



CITY OF SAINT PAUL

651-266-6655
Christopher B. Coleman, Mayor
651-228-3261

25 West Fourth Street

Saint Paul, MN 55102

Telephone:

Facsimile:

October 22, 2015

Richard Dana
Chair, Saint Paul Heritage Preservation Commission (HPC)
C/O Christine Boulware
Saint Paul Department of Planning and Economic Development
25 West 4th Street, Suite 1400
Saint Paul, MN 55102

Re: Appeal of HPC decision
716 Wilson Avenue

Dear Chair. Dana,

On October 8, 2015, the HPC denied the Housing and Redevelopment Authority's (HRA) application for a demolition permit to raze the building at 716 Wilson Avenue (HPC File #16-001). I wish to appeal the HPC's decision and ask that the City Council consider the matter per HRA's rights as the applicant under Chapter 73 of the Saint Paul Legislative Code.

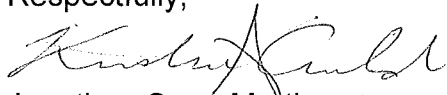
I set forth the following grounds for appeal in accordance with §73.06(i)(2) and §74.90(j):

- Based on the findings presented in the HPC staff report, HPC staff recommended approval of the demolition permit application. The staff report indicated that the historical context is good. However, the context is based on the building's association with the Schornstein Garage and Schornstein Grocery, both of which have been approved for demolition.
- The HPC staff report indicated that the building is classified as non-contributing to the Dayton's Bluff Heritage Preservation District. The non-contributing status of the structure is indicative of its role in defining the overall character of the district.
- The HPC staff report acknowledges that a fire on September 25, 2014 adversely impacted the architectural integrity of the building, especially at the front porch and northeast corner.
- In January of 2014, as is indicated in the HPC staff report, a letter from a construction manager associated with a rehabilitation proposal stated in reference to the building's foundation, "... repair is not an option, and that even if repairs to the foundation were possible, the water infiltration would continue to be an issue at this particular site, given its topography."

- A Structural Condition Review, prepared by a third party structural engineering firm, was submitted with the application, and was discussed via verbal testimony at the public hearing. The Structural Condition Review concluded that the building is in poor structural condition and repairs would likely be costly.
- As was testified to in the public hearing, HRA staff has worked diligently to find an economically viable rehabilitation proposal for the building, to no avail.
 - HRA staff received 2 proposals, one in 2012 for a 5-unit rehabilitation project in conjunction with other properties requesting a total of \$2,700,000 subsidy. HRA staff determined that this was not an economically viable proposal.
 - Staff received a second proposal in 2013 for demolition and multifamily redevelopment in conjunction with an adjacent property. Subsidy need was not determined, but preliminary conversations with the proposer led HRA staff to believe that it would not be an economically feasible proposal.
 - In the spring of 2015, HRA staff requested assistance from HPC staff and the Preservation Alliance of Minnesota to identify interested developers. Three new developers were contacted, but no proposals emerged.
- The demolition of this structure would not have a significant impact on the relationship between buildings on the south side of Wilson as is suggested in the staff report. The structure is at the end of a row of houses along Wilson that terminates at the Schornstein Garage, which is slated for demolition.

The HRA submits that the minimal economic value of the building as-is due to significant water damage, settling and deterioration, loss of architectural integrity and poor structural condition are sufficient grounds for demolition. The HRA respectfully requests approval of this appeal under Saint Paul Legislative Code Sections 73.06(i)(2) and 74.90(j).

Respectfully,



for Jonathan Sage-Martinson
HRA Executive Director

Cc: Patty Lilledahl, Director of Housing, PED
Joe Musolf, Principal Project Manager, PED
File