

Department of Community Planning and Economic Development
Demolition of a Historic Resource
BZH-27956

Date: November 19, 2013

Address: 4535 East Lake Harriet Parkway

Project Name: Demolition of a Single-Family Dwelling at 4535 East Lake Harriet Parkway

Applicant: Daniel Murphy Jr.

Contact Person and Phone: Adam Burrington, Eskuche Design (612-799-8005)

CPED Staff and Phone: Janelle Widmeier, Senior City Planner (612-673-3156)

Date Application Deemed Complete: October 28, 2013

End of 60-Day Decision Period: December 26, 2013

Ward: 13 **Neighborhood Organization:** East Harriet Farmstead Neighborhood Association

BACKGROUND

The applicant seeks to demolish the single-family dwelling located at the property of 4535 East Lake Harriet Parkway. In August 2013, the Department of Community Planning and Economic Development (CPED) informed Eskuche Design that a demolition of the structure at 4535 East Lake Harriet Parkway would require a Demolition of Historic Resource application because it may meet at least one of the local designation criteria as it is located in the Lynnhurst Potential Historic District.

Lynnhurst Potential Residential Historic District

This concentration of homes is located along the southwestern shores of Lake Harriet and is associated with the development of the Lynnhurst Addition of the city plat. The area identified is bounded by 42nd Street West on the north; 48th Street West on the south; Dupont Avenue South on the east; and Lake Harriet Boulevard East on the west. This area includes an additional two-block area south of the Lynnhurst Addition. The area was delineated to include homes that display comparable architectural styles, form, massing, and character with comparable lot sizes and setbacks that provide a consistent setting.

Originally labeled the “Colony,” the area was owned by the local firm Loring and Brown in the late nineteenth century. In an effort to promote residential development near the lakes, the firm offered to give away lots along the current Fremont Avenue South with the condition that the new residents construct homes costing at least \$3,000. In 1893, nine prominent families, including E.W. Decker, Maude Armatage, James McClanahan, Douglas Lansing, John Rickel, Frank C. Metcalf, George Tuttle, Douglas Fiske, and John Baxter, moved to the 4600-block of Fremont Avenue South. The families remained isolated for more than a decade during which time local history indicates the area acquired the name “Lynnhurst” due to the abundance of linden trees.

In 1903, the Lynnhurst Addition was platted by Clinton Morrison and was developed by David C. Bell.

Department of Community Planning and Economic Development
BZH – 27926

The addition was comprised of a tract of land bounded on the north by 42nd Street West; 46th Street West on the south; Dupont Avenue South on the east; and the shores of Lake Harriet on the west. The wide tree-lined boulevard along Dupont Avenue South and 46th Street West was renamed King's Highway and adds character to the Lynnhurst area. Subsequent neighborhood development attracted wealthy citizens of Minneapolis that included bankers and city officials.

The Lynnhurst Potential Residential Historic District appears to be a good candidate for local landmark designation, under *Criterion 5* as a significant pattern of development and under *Criterion 4* for architecture, and/or for the National Register under *Criterion A: Community Planning and Development* and *Criterion C: Architecture*. The 2005 CLG Survey of Southwest Minneapolis does not identify the property as being individually eligible for local or national designation. The subject property also borders the East Lake Harriet Parkway, which is part of the Grand Rounds. The public property of the Grand Rounds is subject of a National Register of Historic Places Designation.

DESCRIPTION

The 2-story residence at 4535 East Lake Harriet Parkway (formerly 4535 East Lake Harriet Boulevard) was constructed in 1925 by Madden and Adams and designed by Albert R. Van Dyck. It does not appear to adhere to a distinct architectural style, but seems to have Mediterranean, Spanish Colonial and/or Craftsman influences. The primary exterior material is stucco. Clay tiles are located on the pitched roof of the front part of the house. The roofs on the back and side of the house are flat. Original windows are wood with true divided lights. Many original decorative features, such as the entrance brackets, also remain. Some exterior modifications to the structure, such as the sunroom/porch addition on the north side of the dwelling and the conversion of the attached garage to a dining room, since it was constructed are apparent.

The structure is located on a 14,883 square foot lot (approximately 200 feet deep by 75 feet wide). The setback of the structure from the parkway is consistent with the adjacent residences.

PROPOSED CHANGES

The applicant is proposing to demolish the building at 4535 East Lake Harriet Parkway in order to construct a new single-family dwelling. A site plan, floor plans and building elevation plans and renderings for the new dwelling are attached for reference.

PUBLIC COMMENT

CPED notified the neighborhood association and the surrounding property owners. A letter was received and is attached to this report. Any additional correspondence, if received, will be forwarded to the Heritage Preservation Commission.

NECESSITY OF DEMOLITION

The Minneapolis Code of Ordinances, Title 23, Heritage Preservation, Chapter 599 Heritage Preservation Regulations states that before approving the demolition of a property determined to be an historic resource, the commission shall make findings that the demolition is necessary to correct an unsafe or dangerous condition on the property, or that there are no reasonable alternatives to the demolition. In determining whether reasonable alternatives exist, the commission shall consider, but not

be limited to the significance of the property, the integrity of the property and the economic value or usefulness of the existing structure, including its current use, costs of renovation and feasible alternative uses. The commission may delay a final decision for up to 180 days to allow parties interested in preserving the historic resource a reasonable opportunity to act to protect it.

SIGNIFICANCE

In CPED's review, the subject property does not appear eligible for local designation.

Criterion #1: The property is associated with significant events or with periods that exemplify broad patterns of cultural, political, economic or social history.

The property does not appear to have been the site of significant historical events.

Criterion #2: The property is associated with the lives of significant persons or groups.

The property does not appear to be significant under this criterion. The architect who designed the home was Albert R. Van Dyck. It was constructed by Madden & Adams. The original owners were Dr. Robert Best and Dr. Cora Johnstone Best.

Albert Van Dyck (1867-1941) primarily designed residences. Examples of his work survive, many of which are located around Lake of the Isles.¹ These residences more clearly exhibit distinctive architectural styles, such as Colonial, Spanish Mediterranean and Tudor. It does not appear that his work was exemplary.

No records were found for Madden & Adams indicating significance.

Dr. Robert Best was a physician. No records were found for him indicating significance.

Dr. Cora Johnstone Best was a noted lecturer, mountain climber, and hunter and was a member of the Canadian Alpine Club, the Japanese Alpine Club, and the Swiss Alpine Club.² She was known for her many ascents in the Canadian Rockies. According to information the applicant found, she was also a good friend of a fellow adventurer, Audrey Belle Forfar Shippam and is the subject of a famous photo taken by Byron Harmon. She died at the subject property in 1930.

Criterion #3: The property contains or is associated with distinctive elements of city or neighborhood identity.

The potential Lynnhurst historic district is populated by a variety of architectural styles common to the first twenty years of the twentieth century. The structure was built for \$13,000 in 1925. The value of the structure, its location and date of construction are consistent with the "Colony" and the platting of the Lynnhurst addition. It also exemplifies the community planning principles that drove development in this community, in terms of age, setbacks, orientation, lot sizes, and cost which contribute to the eligibility of the potential Lynnhurst Historic District.

¹ Lathrop, Alan. Minnesota Architects: A Biographical Dictionary. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2010.

² "Dr. Cora Best, Alpinist, Dies," *The Montreal Gazette*, November, 21, 1930.

Criterion #4: The property embodies the distinctive characteristics of an architectural or engineering type or style, or method of construction.

The 2-story, stucco residence does not appear to adhere to a distinct architectural style, but seems to have Mediterranean and/or Spanish Colonial influences. The property does not embody any distinctive characteristics of an architectural or engineering type or style, or method of construction.

Criterion #5: The property exemplifies a landscape design or development pattern distinguished by innovation, rarity, uniqueness or quality of design or detail.

The property does not exemplify a landscape design distinguished by innovation, rarity, uniqueness or quality of design or detail. The lot in question possesses commonplace shrubs, trees, and grass. These elements are not part of a unified landscape design. It does exemplify the community planning principles that drove development in this community, in terms of age, setbacks, orientation, lot sizes, and cost which contribute to the eligibility of the potential Lynnhust Historic District.

Criterion #6: The property exemplifies works of master builders, engineers, designers, artists, craftsmen or architects.

The property does not exemplify works of master builders, engineers, designers, artists, craftsmen or architects. See Criterion #2 above.

Criterion #7: The property has yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Research of the property did not yield information important to prehistory or history, and therefore, should not be evaluated for archeological significance.

INTEGRITY

The National Register traditionally recognizes a property's integrity through seven aspects or qualities: location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. The subject property retains the integrity required to be a contributing resource in the potential Lynnhust Historic District.

Location: The building remains in its original location, indicating the building maintains integrity of location.

Design: The size and proportion of the building has not changed. Some exterior modifications, such as the north sunroom addition and converting the attached garage to a dining room, have not affected the ability to recognize the structure as a single-family dwelling. Original exterior materials appear to remain, but are in need of repair. It also exemplifies the community planning principles that drove development in this community, in terms of age, setbacks, orientation, lot sizes, and cost which contribute to the eligibility of the potential Lynnhust Historic District.

Setting: The property's integrity of setting remains intact. The building continues to operate among other residences clustered around the lake, as it has done throughout its history.

Materials: The majority of the building’s original exterior materials remain, including stucco, windows, and brackets.

Workmanship: Integrity of workmanship is evident in the existing exterior features, such as the stucco and stone details around the front entrance.

Feeling: The building retains the look and feel of a single family dwelling.

Association: The building continues to be associated with the “Colony.”

UNSAFE OR DANGEROUS CONDITION

As part of the application, a structural condition assessment conducted by Manson Macdonald Young Structural Engineers was included that outlines the work that would be required to rehabilitate the building. The report identified the work that would be required to bring the structure up to current codes. Issues identified included the following:

- Under-engineered framing in the attic and floors
- Water damage from infiltration in the basement
- Rot and cracking in the exterior wood and stucco materials
- Crumbing exterior stairs

Recommended rehabilitation remedies for these issues included replacement, reinforcement and repair, installing drain tile, and waterproofing the basement walls. The report concludes that the structure is unsafe and should be demolished.

An asbestos study, conducted by Hickey Consultants, was also conducted on materials throughout the structure. Multiple materials tested contained asbestos.

The above structure conditions are not uncommon to dwellings constructed in this era. Although repairs are needed, demolition is not the only option to address the noted unsafe and dangerous conditions.

REASONABLE ALTERNATIVES TO DEMOLITION

Reasonable alternatives to demolition exist. The home can continue to be used as a residence, which is a permitted use at this location. However, the structure is in need of work.

ECONOMIC VALUE OR USEFULNESS OF THE EXISTING STRUCTURE

The applicant states that the rehabilitation of the building is cost prohibitive. They’ve determined that the best investment return would be generated by constructing a new single family dwelling. The applicant states that the projected rehabilitation costs total \$598,230. The property was acquired for \$900,000 by the owner, Daniel Murphy Jr., on October 8, 2013. The applicant did not provide an approximate remodel valuation of the property, but noted that the Hennepin County Tax Records identify an existing building value of \$105,500 and land value of \$797,000.

The existing 2-story dwelling contains 2-3 bedrooms and 3 bathrooms. According to City records, the total floor area is 3,802 square feet, including the basement level (1,627 square feet on the ground floor, 1,099 square feet on the second floor, and 1,076 unfinished square feet on the basement level).

Department of Community Planning and Economic Development
BZH – 27926

For comparison, the assessor's value and structure information for the adjacent single-family dwellings are included below:

4525 East Lake Harriet Parkway

Year built: 1940

Stories: 2

Bedrooms/baths: 4/5

Total floor area: 6,087 square feet with a finished basement

Lot area: 20,000 square feet

Assessor's value (land/building): \$936,500/\$768,200

4541 East Lake Harriet Parkway

Year built: 1913

Stories: 2.5

Bedrooms/baths: 5/6

Total floor area: 8,277 square feet with a finished basement

Lot area: 15,400 square feet

Assessor's value (land/building): \$799,300/\$918,200

The Applicant has not demonstrated that the building in question has no economic value or usefulness, despite the home needing repairs.

FINDINGS

1. The subject property was identified as part of a collection of properties identified as part of the Lynnhurst Potential Historic District in the 2005 CLG Resource Study and inventory in Southwest Minneapolis, but this district has neither been nominated for designation nor placed under interim protection.
2. The property is eligible for local designation as part of a potential historic district. The property is not individually eligible for local designation.
3. The demolition is not necessary to correct an unsafe or dangerous condition. However, the structural assessment and asbestos study provided by the Applicant shows that a substantial amount of work is needed on the structure.
4. Reasonable alternatives to demolition exist.
5. The building retains its integrity.
6. The Applicant has not demonstrated that the building in question has no economic value or usefulness.

RECOMMENDATION

The Department of Community Planning and Economic Development recommends that the Heritage Preservation Commission adopt the above findings and **approve** the demolition application for the property located at 4535 East Lake Harriet Parkway.

Department of Community Planning and Economic Development
BZH – 27926

Attachments:

- Applicant's statement and responses to findings
- Structural and code reviews
- Asbestos study
- Remodel evaluation
- Correspondence
- Lynnhurst Potential Historic District Map
- Vicinity map
- Existing site plan
- Original structure plans
- Exterior and interior structure photos
- Proposed site, building elevation and floor plans