

**CITY OF SAINT PAUL  
HERITAGE PRESERVATION COMMISSION RESOLUTION  
FILE ADDRESS: 763 Fourth Street East, Remove or Repair  
HPC FILE NUMBER: 11-014  
DATE: May 12, 2011**

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**WHEREAS**, the City of Saint Paul has declared as a matter of public policy, in Chapter 73 of the Saint Paul Legislative Code, “that the preservation, protection, perpetuation and use of areas, places, building, structures and other objects having special historical, community or aesthetic interest or value is a public necessity and is required in the interest of the health, prosperity, safety and welfare of the people;” and

**WHEREAS**, Chapter 73 also establishes the purposes of heritage preservation to be to: “safeguard the heritage of the City of Saint Paul by preserving sites and structures which reflect elements of the city’s cultural, social, economic, political or architectural history; protect and enhance the City of Saint Paul’s attraction to residents, tourists and visitors, and serve as a support and stimulus to business and industry enhance the visual and aesthetic character, diversity and interest of the City of Saint Paul; foster civic pride in the beauty and notable accomplishments of the past; and promote the use and preservation of historic sites and structures for the education and general welfare of the people of the City of Saint Paul;” and

**WHEREAS**, Chapter 73 also establishes the Saint Paul Heritage Preservation Commission and states that it “shall serve as an advisory body to the mayor and city council on municipal heritage preservation matters;” and

**WHEREAS**, the house, located at 763 Fourth Street East in the Dayton’s Bluff Historic District is now threatened with demolition as the City has issued an Order to Abate; and

**WHEREAS**, the Julius Coney House at 763 Fourth Street East is a one-and-one-half story, L-shaped cottage constructed as a single-family dwelling in 1888. The roof is gabled with asphalt shingles, the original wood lap-siding is concealed by cement-asbestos, there are multiple sets of paired-double-hung windows and the foundation is limestone. This residence has a “simple” façade and altered porch features in the original footprint. A six-course tall, block retaining wall wraps around the property due to the significant change in grade from the sidewalk. The property is classified as contributing to the character of the Dayton’s Bluff Historic District; and

**WHEREAS**, this property became a Vacant Category 3 building on August 6, 2008. Records indicate that the owner is Ya Heu and on February 14, 2011 an Order to Abate Nuisance Building was issued. The Legislative Hearing Officer has continued the Legislative Hearing from April 26 to June 14 in order for the HPC to review a proposal to remove or repair the structure. The Legislative Hearing Officer will consider the HPC’s decision and will make a recommendation to the City Council on July 6;” and

**WHEREAS**, the Saint Paul Heritage Preservation Commission, based upon information gathered by staff and presented at their May 12, 2011 meeting, made the following findings of fact:

1. The preservation program for the district states that consideration of demolitions will be based on the category of building (pivotal, contributing and noncontributing) and its importance to the district, the structural condition of the building and the economic viability of the structure.

2. *The category of the building.* The building is classified as contributing to the architectural and historical integrity of the Dayton's Bluff Historic District.
3. *The importance of the building to the district.* The house was constructed during the period of significance and during a strong building boom from 1880 to 1900. The Dayton's Bluff Handbook states the following about late nineteenth-century vernacular properties;

*At least 430 houses were built in the decade of the 1880s, and about 60 were added during the 1890s. Several hundred vernacular houses built for railroad and factory workers and their families made up much of the total. Pattern books and millwork catalogues were the source of many of these simple designs. Among the most interesting of the many types of housing created on Dayton's Bluff was the small one- or two-story "worker's cottage." Their construction was often financed by mortgages offered by organizations such as the Workingmen's Building Society.*

The number of houses still extant in the Dayton's Bluff Historic District during this time period is unknown.

The Sanborn Insurance map for this site indicates the footprint of the house has not changed much if any since 1925 and that a one-story accessory structure at the rear of the lot has been removed. There is no alley on this block and access to the rear yard for parking is limited due to grade changes.

These two block faces on Fourth Street appear to be contiguous, meaning there is only one vacant lot and the remaining houses have some architectural continuity, with no inappropriate in-fill.

Staff has not researched other historical associations, such as persons that have contributed in some way to St. Paul's history and development or an architect or association with an important event, with this property.

4. *Structural condition of the building.* On January 25, 2011 a Building Deficiency Inspection Report was compiled. The list of deficiencies is not necessarily all the deficiencies present at the time and would not substitute for a team inspection and Code Compliance Report. A more comprehensive report would be necessary for staff to review for compliance with the rehabilitation guidelines. Staff is not aware of any other structural evaluations that have been completed.
5. *The economic viability of the structure.* According to Code Enforcement, the rehabilitation costs of the structure are from \$40,000 to \$60,000 and demolition costs are estimated from \$8,000 to \$10,000. Ramsey County estimates the land value at \$16,500 and the house value at \$51,800.
6. The removal of the residence would not comply with the principle that states, *all work should be of a character and quality that maintains the distinguishing features of the building and the environment* as the removal of the property would alter the streetscape.
7. Rehabilitation of the property that would retain and restore *distinctive architectural features* and restore *altered original features* through photo or physical documentation, would comply with the guideline.

8. The principal states, *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.* A proposal for rehabilitation should first take into account the need to repair of existing features and removal and replacement as a last option.

**FINALLY, BE IT RESOLVED**, that based on the above information the Heritage Preservation Commission recommends the building not be removed at this time and DSI Code Enforcement division contract with an organization, such as Historic St. Paul, or a historic architect and structural engineer with expertise in historic preservation, to complete a historic structure investigation and appraisal, ideally occurring prior to the June legislative hearing in light of the expressed concerns of the neighbors, that will include a recommendation on the feasibility to restore the property in a manner that complies with the preservation program for the district. The City's authority to abate nuisance conditions under Chapter 45.08(c) of the Legislative Code allows for the costs of "...investigation, inspection...or appraisals..." to be paid by the property owner. The results and report recommendations will be considered by the HPC and the HPC recommendation shall be included with the Legislative Hearing Officer's recommendation to the City Council.

**MOVED BY** David Riehle  
**SECONDED BY** Richard Dana

**IN FAVOR** 10  
**AGAINST** 0  
**ABSTAIN** 0