

Department of Community Planning and Economic Development - Planning Division
Certificate of Appropriateness
BZH-27348

Date: June 12, 2012

Proposal: Certificate of Appropriateness for a Master Sign Plan that includes four signs that do not comply with the size and height requirements of the HPC Design Guidelines for On-Premise Signs

Applicant: Charlene Roise of Hess, Roise and Company, on behalf of North Loop Historical Partners, LLC

Address of Property: 607 Washington Avenue North

Project Name: Holden Building Rehabilitation

Contact Person and Phone: Charlene Roise of Hess, Roise and Company, 612.338.1987

Planning Staff and Phone: Brian Schaffer, 612.673.2670

Date Application Deemed Complete: May 25, 2012

Publication Date: June 12, 2012

Public Hearing: June 19, 2012

Appeal Period Expiration: June 29, 2012

Ward: Ward 5 (Adjacent to Ward 7)

Neighborhood Organization: North Loop Neighborhood Association

Concurrent Review: None

Attachments:

Attachment A: Materials submitted by CPED staff

A1. Map of Surrounding Area

Attachment B: Materials submitted by Applicant

- B1. Certificate of Appropriateness Application & Responses to Findings
- B2. Photographs of existing signage
- B3. Site Plan
- B4. Historic Precedent for Signage
- B5. Photographs before building rehabilitation commenced
- B6. Building Elevations

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- B7. Proposed Building Signage: Building Identification Signage
- B8. Proposed Building Signage: 1910 Warehouse Tenant Signage
- B9. Proposed Building Signage: 1926 Annex Tenant Signage
- B10. Proposed Multi-Tenant Signage Package (Master Sign Plan)

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| CLASSIFICATION: | |
|------------------------------|---|
| Local Historic District | Minneapolis Warehouse Historic District |
| Period of Significance | 1865-1930 |
| Criteria of significance | Industry/Commerce, Architecture/Engineering, Social History |
| Date of local designation | 2009 |
| Applicable Design Guidelines | Minneapolis Warehouse Historic District Design Guidelines; Minneapolis HPC Guidelines for On-Premise Signs and Awnings. |

| PROPERTY INFORMATION | |
|-----------------------------|---|
| Current name | Holden Building |
| Historic Name | Parlin and Orendorff Plow Company Warehouse |
| Current Address | 607 Washington Avenue North |
| Original Construction Date | 1910, 1926 |
| Original Contractor | |
| Original Architect | Bertrand and Chamberlain |
| Historic Use | Warehouse |
| Current Use | Vacant |
| Proposed Use | Commercial/Residential |

BACKGROUND:

The Parlin and Orendorff Plow Company Warehouse, commonly known as the Holden Building, is located at 607 Washington Avenue North. This seven story warehouse building was designed by Bertrand and Chamberlain and constructed in 1910. The first story of this large symmetrical warehouse building consists of brick that appears to be painted in a cream color while the remaining six floors are of a deep wine-red color brick. The building is distinguished by a refined panelization of its facade with four giant raised brick panels separating the window bays on the third through sixth floors. Eight smaller panels define the seventh floor. Craftsman details consisting of geometric bands of ornamentation occur on the upper story and the cornice terminates in a graceful curve. The large window openings on the first floor have been infilled with concrete block although two octagonal Doric columns which once flanked the original entry are still intact. This structure represents the most monumental design of the numerous buildings by Bertrand and Chamberlain in the warehouse district. The building contains an exterior loading dock along Seventh Avenue North. The building is a contributing resource to the Minneapolis Warehouse Historic District.

In 1926, a one-story addition or annex was constructed on the east side of the building along Washington Avenue North. The building permit states that it was a service building for trucks. The facade of the one-story building appears to be painted in the same cream color as the first floor of the 1910 building. The one story building has an adjacent elevated loading dock along Sixth Avenue North with a series of roll-up overhead doors in the Sixth Avenue North facade of the building. The building is a contributing resource to the Minneapolis Warehouse Historic District. Together the 1910 warehouse and the 1926 annex building fill the block face along Washington Avenue North between Sixth and Seventh Avenues North.

On January 4, 2011, the Minneapolis Heritage Preservation Commission (HPC) approved a Certificate of Appropriateness (BZH-26740) to allow for the rehabilitation of the 1910 warehouse building into apartments and the rehabilitation of the 1926 annex into a commercial tenant space. Building permits for the project have been approved and construction is underway.

SUMMARY OF APPLICANT'S PROPOSAL:

The applicant is proposing a master sign plan for the subject buildings. The master sign plan covers the extent of the proposed or anticipated signage on the buildings and will be used by CPED staff and the building owner to address future signage decisions.

Master Sign Plan

The Applicant is proposing a master sign plan for the 1910 Warehouse and 1926 Annex building. A key element of the master sign plan is the height of the signs. Due to the scale and design of the building the guidance from the Minneapolis Heritage Preservation Design Guidelines for On-Premise Signs and Awnings on height of signs cannot be met. The proposed sign plan enumerates the following:

1. Sign band, Warehouse Building: The sign band above the storefront bays is architecturally identified by two horizontal elements: 1) the base is defined by the

- top of the brick lintel above the storefront bays, comprising a parallel row of soldier and end bricks, which is 14'-7" above the first-floor elevation; and 2) the top is defined by the bottom of the second-floor windows sills, which is 18'-9" above the first-floor elevation. (The first floor is about 2' above the sidewalk.) The sign band above the main entry on Washington Avenue has slightly smaller dimensions, being completely surrounded by a band of soldier bricks.
2. Sign band, Annex: The sign band above the storefront bays on Washington Avenue is architecturally identified by two horizontal elements: 1) the base is defined by the top of the brick lintel above the storefront and entry bays, comprising a parallel row of soldier and end bricks, which is 14'-7" above the first-floor elevation; and 2) the top is defined by the bottom of the parapet coping.
 3. Each commercial tenant is allowed to install one storefront sign. In the event that a single tenant has principal entrances on two separate streets, that tenant may have one sign on each street front. The sign shall either be a transom sign or a projecting sign.
 4. Transom signs: Only one sign shall be allowed above each storefront bay. It is preferred that each tenant use the bay above their location, but if there are ground-floor tenant spaces that do not have an exterior window, those tenants are allowed to utilize the remaining transom bays.
 5. Projecting signs: A tenant's projecting sign shall be centered on the masonry piers and in the sign band area. It should be attached to a permanent mounting plate that is secured only through mortar joints. The plate and mounting bracket shall be painted.
 6. In addition, there may be one projecting sign identifying the building. It shall be centered above the front facade and be no higher than 28' above the elevation of the sidewalk.
 7. The primary material of new signs will be wood, metal, painted fiberglass, or painted plastic.
 8. Once a projecting sign is installed, subsequent tenants shall re-use the same location for the sign and mounting plate.

The proposed master sign plan does not provide guidance on the size of signs; however the Applicant's submittal also includes four signs that do not comply with the adopted Design Guidelines for On-premise Signs and Awnings. Three of these proposed signs exceed the maximum allowed sizes for signs. The proposed signs are listed below.

Building Identification Signage

The Applicant is proposing two signs to identify the building: a wall sign and a projecting sign. The wall sign utilizes the historic sign band above the historic entrance to the building. The copy of the sign reads: "The Copham Residences". It includes individual letters pin-mounted through the mortar joints. The sign will be externally illuminated with LED light fixtures mounted above the sign copy. The sign's size complies with the guidelines and is 18 inches tall and is under 32 square feet. The height of the sign is 18 feet 5 inches above the ground; the maximum height for a wall sign under the guidelines is 14 feet.

The Applicant is proposing a projecting sign that is centered over the main entrance of the building . The copy of the sign reads: "The Copham Residences". The projecting sign will be internally illuminated with exposed neon accenting. The sign is approximately 29 square feet and projects 8 feet from the building wall. The sign guidelines allow for a maximum of a 12 square foot projecting sign and a maximum of a four foot projection from the building wall.

The eight foot projection also exceeds the maximum projection allowed in the zoning ordinance, which is four feet.

The sign will be mounted to the building with two square tubes that will be fastened to the building through the mortar joints. Two additional guy wires may also be needed and will be mounted through the mortar joints as well.

The height of the sign is 27 feet 9 inches above the ground; the maximum height for a wall sign under the guidelines is 14 feet.

1910 Warehouse Tenant

The 1910 warehouse contains one commercial tenant space. The Applicant is proposing a wall sign for this tenant. The proposed sign is located between the top of the storefront windows and the belt course on the building. CPED considers this the sign band for the building. The height of the proposed sign is 20 feet 4 inches above the ground; the maximum height for a wall sign under the guidelines is 14 feet.

The proposed sign is 11.5 square feet and complies with the sign guidelines that allow up to a 32 square foot sign. The sign is 2 feet 7¼ inches tall and exceeds the maximum allowed height for a wall sign, which is two feet.

The sign will be illuminated and mounted on a mounting plate connected to the building wall through the mortar joints.

1926 Annex Tenant

The 1926 annex contains one commercial tenant space. The Applicant is proposing a projecting sign for this tenant. The proposed sign is centered above the main entrance along Washington Avenue North. The height of the proposed sign is 19 feet 8 inches above the ground; the maximum height for a projecting sign is 14 feet.

The proposed sign is 16 square feet and projects four feet from the facade of the building. The sign guidelines allow for a maximum of a 12 square foot projecting sign and a maximum of a four foot projection from the building wall..

PUBLIC COMMENT:

As of the publication date of the staff report no additional correspondence has been received regarding this project.

CETIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS: to allow for building rehabilitation including brick repair, window replacement, pedestrian access ramp/platform and other building alterations

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.***

The Minneapolis Warehouse Historic District is historically significant as an early example of commercial growth as the city's warehouse and wholesaling district, which expanded during the late 19th and early 20th centuries when Minneapolis became a major distribution and jobbing center for the northwest. The Warehouse Historic District is also significant for its architecture and engineering.

Historically the Minneapolis Warehouse Historic District had similar types of signs as proposed by the Applicant and allowed in the proposed master sign plan. Over the period of significance the number and size of signs within the Warehouse Historic District varied.

In general the proposed master sign plan allows for signage that is in keeping with the scale and details of the buildings. The proposal reuses the historic sign band at the center of the building and includes a building identification projecting sign that does not obscure architectural details of the building. The proposed sign band on the 1910 Warehouse building is located between two architectural details. The Applicant does not identify how close the wall sign will be to these features within the sign band. If a sign filled the sign band it would be too close to the architectural details and may obscure these features. This would not be compatible with preserving the architectural significance of the building.

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

The property is designated for its association with the warehousing and manufacturing industries that developed along the rail corridors and rail yards in the area that became the warehouse district of Minneapolis. The property is also designated for its architecture. The subject building was designed by renowned architects, Bertrand & Chamberlain, and the designation study for the district states: "This structure represents the most monumental design of the numerous buildings by Bertrand and Chamberlain in the warehouse district."

The proposed sign band on the 1910 Warehouse building is located between two architectural details. The Applicant does not identify how close the wall sign will be to these features within the sign band. If a sign filled the sign band it would be too close to the architectural details and may obscure these features. This would not be compatible with preserving the architectural significance of the building.

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

A master sign plan that allows for signage that is in scale with the building and does not obscure its key architectural elements will ensure the integrity of the district. The proposal allows for signage that fits the scale of the building. The proposal does include signage that might obscure the masonry details around the building's storefront windows as it allows for wall sign on the building that may be too tall for the sign band where it is proposed.

(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 Minneapolis Heritage Preservation Design Guidelines for On-Premise Signs and Awnings was adopted in 2003. The guidelines provide information on the type, location, number, size, and illumination of signs on buildings within historic district. Signs that meet the guidelines can be approved administratively through Certificate of No Change applications. A Certificate of Appropriateness is required for signs that do not conform to the sign guidelines. The guidelines provide information about what the HPC should consider when reviewing Certificate or Appropriateness applications. This includes:

- Building condition
- Building orientation
- Historic precedence
- Exceptional design proposals

The subject building was designed for the Parlin & Orendorff Plow Company. The first floor was designed with a showroom and office along Washington Avenue and warehouse activities in the rear half of the first floor of the building. The building's design included a main front entry with a dedicated sign band above. The building was not designed as a traditional storefront commercial building and was not necessarily intended for multiple tenants which are common in the modern reuse of these buildings.

Sign Height

The design of the building presents difficulties in complying with height requirements of the Design Guidelines. The Design Guidelines state that wall and projecting signs shall not exceed 14 feet in height. Outside of the integrated entrance wall sign band above the entrance the building does not appear to have a purposefully designed sign band. The area above the first floor windows and below the belt course of the building appears to be the most apt sign band. This area begins at approximately 17 feet 6 inches above

the ground. The design of the building and its orientation present an appropriate sign band that exceeds the height requirements of the Design Guidelines.

Sign Size

The scale of the building also presents challenges for identifying the primary use of the buildings in signage. The Applicant has proposed signage that exceeds the size of allowed signs. In their application materials the Applicant states that the “larger signage is visually appropriate given the seven-story mass of the Warehouse and the long frontage on Washington Avenue.” The proposed size of the signs is in scale with the building.

The projecting building identification sign does exceed the maximum allowed projection both in the Design Guidelines and the Zoning Code. CPED does not believe this projection can be supported by the building’s scale and orientation. A sign of a similar size can be designed that complies with the maximum allowed projection and still be compatible with the scale of the building.

Number of Signs

The Applicant’s proposed master sign plan allows for more signs than what is allowed by the Design Guidelines. The Design Guidelines limit the number of signs to two per principal building entrance. The Applicant’s proposal, as written, could allow for up to seven signs on the 1910 Warehouse building. CPED is concerned that this could negatively impact the design of the building and does not believe there is need to allow for this potential amount of signage.

- (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 Secretary of the Interior’s Standards and Guidelines for Rehabilitation are likely the most applicable to the project. Standards number two, nine, and ten are most appropriate to the proposed project.

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.
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 such a manner that, if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.

The proposed master sign plan results in new signage that will be mounted to the building through the mortar joints in a manner that minimizes impacts on the building. If the size of the signs within the sign band do not encroach on the building details the proposal would retain and preserve the historic character of the property while allowing for the rehabilitation of the building for its new use as a mixed-use residential building.

- (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 subject site is located within the plan area of the North Loop Small Area Plan adopted by the City Council in 2010. The plan does not offer specific guidance on the individual elements of the proposed project. However, it does encourage the preservation of historic buildings.

The Minneapolis Plan for Sustainable Growth, the City's Comprehensive Plan, provides applicable policy guidance on signs. It states that Master sign plans shall be submitted for multi-tenant buildings to ensure a complementary relationship between signage and the architecture of a building. It further encourages effective signage that is appropriate to the character of the city's historic districts and landmarks, and preserves the integrity of historic structures.

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 materials provided by the Applicant demonstrate an understanding of the significance of the building and the Minneapolis Warehouse Historic District.

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

Chapter 530 of the Zoning Ordinance does not offer guidance on the elements of the proposed project. However, Chapter 543 of the Zoning Ordinance provides guidance on on-premise signage. All of the proposed signage complies with the size and height requirements of the Zoning Code. The maximum height of signs is 28 feet, the maximum area of wall signs is 120 square feet and the maximum area of projecting signs is 48 square feet. The proposed projecting building identification sign exceeds the maximum projection of four feet from the building wall.

(10) *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 treatment can be best described as rehabilitating.

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:

(11) *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.*

A master sign plan that allows signage that is compatible with the scale of the building and does not obscure the architectural details of the building will ensure the continued integrity of the building and all of the resources within the historic district.

(12) *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.*

Granting the certificate of appropriateness for the master sign plan and proposed signs will be in keeping with the spirit and intent of the ordinance by allowing for the size and location of signs that are reflective of the design of the buildings.

(13) *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 Applicant has based their master sign plan and proposed signs on the design of the building. Basing designs of signs based on a study of the building's architectural features is encouraged and will help retain the integrity of the subject building and is an example for other buildings in the district to follow.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

The Department of Community Planning and Economic Development – Planning Division recommends that the Heritage Preservation Commission adopt the above findings and **approve** the Certificate of Appropriateness for a Master Sign Plan that includes four signs that do not comply with the size and height requirements of the HPC Design Guidelines for On-Premise Signs for the building located at 607 Washington Avenue North with the following conditions:

1. The Applicant's proposed master sign plan is revised and reads as follows:

In addition to the "Design Guidelines for On-Premise Signs and Awnings", the Copham Building Multi-Tenant Signage Package includes the following guidelines

- a. Sign band, Warehouse Building: The sign band above the storefront bays is architecturally identified by two horizontal elements: 1) the base is defined by the top of the brick lintel above the storefront bays, comprising a parallel row of soldier and end bricks, which is 14'-7" above the first-floor elevation; and 2) the top is defined by the bottom of the second-floor windows sills, which is 18'-9" above the first-floor elevation. (The first floor is about two feet above the sidewalk.) The sign band above the main entry on Washington Avenue has slightly smaller dimensions, being completely surrounded by a band of soldier bricks. Signs shall not obscure architectural details and shall be centered in the sign band.
- b. Sign band, Annex: The sign band above the storefront bays on Washington Avenue is architecturally identified by two horizontal elements: 1) the base is defined by the top of the brick lintel above the storefront and entry bays, comprising a parallel row of soldier and end bricks, which is 14'-7" above the first-floor elevation; and 2) the top is defined by the bottom of the parapet coping.
- c. The 1910 Warehouse Building is allowed a total of four signs along Washington Avenue North; two signs per principal entrance.
- d. Wall signs: Only one sign shall be allowed above each storefront bay. It is preferred that each tenant use the bay above their location, but if there are ground-floor tenant spaces that do not have an exterior window, those tenants are allowed to utilize the remaining transom bays. The maximum size is 2 feet eight inches tall and shall not exceed 32 square feet in area.
- e. Projecting signs: A tenant's projecting sign shall be centered on the masonry piers and in the sign band area. It should be attached to a permanent mounting plate that is secured only through mortar joints. The plate and mounting bracket shall be painted. The maximum size is 16 square feet.
- f. In addition, there may be one projecting sign identifying the building. It shall be centered above the front facade and be no higher than 28' above the elevation of the sidewalk. The maximum size is 30 square feet.
- g. The primary material of new signs will be wood, metal, painted fiberglass, or painted plastic.

- h. Once a projecting sign is installed, subsequent tenants shall re-use the same location for the sign and mounting plate.
2. The proposed projecting building identification sign shall not project more than four feet from the building wall.
3. The proposed building identification wall sign is approved.
4. The proposed 1910 Warehouse tenant sign is approved.
5. The proposed 1926 Annex tenant sign is approved.