

**Department of Community Planning and Economic Development - Planning Division**  
Certificate of Appropriateness  
BZH-27560

**Date:** December 11, 2012

**Applicant:** Hess, Roise and Company, on behalf of Greco Real Estate Development and Property Management

**Address of Property:** 730 Washington Avenue N

**Project Name:** 730 Washington Avenue N Master Sign Plan

**Contact Person and Phone:** Elizabeth Gales, Hess, Roise and Company 612-338-1987

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

**Date Application Deemed Complete:** November 19, 2012

**Publication Date:** December 4, 2012

**Public Hearing:** December 11, 2012

**Appeal Period Expiration:** December 21, 2012

**Ward:** 7

**Neighborhood Organization:** North Loop Neighborhood Association

**Concurrent Review:** N/A

**Attachments:**  
Appendix A- Materials Submitted by CPED  
Appendix B- Materials Submitted by the Applicant

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<b>CLASSIFICATION:</b>	
Historic District	Warehouse Historic District (Contributing)
Period of Significance	1865-1930
Criteria of significance	Architecture, Commerce, Master Craftsmen
Date of local designation	1978, 2009
Date of National Register designation	1989
Applicable Design Guidelines	Secretary of Interior Standards for Treatment of Historic Properties, Minneapolis Warehouse District Design Guidelines.

<b>PROPERTY INFORMATION</b>	
Current name	Precision Building
Historic Name	Scriver-Andrews Warehouse Company
Current Address	730-750 Washington Avenue North
Historic Address	738-744 Washington Avenue North
Original Construction Date	1920-1922
Original Contractor	Unknown
Original Architect	Concrete Steel Company (Per the Applicant)
Historic Use	Warehouse
Current Use	Industrial (Manufacturing)
Proposed Use	Mixed Use- Commercial and Residential

**BACKGROUND:**

The subject property is a 6 story brick warehouse building (the three easternmost bays are 3 stories). It was constructed between 1920 and 1922. Building permit records do not list an architect or contractor, though the Applicant has identified the architect to be the Concrete Steel Company. It housed various warehouse and wholesale uses through the period of significance. The building is of a relatively simple, utilitarian design, with no ornamentation or detailing. The building's massing and divided light windows are its key character defining features.

The building has undergone a substantial rehabilitation, including repair, rehabilitation and replacement of window and storefront systems, masonry repairs, and a rooftop addition. This work was approved as a Certificate of Appropriateness (BZH-26977) in September of 2011. The property owner is converting the building for mixed use, with commercial on the lower levels and rental apartments in the upper levels.

**SUMMARY OF APPLICANT'S PROPOSAL:**

The Applicant is proposing to install a total of five new signs on the building:

- One sign for the apartment use. It measures 13'-11"x2'-6", totaling 34.79 square feet. The proposed sign would include individual metal letters spelling "ElseWarehouse" lit with LED lighting, mounted to a metal sign board.
- One sign for a proposed restaurant at the west loading dock. This would be a projecting sign, measuring 3'x4', totaling 12 square feet. The sign board would be reclaimed wood with metal signage and lettering spelling "Bear Cheese", supported by a hot-rolled steel frame. It would be illuminated by gooseneck lights.
- Three signs for future commercial tenants. The Applicant is proposing material, illumination and maximum size specifications at this time. The future tenants would be able to propose specific signage that falls within these basic design parameters in the future, which would be reviewed by staff via Certificate of No Change applications. The Applicant is proposing two signs measuring a maximum size of 2'-6" x 31'-9", totaling 79.37 square feet (Tenant A and Tenant B on the elevation drawings.) For the eastern most tenant space (Tenant C), the Applicant is proposing a sign measuring a maximum of 2'-6" x 42'-2", totaling 105.41 square feet. All three of the signs would feature individual metal or wood letters with LED lighting, mounted to a metal or wood sign board.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:**

No public comment had been received by the time of publication.

***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 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> 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.

The proposed signage meets this finding. The proposed signage is within the historic sign band of the building. As illustrated by the historic photographs of the Warehouse District provided by the Applicant, large signage was found throughout the district during the period of significance.

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

The alterations are compatible with and support the designation of the property. The overall impact of the signs on the district as a whole will be negligible. It is unlikely that the installation of any signage would have any significant impact on the association of the Warehouse District or its expansion which occurred in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

- (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 seven aspects that define a property's integrity: location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association. Based upon the evidence provided below, the proposal would not impact the integrity of the property or Warehouse Historic District.

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

*Design:* The proposed signs would not have a significant impact on the integrity of design. The signs would be placed within the traditional sign band, and installation of the signs will not result in any additional design modifications to the building. Staff is

recommending that the easternmost sign (Tenant Sign C) be shortened so that it does not extend beyond the edge of the bank of windows in the middle bay of the 3-story section of the building. This way it will visually match the design of the signs for the other two tenant spaces. It could still potentially be larger than the other two signs, as the window bank features five windows in this location, compared to four on the rest of the building.

*Setting:* Large signs were found throughout the Warehouse Historic District during the period of significance, and are still found there today. The proposed signs would not have an impact on the integrity of setting.

*Materials:* The installation of the signs would not have an impact on any significant or character defining materials.

*Workmanship:* The signs would not require the removal or alteration of any distinct decorative or character defining elements on the building. The proposed signs would not have an impact on the integrity of workmanship.

*Feeling:* Large signs were found throughout the Warehouse Historic District during the period of significance, and are still found there today. The proposed signs would not have an impact on the integrity of feeling.

*Association:* The project would 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 *Design Guidelines for On-Premise Signs and Awnings* are the relevant design guidelines for this application. The *Minneapolis Warehouse Historic District Design Guidelines* defer to the *Design Guidelines for On-Premise Signs and Awnings* for design guidance for signage. The *Design Guidelines for On-Premise Signs and Awnings* allow for signs that do not meet the guidelines to be approved through a Certificate of Appropriateness, taking into consideration "special situations including building condition, building orientation, historic precedence and exceptional design proposals."

The sign for the Bear Cheese restaurant meets all applicable standards of the *Design Guidelines for On-Premise Signs and Awnings*. The proposed signs for the ElseWarehouse apartments and the three future commercial tenants all exceed the maximum area of 32 square feet established by the *Design Guidelines for On-Premise Signs and Awnings*. Additionally, due to the grade change along Washington Avenue and the location of the sign band, some of the signs exceed the maximum height of 14' set in the guidelines.

The Applicant has provided photographs of the Warehouse District during the period of significance. The photos show that signs were often large and were numerous throughout

the district during this time. The number of signs meets the standards outlined in the *Design Guidelines for On-Premise Signs and Awnings*, and the size of the proposed signs is not out of scale with the size of the building.

Staff is recommending that the sign for Tenant C be reduced in size so that it does not extend beyond the edge of the windows in the central bay, making it slightly smaller and in keeping with the proposed design for the Tenant A and Tenant B signs.

- (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 for Rehabilitation below are most applicable to the proposed project.

Standard #2 states: "The historic character of a property shall be retained and preserved. The removal of historic materials or alteration of features and spaces that characterize a property shall be avoided." The installation/modifications of the signs on the building would not have an impact on any historic materials or features.

- (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.***

As conditioned, the project would comply with policy 8.1.1 of The Minneapolis Plan, which states: "Protect historic resources from modifications that are not sensitive to their historic significance."

***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 statement outlining how they feel the proposed work meets the applicable findings and the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation (see Appendix B).

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

The proposed alterations do not trigger any additional review under Title 20, Chapter 530.

- (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 Applicant submitted a statement saying that the proposal is required to meet the Secretary of the Interior's Standards because the project is receiving state and federal tax credits.

***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 signs would be compatible with and ensure the continued significance and integrity of the subject property and all other contributing properties in the Warehouse Historic District.

- (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 intent of the *Design Guidelines for On-Premise Signs and Awnings* is to allow for sensitive, appropriately sized and designed signage for historic buildings. The proposed signs meet the spirit and intent of the ordinance and guidelines and would not alter the essential character of the historic district.

- (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 rehabilitation of the historic building and occupancy by new tenants should have a net positive impact on the significance and integrity of the district. Investment in this property may help spur further reinvestment in the district, furthering the preservation of the remaining resources. The installation of appropriately scaled signage is an important component of creating successful tenant spaces and a new identity for this building.

## 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 for the building located at 730 Washington Avenue N subject to the following condition(s):

1. Signs for Tenant Space A, Tenant Space B, and Tenant Space C shall meet the material and illumination details outlined by this application. Final size and design shall be subject to staff review through a Certificate of No Change.
2. The sign for Tenant Space C shall not extend past the west end of the bank of windows in the central structural bay of the 3-story portion of the building.
3. CPED-Planning shall review and approve the final plans.
4. Signs shall be anchored to the wall through mortar joints. Not more than one brick shall be altered or removed for the installation of wiring.
5. No other signs are approved.
6. All workmanship must be completed in conformance with the Secretary of Interior Standards, see: <http://www.nps.gov/history/hps/tps/standguide/>
7. The Applicant shall obtain all other necessary City approvals prior to the commencement of work.
8. By ordinance, approvals are valid for a period of two years from the date of the decision unless required permits are obtained and the action approval is substantially begun and proceeds in a continuous basis toward completion. Upon written request and for good cause, the planning director may grant up to a one year extension if the request is made in writing no later than December 11, 2014.

**Attachment A: Submitted by CPED staff**

## **Attachment B: Materials submitted by Applicant**