

**CITY OF SAINT PAUL
HERITAGE PRESERVATION COMMISSION STAFF REPORT**

FILE NAME: 740 Seventh Street East – former Hospital Linen Site
DATE OF APPLICATION: July 29, 2014
APPLICANT: Eduardo Barrera for the City of Saint Paul – Housing and Redevelopment Authority
OWNER: same
DATE OF HEARING: August 14, 2014
HPC SITE/DISTRICT: Dayton’s Bluff Heritage Preservation District
CATEGORY: Vacant Lots
CLASSIFICATION: Lot Split
STAFF INVESTIGATION AND REPORT: Christine Boulware
DATE: August 6, 2014

A. SITE DESCRIPTION:

The subject site is an approximately 2.63-acre vacant lot bounded by East Seventh Street, Maple Street, Bates Avenue, and residential properties to the south. The site formerly contained the Hospital Linen business in its northeastern portion and several residential buildings and one commercial building in its southwestern portion, all of which have been demolished. The site slopes downhill from northeast to southwest.

The northeastern portion of the lot is proposed to be developed by Mississippi Market as a grocery store with a footprint of approximately 15,252 square feet, and a 56-space surface parking lot to the rear (southeast). The building’s northeastern portion would be one-story, while the southwestern portion has a 2nd floor and a basement level that is partially above ground due to the site slope.

The southwestern portion of the lot is proposed to be developed as a new, 109-unit, four- and five-story apartment building with a 32,000 sq. ft. footprint. Parking includes 90 interior stalls in the lower floors and a 33-stall surface parking lot to the south. Four stories are above grade at the eastern end of the site while five are exposed at the western end and Bates Avenue elevation.

These projects require review and approval by the Heritage Preservation Commission at a public hearing.

B. PROPOSED CHANGES:

The applicant is proposing a lot split that would divide the site into two parcels:

The northeastern parcel = ~0.94-acres

The southwestern parcel = ~1.68-acres

C. BACKGROUND:

In 2004, the HPC conditionally approved the demolition of the Hospital Linen Site and the buildings were razed in 2005. Also in 2005, the HPC held a pre-application review for a multi-family residential project that was never constructed. In 2008, the remaining commercial and residential buildings at the southwestern portion of the site were demolished in order to meet deadlines for environmental clean-up

Lot splits are reviewed and approved by the planning administrator in the City of Saint Paul and there are several conditions that must be met in order for a lot split to be approved. Chapter 69 of the City’s Legislative Code states that the administrator “*shall cause the application to be reviewed by the public works department and other affected city departments, if appropriate, and shall notify the applicant of any required modifications.*”

D. GUIDELINE CITATIONS:

Dayton's Bluff Heritage Preservation District Design Guidelines (1992)

Leg. Code § 74.87. General principles.

- 1. All work should be of a character and quality that maintains the distinguishing features of the building and the environment. The removal or alteration of distinctive architectural features should be avoided as should alterations that have no historical basis and which seek to create an earlier appearance. The restoration of altered original features, if documentable, is encouraged.*
- 2. Changes which may have taken place in the course of time are evidence of the history and development of a building, structure, or site and its environment. These changes may have acquired significance in their own right, and this significance shall be recognized and respected.*
- 3. Deteriorated architectural features should be repaired rather than replaced whenever possible. In the event of replacement, new materials should match the original in composition, design (including consideration of proportion, texture and detail), color and overall appearance.*
- 4. New additions or alterations to structures should be constructed in such a manner that if such additions or alterations were to be removed in the future, the form and integrity of the original structure would be unimpaired.*
- 5. The impact of alterations or additions on individual buildings as well as on the surrounding streetscape will be considered; major alterations to buildings which occupy a corner lot or are otherwise prominently sited should be avoided.*
- 6. New construction should be compatible with the historic and architectural character of the district.*

Sec. 74.90. - New construction and additions.

(b) General guidelines:

- (1) Site evaluation.* Existing historic buildings and landscape features should be retained and rehabilitated in plans for redevelopment.
- (2) General character.* New construction should reinforce the historic architectural and visual character of the area. Specifically, it should refer to the traditional two- and three-story dwelling and commercial building module and typical setbacks already established in the district and in the adjacent area.
- (3) Pedestrian circulation and parking.* New construction should be oriented toward streets which are inviting environments for pedestrians. Parking areas should be placed at the rear of buildings wherever possible or screened with landscaping, low walls or appropriately detailed fences.
- (4) Views and vistas.* Exceptional views of the city and river valley provided from the public way should not be obstructed by new buildings or structures.

(c) Principal buildings; additions:

- (1) Massing and scale.* New construction should conform to the massing, volume, height, facade proportions and scale of surrounding structures and also comply with existing zoning regulations. The gross volume of any new structure should be visually compatible with the buildings and elements within the surrounding area. New dwellings and commercial buildings should be compatible with the height of existing adjacent buildings.
- (2) Materials and details.* Materials and details should relate to those of existing nearby buildings. Wood or masonry construction is typical for existing residential buildings in the district, while masonry is typical of commercial buildings. These materials are preferable to vinyl, metal or hardboard siding. Imitative materials such as artificial stone or brick veneer should not be used. Materials will be reviewed to determine their appropriate use in relation to the overall design of the structure. The use of vinyl, metal or hardboard siding will be considered by the commission on a case-by-case basis. These materials may be permissible in new construction of principal buildings if appropriately detailed.

(d) Building elements:

- (1) Roofs.* The gable and hip roof or their variants are the primary historic roof forms in the district, with many variations and combinations. In new construction, the skyline or roof profile should relate to

the predominant roof shape of nearby buildings. Highly visible secondary structure roofs should be compatible with the roof pitch, color and material of the main structure.

The roofing materials used on new buildings should be appropriate to the design of the building and the visibility of the roof.

Roof hardware such as skylights, vents and metal pipe chimneys should not be placed on the front roof plane.

*(2) **Windows and entries.** Vertically oriented, double-hung sash are the predominant historic window type in the district. The proportion, size, rhythm and detailing of windows and entries should be compatible with that of existing nearby buildings. The rhythm of solids to voids created by openings in the facade of the new structure should be visually compatible with surrounding structures.*

*(3) **Porches and decks.** Porches are a standard feature of many historic houses in the district and whether enclosed or unenclosed they are an important part of the streetscape. In new construction, the front entry should be articulated with a design element such as a porch, portico or landing which provides a transitional zone between the semipublic and public exterior zones and the private interior zone. This design element should be appropriately detailed and compatible with the size and scale of the building.*

Decks should be constructed at the rear of the building and should be integrated into the overall design. Decks should be appropriately detailed and should not be raised in a manner which makes them conspicuous.

*(f) **Site considerations:***

*(1) **Setback and siting.** The setback of new buildings in most residential and commercial areas should be compatible with the setback of existing adjacent buildings.*

*(2) **Parking.** Residential parking areas should be confined to the rear of existing or new buildings. Parking spaces should be screened from view from the public street by landscaping such as hedges, grade changes or low fences.*

*(3) **Fences.** Fences which allow some visual penetration of front yard space are preferable to complete enclosure. Fences of wrought iron or wood which enclose the front yard should be no higher than three and one-half (3½) feet. Cyclone fences should not be used to enclose front yards in the front half of side yards.*

*(4) **Retaining walls.** Stone, brick and split face concrete block are preferable to landscape timber for the construction of retaining walls. Masonry retaining walls should be finished with caps or appropriate details.*

*(5) **Public improvements.** New street and landscape improvements, lighting, street furniture and signs should be compatible with the character of the historic district. The historic urban pattern of gridplan streets should be retained and enhanced in improvement projects.*

*(6) **Signs.** Sign materials and design should complement the materials and design of the building and adjacent buildings. (See also: Storefront Guidelines.)*

*(7) **Views and vistas.** New buildings or other structures should not block key views and vistas of the river valley and the downtown skyline.*

(C.F. 92-900, § 2(I)(B), 7-23-92)

Storefront Guidelines

*(g) **East Seventh Street: Hope Street to Bates Street.***

*(1) **General provisions:** The passerby can travel up or down East Seventh Street without much of a sense of the historic neighborhood on each side of the avenue. The four-lane street is a major artery and divides the Swede Hollow corner of the district from the rest of the bluff. East Seventh is visually dominated by the large institutional mass of the Wilder Residence. A scattering of historic and modern commercial buildings and a few residences constitute the other structures. Excellent views of downtown Saint Paul and the river valley are afforded from various points along the streets. Vacant parcels are found on both sides of the street, and there is a small public park triangle at the north side of the Maple Street intersection.*

This portion of East Seventh Street has been a mixture of residential, commercial and institutional uses since the late nineteenth century. In 1892, the corridor between Bates and Hope streets was occupied by several mansions and a number of double houses, as well as a variety of commercial buildings. The street was not lined with a continuous row of stores and shops, such as those still found along Payne Avenue or farther up the street at the Arcade Street intersection. However, existing historic commercial buildings are built out to the sidewalk with no setback from the property line. This creates a uniform alignment of facades that provides a visually strong streetscape. The Stutzman Block—with its wedge shape and corner turret—is the most architecturally significant.

a. Design. *New construction along East Seventh should serve as an attractive frame for the historic neighborhood behind it. Fewer historic reference points are found here than along adjacent streets. However, the important route of East Seventh through the neighborhood requires very sensitive consideration of land use, siting and building design issues.*

b. Siting and setback. *New construction, particularly commercial, should maintain the uniform setback of older commercial buildings along the street. Where facades must be set back from sidewalks, low walls, landscaping or other elements should define the street edge.*

c. Parking. *Parking areas should be located at the side or at the rear of the buildings and should be screened with landscaping, low walls or appropriately detailed fences. Large paved areas should be divided with landscaping at the interior of the site.*

d. Massing, height and scale. *New construction should conform to the massing, volume, height, facade proportions and scale of buildings within view of the site, and also comply with existing zoning regulations. The gross volume of any new structure should be visually compatible with the building elements within the surrounding area.*

e. Materials and details. *Although the architectural character of the street is quite eclectic, materials and details should be compatible with those in the district. Wood or masonry construction is typical for existing residential buildings in the district, while masonry is typical of commercial construction. These materials are preferable to vinyl, metal or hardboard siding. Imitative materials such as artificial stone or brick veneer should not be used. The use of vinyl, metal or hardboard siding will be considered by the commission on a case-by-case basis. These materials may be permissible in new construction if appropriately detailed.*

(2) Building elements:

a. Roofs. *Flat roofs are more typical of commercial buildings while the gable and hip roof or their variants are the primary historic residential roof forms in the district. In new construction, the skyline or roof profile should relate to these predominant roof shapes. Roofing materials used on new buildings should be appropriate to the design of the building and the visibility of the roof.*

Roof hardware such as skylights, vents and metal pipe chimneys should not be placed on the visible portion of the roof such as the front roof plane.

b. Windows and entries. *Prominent first floor display windows and distinctive entries facing the street are typical for existing historic commercial buildings. Vertically oriented, double-hung sash is the predominant window type for upper stories in the district. The location, proportion, size, rhythm and detailing of windows and entries should address these traditional district forms.*

c. Signs and lighting. *Signs, graphics and lighting should be designed as part of the facade. Signs on commercial blocks housing several adjacent businesses should be designed to unify the facade, while providing identity for individual businesses. Type style, sign color and sign materials should complement the building exterior.*

Lighting should be compatible with the building exterior and signs. Internally lighted signs should not be used where they overpower the facade or setting.

E. FINDINGS:

1. The site is vacant land bounded by East Seventh Street, Maple Street, Bates Avenue, and residential properties to the south and is located within the Dayton's Bluff Heritage Preservation District.

2. On July 23, 1992, the Dayton's Bluff Heritage Preservation District was established under Ordinance No. 17942 (Council File #92-900). The Heritage Preservation Commission shall protect the

architectural character of heritage preservation sites through review and approval or denial of applications for city permits for exterior work within designated heritage preservation sites §73.04.(4).

3. The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation state "*New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction will not destroy historic materials, features, and spatial relationships that characterize a 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.*" The site is vacant and there are no historic buildings or structures remaining. The proposed lot split will create larger parcels than were historically present, allowing for new construction with larger footprints and massing.

4. Legislative Code Sec. 74.90.(g)(1) describes the significance of East Seventh Street:

"The passerby can travel up or down East Seventh Street without much of a sense of the historic neighborhood on each side of the avenue. The four-lane street is a major artery and divides the Swede Hollow corner of the district from the rest of the bluff. East Seventh is visually dominated by the large institutional mass of the Wilder Residence. A scattering of historic and modern commercial buildings and a few residences constitute the other structures. Excellent views of downtown Saint Paul and the river valley are afforded from various points along the streets. Vacant parcels are found on both sides of the street, and there is a small public park triangle at the north side of the Maple Street intersection.

This portion of East Seventh Street has been a mixture of residential, commercial and institutional uses since the late nineteenth century. In 1892, the corridor between Bates and Hope streets was occupied by several mansions and a number of double houses, as well as a variety of commercial buildings. The street was not lined with a continuous row of stores and shops, such as those still found along Payne Avenue or farther up the street at the Arcade Street intersection. However, existing historic commercial buildings are built out to the sidewalk with no setback from the property line. This creates a uniform alignment of facades that provides a visually strong streetscape. The Stutzman Block—with its wedge shape and corner turret—is the most architecturally significant."

The lot split would create two parcels where historically there were 16 lots with both residential and commercial uses. The lot split will create parcels that will allow for new construction that will have larger footprints and massing than neighboring buildings both in and outside the historic district. New construction will need to conform to the Dayton's Bluff Historic District Guidelines and massing and size will be addressed by the Heritage Preservation Commission at public hearings.

5. Both of the proposed developments, in which the lot split is being sought, have been presented to the HPC in 2014 at Pre-Application Reviews. With the Mississippi Market reviews, the HPC did not express concern over the proposed massing and footprint; the HPC did express this concern regarding the proposed residential development.

F. RECOMMENDATION: Based on the findings, staff recommends the HPC support the application for the lot split and inform the planning administrator of the concern regarding the potential for an overly large footprint and therefore massing that is not consistent with the character of the Dayton's Bluff Heritage Preservation District.

G. ATTACHMENTS:

1. Lot Split application and supporting materials