Number of awning signs. Awning signs are limited to ground floor awnings. There should be no more than one sign per awning. Awning signs should be no more than six (6) square feet in area. Where there are multiple awning signs on a building, all signs should be located in the same or similar position on the awnings.
- iv. Materials. Awnings should be constructed of coated or uncoated cloth fabric.

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- v. Installation. Awning hardware should be attached to the window or door frame and should never damage masonry. Awnings should not be attached to or cover any part of the building wall.
- vi. Illumination. Awnings and awning signs should not be illuminated.
- vii. Awning shape. Awnings should project downward and outward from the openings in straight lines unless they are reflecting the curved shape of the opening. The projection of an awning should be less than its height. An awning drop or skirt should not exceed twelve (12) inches.

Area of Sign

The proposed awning and sign are in keeping with all of these requirements except for section iii. The signage exceeds the maximum area of six square feet. The main “Hennes Art Company” portion of the sign measures 16”x20’, totaling approximately 26.6 square feet. The smaller signage along the skirt totals 5.5 square feet, bringing the total for all signage on the awning to slightly more than 32 square feet.

The Minneapolis Heritage Preservation Commission Design Guidelines for On-Premise Signs and Awnings allow for two signs for each principle building entrance that faces a public street or for each ground floor principle use, whichever is less. Other types of signs are allowed to be significantly larger than the 6 square feet allowed for awning signs. Wall signs can be up to 32 square feet, and projecting signs can be up to 12 square feet (and double sided.) Theoretically, the Applicant could install a 32 square foot wall sign and a 14 square foot projecting sign without the need for a Certificate of Appropriateness. The proposed awning sign, while larger than allowed in the guidelines, is smaller in area than what would be allowed if other sign types were used. Furthermore, the fact that it re-uses an existing awning frame eliminates the need for further drilling into the building surface. Finally, the sign replaces an older awning sign that also did not comply with the sign design guidelines. Ultimately, the proposed awning sign has less of an impact on the building and the district than the installation of new signage would.

- (5) ***The alteration will not materially impair the significance and integrity of the landmark, historic district or nominated property under interim protection as evidenced by the consistency of alterations with the recommendations contained in The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties.***

The Guidelines for windows in the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation are most applicable to the proposed project.

The Secretary of the Interior’s Standards and Guidelines for Rehabilitation do not offer extensive guidance for signs. In regard to storefronts, the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation recommend against: “Using inappropriately scaled signs and logos or other types of signs that obscure, damage, or destroy remaining character-defining features of the historic building.” The awning and signage are appropriately scaled for the building and does not obscure, damage or destroy character defining features of this non-contributing resource. The proposed work is in keeping with this standard.

- (6) *The certificate of appropriateness conforms to all applicable regulations of this preservation ordinance and is consistent with the applicable policies of the comprehensive plan and applicable preservation policies in small area plans adopted by the city council.***

The proposed alterations are not fully in keeping with the Minneapolis Heritage Preservation Commission Design Guidelines for On-Premise Signs and Awnings and require a Certificate of Appropriateness application.

As conditioned, the project would comply policy 8.1.1 of The Minneapolis Plan, which states: "Protect historic resources from modifications that are not sensitive to their historic significance." Canvas awnings were traditionally found in the Harmon Place Historic District. Use of the awning area for signage would eliminate the need to drill new holes in the building wall for the installation of new wall or projecting signs.

Before approving a certificate of appropriateness, and based upon the evidence presented in each application submitted, the commission shall make findings that alterations are proposed in a manner that demonstrates that the applicant has made adequate consideration of the following documents and regulations:

- (7) *Adequate consideration of the description and statement of significance in the original nomination upon which designation of the landmark or historic district was based.***

The Applicant submitted a document addressing some of the 12 required findings (see Appendix B-7). The applicant did not specifically address the description and statement of significance from the original nomination for the potential historic district.

- (8) *Where applicable, Adequate consideration of Title 20 of the Minneapolis Code of Ordinances, Zoning Code, Chapter 530, Site Plan Review.***

The proposed work does not require site plan review. The Applicant would need to obtain a sign permit for any approved sign or awning on the property.

- (9) *The typology of treatments delineated in the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties and the associated guidelines for preserving, rehabilitating, reconstructing, and restoring historic buildings.***

The proposed work falls under the scope of rehabilitation. The proposed work would be in compliance with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation, as outlined in finding #5 of this report. The Applicant did not specifically address how or why they believe that the proposal is in keeping with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation.

Before approving a certificate of appropriateness that involves alterations to a property within an historic district, the commission shall make findings based upon, but not limited to, the following:

- (10) The alteration is compatible with and will ensure continued significance and integrity of all contributing properties in the historic district based on the period of significance for which the district was designated.***

The alterations would be compatible with and will ensure the continued significance and integrity of all contributing properties in the historic district based on the period of significance for which the district was designated. The proposed changes are limited to the replacement of an awning that was on the building at the time of designation with a new awning and signage exceeding 6 square feet in area. Awnings and large signs were both readily found in the district during its period of significance. The proposed work would be in keeping with The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation, as demonstrated in finding #5 of this analysis.

- (11) Granting the certificate of appropriateness will be in keeping with the spirit and intent of the ordinance and will not negatively alter the essential character of the historic district.***

The spirit and intent of the City of Minneapolis' Heritage Preservation Regulations is to preserve historically significant buildings, structures, sites, objects, districts, and cultural landscapes of the community while permitting appropriate changes to be made to these properties. The proposed work is limited to the replacement of an awning with signage on it with a new awning with signage on it. As conditioned, the project complies with the Harmon Place Historic District Guidelines and Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties, and with all but one provision of the Minneapolis Heritage Preservation Commission Design Guidelines for On-Premise Signs and Awnings. The work would not negatively alter the essential character of the historic district, and a new awning would be an improvement to the district. The proposed improvement will be an overall benefit to the maintenance and upkeep of the district. The use of the awning for signage eliminates the need to make further alterations to the building wall to anchor new signs. Granting the certificate of appropriateness would be in keeping with the spirit and intent of the ordinance.

- (12) The certificate of appropriateness will not be injurious to the significance and integrity of other resources in the historic district and will not impede the normal and orderly preservation of surrounding resources as allowed by regulations in the preservation ordinance.***

The proposed work is confined to the subject property. It is limited to the replacement of an awning that was in place at the time of designation with a nearly identical awning with signage on it. The subject property is non-contributing in the district, and the work would not have an impact on any contributing resource. The proposal will not be injurious to the significance and integrity of other resources in the historic district and will not impede the

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normal and orderly preservation of surrounding resources as allowed by regulations in the preservation ordinance.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

CPED-Planning staff recommends that the Heritage Preservation Commission **adopt** staff findings and **approve** the Certificate of Appropriateness for an awning sign exceeding 6 square feet in area, subject to the following condition(s):

1. No other signage for the subject business shall be allowed unless the awning signage is brought into compliance with the Minneapolis Heritage Preservation Commission Design Guidelines for On-Premise Signs and Awnings.
2. The Applicant shall provide staff with additional information demonstrating that the awning's connection to the building is secure and stable.
3. No future work on this site shall take place prior to receiving the necessary City approvals, including those related to the property's local designation status.

Attachment A: Submitted by CPED staff

Attachment B: Materials submitted by Applicant

Attachment C: Materials submitted by other parties