

**Community Planning & Economic Development
Planning Division**
250 South 4th Street, Room 110
Minneapolis, MN 55415-1385



City of Minneapolis
*Department of Community Planning
& Economic Development - CPED*

MEMORANDUM

TO: Heritage Preservation Commission
FROM: Chris Vrchota
DATE: November 30, 2010
RE: Conceptual Review, Amos B. Coe House, Addition and Historic Variances



1700 3rd Avenue S- Amos Coe House, date and source unknown.



1700 3rd Avenue S- Amos Coe House, 2006, photo by CPED staff.

CLASSIFICATION:	
Individual Landmark	Amos B. Coe House
Period of Significance	1884- circa 1910
Criteria of significance	Architecture
Date of local designation	June 24, 1983
Date of National Register designation	1984
Applicable Design Guidelines	<i>Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties</i>

PROPERTY INFORMATION	
Current name	Amos B. Coe House
Historic Name	Amos B. Coe House
Current Address	1700 3 rd Avenue S
Historic Address	1700 3 rd Avenue S
Original Construction Date	1884 (House), 1886 (Carriage House)
Original Contractor	Unknown
Original Architect	Unknown
Historic Use	Single Family Residence
Current Use	Vacant
Proposed Use	Museum

Background:

The subject property is a 2.5 story brick residence designed in the Queen Anne architectural style. It was constructed in 1884 for Amos B. Coe, a real estate developer. It sits at the southwest corner of 3rd Avenue S and 17th Street E, directly south of I-94.

The house was used as a single-family residence for approximately 24 years, before being turned into a hospital by Dr. John Rydell in 1908. Around 1928 the house was purchased by the Women's Christian Association, who used it as an orphanage, followed by the Young Men's Residence Club in 1931. A.D. Kleinman Realty acquired the property in 1960, and altered the house to accommodate a total of 6 dwelling units.

In 1982, the Minneapolis Department of Inspections found the property to be vacant and boarded, and required that the house either be rehabilitated or demolished. This spurred both the rehabilitation of the house and the effort to have it designated as an individual local landmark and placed on the National Register of Historic Places. The restoration work, which included exterior repairs to both the house and carriage house and reconfiguration of interior spaces to make the structure a duplex, was completed by the mid 1980s.

Dr. Robert Wengler owned the property through the 1990s and most of the 2000s. At some point, he converted the carriage house to a bed and breakfast. (Materials submitted by the Applicant state that this happened in the early 1990s, while licensing records from the City

indicate that a bed and breakfast license was issued for the property from 2006-2009.) The Applicants, who purchased the property in June of 2009, have stated that the property has been vacant since 2005. (See Appendix B-4.)

Summary of Applicant's Proposal:

The Applicant intends to convert the house into museum space for the Minnesota African American Museum. As part of this conversion, the Applicant is proposing to construct a 3-story, 6,956 square foot addition on the east side of the house. The Applicant has also stated that they intend to perform restoration work on the original house, though they have not provided detailed plans for this proposed work.

The proposed work would require two sets of approvals from the Heritage Preservation Commission- a Certificate of Appropriateness for the proposed addition and restoration to the Amos B. Coe House, and Historic Variances to reduce the minimum required lot area for a museum in the OR3 zoning district from 20,000 square feet to 15,962 square feet, and to reduce the minimum required on-site parking from 13 to 3.

The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties

The Heritage Preservation Commission has not adopted local guidelines for the Amos B. Coe House. This leaves *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties* as the guiding document to recommend appropriate treatments. The proposed work falls under the scope of rehabilitation.

There are ten standards for rehabilitation:

1. A property will be used as it was historically or be given a new use that requires minimal change to its distinctive materials, features, spaces, and spatial relationships.
2. The historic character of a property will be retained and preserved. The removal of distinctive materials or alteration of features, spaces, and spatial relationships that characterize a property will be avoided.
3. Each property will be recognized as a physical record of its time, place, and use. Changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding conjectural features or elements from other historic properties, will not be undertaken.
4. Changes to a property that have acquired historic significance in their own right will be retained and preserved.
5. Distinctive materials, features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property will be preserved.
6. Deteriorated historic features will be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature will match the

old in design, color, texture, and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features will be substantiated by documentary and physical evidence.

7. Chemical or physical treatments, if appropriate, will be undertaken using the gentlest means possible. Treatments that cause damage to historic materials will not be used.

8. Archeological resources will be protected and preserved in place. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures will be undertaken.

9. New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction will not destroy historic materials, features, and spatial relationships that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and will be compatible with the historic materials, features, size, scale and proportion, and massing to protect the integrity of the property and its environment.

10. New additions and adjacent or related new construction will be undertaken in a such a manner that, if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.

Staff Analysis

A complete analysis of every proposed change is neither possible nor appropriate at this time, as a) the Applicant has asked for a review of the proposed concept, not details, from the Heritage Preservation Commission and b) staff has not received a complete Certificate of Appropriateness application. With this in mind, staff has highlighted some aspects of the project that warrant close examination to determine if and how they are in keeping with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards. Staff has not fully analyzed the project as it relates to each of the standards.

Rehabilitation standard #2: *"The historic character of a property will be retained and preserved. The removal of distinctive materials or alteration of features, spaces, and spatial relationships that characterize a property will be avoided."*

The construction of a 3 story addition to the side of the historic Amos B. Coe House has a strong potential to alter the historic character of the property. More specifically, it could alter distinctive spaces and spatial relationships that characterize the property. The house has always stood on the corner, with a large open yard directly adjacent to the house setting it apart from the rest of the block. The carriage house was built at the back of this open area, maintaining this separation. The proposed addition would be located in this open space. It would be connected to the house through a 10-foot wide, 3 story tall glass hallway. At its closest point, the bulk of the addition would sit 5'-6" from the historic portion of the house. The addition would be setback approximately 6 feet further from the street than the original house, and would be just slightly shorter than the chimneys and roof peaks of the historic house. The mass of the edition would completely fill the existing open space that set the Coe House apart from the other structures on the

block, as well as obscuring the carriage house, which is considered a contributing resource to the landmark.

Rehabilitation standard #6: *“Deteriorated historic features will be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature will match the old in design, color, texture, and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features will be substantiated by documentary and physical evidence.”*

The Applicant has stated that they intend to rehabilitate the exterior of the historic Amos B. Coe House, with work including “...tuckpointing of the masonry, the replacement of a couple of non-historic replacement windows with new wood windows that more closely match the extant historic windows, and possibly new storm windows.” Locations and details for this proposed work have not been provided by the Applicant. These details will be important for staff and the HPC to evaluate if and how the proposed work is in keeping with the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards.

Rehabilitation standard #9: *“New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction will not destroy historic materials, features, and spatial relationships that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and will be compatible with the historic materials, features, size, scale and proportion, and massing to protect the integrity of the property and its environment.”*

As this standard specifically addresses new additions and will thus be one of the key findings in determining the impacts of the proposed work, it has been broken down for more detailed analysis

Destruction of Spatial Relationships

As stated under the analysis of Standard #2, the proposed addition would have a significant impact on the spatial relationship of the Amos B. Coe House to its surroundings. The house has always had a large, open yard area directly adjacent to it, setting the house apart from other structures on the block and increasing its prominence on the corner of 3rd Avenue S and 17th Street E. While this open area is the only feasible location for any substantial addition, the proposed addition would fill this space essentially from the house to the lot line, and from the ground up to the extant height of the historic house, thus removing the separation that has existed since the house was constructed.

Destruction of Historic Materials and Features

The proposal minimizes destruction of historic materials and features. The Applicant is proposing to connect the addition to the house with a 3-story glass walkway. The connection would be made through existing windows, minimizing the amount of material that would need to be removed. While the plans provided by the Applicant do not provide enough detail to tell for certain, it appears that the construction of the walkway

would require the alteration of two dormers on the south side of the house. Further details are needed to determine the full extent of the destruction of historical materials and features that would be caused by the proposed addition.

Differentiating the New Work From the Old

The proposal very clearly differentiates the new work from the old. The historic Amos B. Coe House is designed in the Queen Anne architectural style, and features many detailed decorative elements that are a hallmark of this style. The proposed addition is of a very modern design, featuring geometric simple shapes and patterns. The Amos B. Coe House also features geometric shapes and patterns, though they are somewhat more complex.

Compatibility with Historic Materials

The Applicant is proposing to utilize three primary materials on the exterior of the addition- terra cotta tiles of a color that matches the brick of the historic house; zinc panels of an unspecified color; and glass. (Samples of the terra cotta tile and zinc panels will be available at the meeting.) Depending on the finish of the zinc panels, it is likely that the proposed materials are compatible with the historic materials of the Amos B. Coe house, without creating a false sense of history. The clay tiles would speak to the brick of the original house without directly copying it. The zinc panels could, if finished properly, reference the wood trim and accents on the original house, again without directly copying the original.

Compatibility with Historic Features

The Amos B. Coe house is a 2.5 story structure, capped with a gabled, pitched roof. It contains many features that are hallmarks of the Queen Anne style, including turned porch spindles, decorative lintels around the windows, a number of multi-storied bays, and fish-scale shingles in the dormers. The proposed addition is a 3-story, flat roofed structure with minimal exterior detailing. There is little in the proposed addition that speaks to any of the features of the original, historic house. While it is important that any new construction be differentiated from the old, additions should be guided by and compatible with the original structure.

Compatibility with Historic Size

The existing Amos B. Coe House contains 8,437 square feet. The proposed addition would be 6,956 square feet. (Square footage breakdowns are available on page A010 of the plans provided by the Applicant.) This makes the addition a total of 1,481 square feet smaller than the original house. It is worth noting, however, that the proposed addition does not have a full basement, as the original house does, but the addition does feature a full third story, whereas the original house is capped with a half story. When the square footage of the basement area is factored out and the above ground area of the original house and addition are calculated, the difference is much smaller.

The original house has 5,974 square feet of above ground area; the proposed addition would have 5,770 square feet of above ground area- a difference of only 204 square feet. To the observer on the street, the addition would be nearly equal in size to the original house. A great deal of the space in the addition is devoted not to programming space, but to circulation and utility spaces, such as restrooms. A more efficient use of space in the addition could likely make it possible to reduce the overall size, thus improving the compatibility with the original structure.

Compatibility with Historic Scale

The proposed addition is nearly as tall as the peaks and chimneys of the original house. However, because the original house has a pitched roof and only a half third story, the flat roofed addition with its full third story seems to dominate and overwhelm the original house as the eye travels upwards. The height, coupled with the relatively close placement of front of the addition to the front of the original house, make the addition very noticeable when viewing the 3rd Avenue South elevations. (See plan sheet A200)

Rehabilitation Standard #10: *“New additions and adjacent or related new construction will be undertaken in such a manner that, if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.”*

As stated previously, the proposed connection of the addition to the original house through a relatively narrow walkway would minimize the impact on the historic fabric of the original house. Due to the limited amount of material that would need to be removed, and the location of the proposed connection on a side elevation, behind a projecting bay, it is likely that the addition could be removed in the future without having a substantial impact on the essential form and integrity of the historic property.

Historic Variances

The Applicant would need to pursue two Historic Variances for this project- to reduce the minimum required lot area for a museum in the OR3 zoning district from 20,000 square feet to 15,962 square feet, and to reduce the minimum required on-site parking from 13 to 3.

There are two findings that need to be made in order for a Historic Variance to be granted:

1. The variance is compatible with the preservation of the property and with other properties in the area.
2. The variance is necessary to alleviate undue hardship due to special conditions or circumstances unique to the property and not created by the applicant.

The property has not been used as a single family dwelling for over 100 years. It has been put to a number of different uses in the intervening time, from hospital to orphanage to multi-family dwelling to bed-and-breakfast. The Applicant has stated that the property has been vacant

since 2005. Varying the minimum lot requirement for a museum and thus allowing the structure to be occupied would be compatible with the preservation of the property. However, staff does not believe that the proposed addition is compatible with the preservation of the property- if the use of the property hinges on the construction of the addition as it is presently proposed, this finding would be difficult to make.

The need from the parking variance stems from the limited amount of space on the property where parking could be reasonably and sensitively provided. At present, the only space where additional parking could be provided is the open yard area where the proposed addition would be provided. This space would obviously be lost if an addition were constructed. Varying the minimum parking requirements to allow for a new use that allows for the re-use of the historic property would be compatible with the preservation of the property.

The need for both variances is driven by the size of the subject property. It is not possible to expand the lot area to meet the minimum lot requirement without impacting adjacent properties, and there is very limited space for the expansion of on-site parking. It is likely that any use of the property other than as a single-family dwelling would require a parking variance.

Actions Requested

The Heritage Preservation Commission is asked to provide the Applicant and staff with feedback and guidance on the proposed Certificate of Appropriateness and Historic Variances. This input will be used by the Applicant as they prepare formal applications, and by staff when reviewing the applications and preparing staff reports.

Attachments

Appendix A- Material Provided by Staff:

- A-1: Location Map
- A-2 - A-6: National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form

Appendix B- Material Provided by the Applicant

- B-1 - B-11: Project description, findings, and background
- B-12 - B-15: Photos

Plans: 11x17 Plans Submitted by the Applicant, Pages Numbered A000-A802